Undercover Romance

A Comedy

By Bill Majeski

Performance Rights

To copy this text is an infringement of the federal copyright law as is to perform this play without royalty payment. All rights are controlled by Eldridge Publishing Co., Inc. Contact the publisher for further scripts and licensing information.

On all programs and advertising the author's name must appear as well as this notice" "Produced by special arrangement with Eldridge Publishing Co."

PUBLISHED BY

ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY
www.histage.com
© 1987 by Eldridge Publishing Company

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/undercover-romance

STORY OF THE PLAY

Blanche Dunwitty's passionate romance novels are hot sellers. Little does anyone know *(although his neighbors suspect something!)* that the author is really one Ed Bartlett, a likeable, thoroughly masculine MAN who likes to chomp on his pipe when working. His editor, Leona Washbutton, keeps his identity top-secret because if the female fans knew, they would become violent. After all, romance writing is the sacred preserve of women.

The only problem is the upcoming romance writers' convention. The widely popular Blanche Dunwitty must make a speech. Leona decides to send a young, attractive editor, Elaine Hall, to act as Blanche but a last-minute emergency forces Ed to go after all. Dressed in women's clothes, he begins to enjoy himself among his lady admirers - until Elaine shows up.

While not letting on he is a man, Ed tries to make a few points with Elaine. He also tries to find an excuse for not changing out of his disguise with her in the same room.

Later, during the speech, a suspecting editor from a rival publishing house tries to tear off Blanche's wig. In the ensuing struggle, Blanche *(Elaine.)* comes out the winner. Ed, finally dressed in his own clothes, introduces himself, and from then on, his romantic fiction starts to become reality. Two satirical romantic playlets, acted out as Ed "writes" them, add even more visual humor.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
6 M, 16 W *(Doubling possible)*

ED BARTLETT: A likeable guy writing under the pseudonym of Blanche Dunwitty, whose romance novels are widely popular. He's about 30.
CYRUS BERDOO: A nosy neighbor who boards with his aunt, the landlady. About 40.
MRS. PEGGY HAZLITT: Landlady and Cyrus's aunt. She's upset by Cyrus's suspicious nature, but goes along with it. About 60.
LEONA WASHBUTTON: Ed's editor at Franklin Publishing. She's bright, direct, and pleasant. In her 40s.
ELAINE HALL: Very pretty, vivacious lady who works at Franklin. In her mid - to late 20s.
MESSENGER: Teenage girl who appears briefly.
EDNA WHISENBEE: Guest at convention. In her 30s.
LADY AT DESK: Convention registrar. About 40.
WINIFRED SHUGRUE: Visitor to convention. About 40.
ELOISE TOWERS: Convention visitor. In her 30s.
DAPHNE DUCK: Convention visitor. In her 40s.
JUDY PEMBERTON: Pretty convention visitor who just sold her first romance novel. In her 20s.
PRISCILLA PATTON: Haughty, aggressive editor with a rival publishing house. In her 30s.
EMILY FORGIVENY: Photographer for a newspaper. In her 20s.
HANNAH PALINDROME: Convention official. About 50.

NOTE: There are two interior playlets denoting what Ed is writing. In the first, there are four characters, DUKE, WINSTON, ROSALIND, and LADY FANDOM. In the second, there are three characters, BARNEY STURGIS, AMANDA DEEDS, and a male INTRUDER. Actors performing in the first sketch can double for the performers in the second. The female performers can also double as ladies attending the convention.

SETTING

The action takes place in three settings.

Ed's apartment: This can be a very small set at one end of the stage. Rather than show the whole apartment, all that is necessary is a phone, desk, chair, and typewriter or computer showing that this is where Ed writes. A doorway leads to the rest of his living quarters. Outside his front door, in the building hallway, is a comfortable chair and table.

Leona Washbutton's office: This requires only a desk and two chairs and can be set up at the other end of the stage.

Convention hall: This requires a table and numerous chairs set up according to the director's wishes. The scene opens the second act so it can be set up as soon as the first act curtain comes down and removed quickly when the scene ends with a blackout leading up to the final brief scene at Ed's place.

