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PREFACE

Funny Business is more than simply a book of comedy sketches and comic one-act plays. What makes it unique is that I have included examples of as many different forms of comedy and humor as possible, all with characters in their teens and twenties. I did this for several reasons. First, the wide choice of plays and sketches should, I hope, provide enjoyment and entertainment, as well as introduce readers to a greater range of comedy than they are likely to find in most anthologies. Second, such a range of comedy in one volume should make it easier to find material that suits individual needs both for acting practice and live performances. Third, the book defines the various types of comedy, comparing and contrasting each form to the others.

Because I didn't want to give away the endings of the sketches and plays before they are read, I have included only a brief introduction to each piece. In these introductions I discuss the type of comedy a piece illustrates and/or explain the comic devices it uses.

Knowing the style of a play can help to know how the playwright intended it to be seen and performed. This is important in that comedy has the widest range of any dramatic genre. Some comedy, of course, should be played broadly, some subtly.

Following each piece, I briefly discuss what should or can be considered in acting the roles and in preparing a total production. I also mention various themes touched upon in the pieces and the reasons for writing them in a particular way. I explain references to events, places, people and past or contemporary society and why each of these is important to the play or sketch.

I strongly believe in casting a play according to talent and ability, that is, without regard to race or ethnicity. I urge anyone presenting the plays to abide by this belief.

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