



**Sample Pages from
One Beer Too Many**

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A BOX OF PUPPIES

Constantly, Incessantly, All The Time
Huge Hands
Diatom
One Beer Too Many

FOUR ONE ACT PLAYS BY
Billy Houck



A Box of Puppies

Four One Act Plays by Billy Houck

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Set

All you need is a bare stage.

Welcome!

Welcome to *A Box of Puppies*, a diverse and exciting collection of One Act Plays. Each play can be performed independently or the four plays can be performed together in the above order for an outstanding competition piece.

— Enjoy! —

One Beer Too Many

Characters

Skip

SKIP, an average kid, stands in a sad pool of light.

SKIP: I used to enjoy English. I used to enjoy creative writing. My sophomore teacher, Ms. Lipshitz, told me I was good. Said I had promise. A real original. It was so nice to see student writing with such style. Real quality work. That's the way she talked. Ms. Lipshitz. I told my Mom I was gonna be a writer. She said: "That's nice, Honey." I told my dad. He just looked at me and sat in his black Naugahyde La-Z-Boy recliner and drank beer.

I hate beer.

Ms. Lipshitz said there was a contest for the best student-written play. The drama club wanted to do an original work and the winner would get fifty bucks and the play would be done by the kids in the drama club. Ms. Lipshitz said this was my perfect chance to show the world that I could write. I didn't know what to write about.

Ms. Lipshitz said, "Write what you know."

Write what you know? Write what y'know. Wriwachano.

I thought, what do I know? I don't know what I know. So I told my Mom and she said, "That's nice, Honey." And I was gonna ask my dad, but he was just sitting there, looking at me, drinking beer, so I didn't even bother. So I went to my room and got out a sheet of paper and wrote, "Write What You Know."

And I looked at the paper. And I looked and I looked and I looked at that white sheet of paper. And no words appeared on it.

I looked at that paper a long time.

I didn't see anything.

I could hear the TV in the living room and Dad's La-Z-Boy recliner creaking and Dad opening another beer.

And then I wrote a play! It was all about a man who was so self-centered that all he ever did was drink beer all day long in his La-Z-Boy recliner and he stacked up his empty cans in a pyramid

and the pyramid got too high and it tipped over and the man was crushed under it and he died. Nobody could believe it was an accidental death so the man's son was charged with murder and he said he didn't do it but nobody would believe him so he went to prison and when he got out he was old and all he wanted to do was sit in a La-Z-Boy recliner and drink beer all day.

I didn't have a chance to show my play to Ms. Lipshitz because the deadline was the next day, so I took it straight to the theatre and left it on the drama teacher, Mr. Larker's desk. I called the play *One Beer Too Many*.

I was pretty proud of myself. Ms. Lipshitz said so, too. "Just for trying." I guess that meant she thought I didn't have much of a chance of being picked. I thought it was a sure thing, though, 'cause nobody else at that school, at least nobody I knew, was gonna write a play. Except one girl. Her name was Melody. Melody Golden. Really. She told me she was going to write a play about young people's dreams of stardom and about how every young heart dreams of treading the boards and being in the spotlight. (*snorts*) I mean, Melody was cute and I liked her and all that, but who would want to see a play about young hearts on the boards? Not me. So when I got called out of class to go to the counselling office and I saw Ms. Lipshitz and Mr. Larker in there with my counsellor, Mr. Sanchez, I knew I was in.

They were going to do my play and they called me to the counsellor's office to congratulate me.

I was so proud.

Then I saw their faces.

Ms. Lipshitz looked embarrassed. And Mr. Larker looked mad. And my counsellor looked like he had some real bad news to tell me. Then I remembered that Mr. Larker was the drama teacher, and I figured that they were just...being dramatic...in...there.

So I pasted on a smile and swung in there and waited for the good news. And Mr. Sanchez shut the door. And Ms. Lipshitz wouldn't even look at me.

And I waited for a minute.

And nobody said anything.

And I remembered that blank page that didn't have any words on it except "Write What You Know." And all of a sudden Larker is shouting, "Who do you think you're dealing with here? I'm



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