PROPS

Typewriter and paper, folder, manuscript, 3 men's pipes, watch, newspaper clipping, calendar, small camera, diamond pin, jeweler's eyepiece, luggage, most-wanted criminal circulars, paperback book, notebook and pencil, travel brochures, big "gem", 2 guns *(one a starter gun.),* bundle of clothes, pen, clipboard, small tape recorder, convention sign, registration cards or book, ID badges for all at convention, jar of peanuts, rolled up newspaper, ticket.

COSTUMES

All characters wear up-to-date clothing. Blanche's outfit includes a long-sleeve blouse, floor-length skirt, hat, and for Ed, a woman's wig. Characters in first playlet should wear medieval style dress while characters in second playlet should wear gangster style clothing.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: ED is in his room, seated at typewriter. He pecks away, stops, thinks, continues typing. He pauses and then finishes off with a quick burst at the keys.)

ED: *(Reading aloud from the sheet in the typewriter.*) "There is something I must tell you," whispered the Duke, nuzzling her longingly. "Yes?" Antoinette asked. "What is it?" "I love you more than any other woman I've ever loved." She smiled at him, blushing as she did so. He took her in his arms.

(*ED pauses, leans back and thinks. He takes a pipe out of his shirt pocket and puts it, unlit, into his mouth. At this point we see CYRUS BERDOO tip-toeing furtively to a position outside Ed's room. He leans close to listen in.)*

ED: (*Continuing.*) Antoinette had never experienced this feeling before. The blood rushed to her head. She felt as if she were going to swoon.

(*CYRUS excitingly signals for someone to come over to him. MRS. PEGGY HAZLITT enters and goes to him.)*

CYRUS: (*Stage whisper.*) He's talking to himself again.
MRS. HAZLITT: He pays his rent on time.
CYRUS: He's an oddball. Maybe sick. (*Gestures to HIS head.*)
MRS. HAZLITT: Unless he's on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted list, he's okay with me. Never a day late with the rent.
CYRUS: I think we may be harboring a fugitive from the laughing academy.
MRS. HAZLITT: Cyrus, you're too suspicious of everybody.
CYRUS: Aunt Peggy, I was a store detective for l0 years. I know weirdos.
MRS. HAZLITT: Live and let live. (*SHE exits*.)

(*ED types for a few brief seconds then reads again after removing the paper from his typewriter.)*

ED: (*Reading.*) "Will you marry me?" the Duke asked softly, gazing deep into her eyes. She couldn't speak, her head was whirling and her heart was pounding so hard she thought he might be able to hear it hammering inside her. (*CYRUS is straining very hard to pick up Ed's words*.) "Yes ... yes ... yes," she gushed, the words tumbling forth. They kissed. She felt the warmth course through her youthful body. Then he picked her up and slowly carried her to the (*Mumbles ... mumbles.*) and paradise was theirs. (*ED leans back, exhales as HE reaches for a piece of paper and inserts it in his typewriter*.) Chalk up another one, please. (*HE types and talks*.) Title - "Love's Flickering Flame" by ... Blanche Dunwitty.

(*ED takes paper out, puts the typewritten sheets into a folder, gets up and walks around, relieved. Another job done. Outside, a disappointed CYRUS turns to exit. The PHONE rings in ED's room. CYRUS hears it and rushes back. ED picks up the PHONE.)*

ED: (*Into PHONE*.) Hello?
VOICE OF LEONA WASHBUTTON: (*Filter or from off-stage point.*) Ed?
ED: Hi, Leona. You editors must be psychic. I just finished my latest.
LEONA: You're right on schedule. Why don't you bring it in? I have something to tell you. Important.
ED: (*Looks at watch.*) Sure. I'm free now. I'll hop a cab and hustle over.
LEONA: Fine.
ED: But what's so important?
LEONA: When you get here. Never trust the phone.
ED: Hush-hush?
LEONA: (*Affirming.)* Hush-hush.
ED: Cloak and dagger?

End of Freeview

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/undercover-romance

Eldridge Publishing, a leading drama play publisher since 1906, offers more than a thousand full-length plays, one-act plays, melodramas, holiday plays, religious plays, children's theatre plays and musicals of all kinds.

For more than a hundred years, our family-owned business has had the privilege of publishing some of the finest playwrights, allowing their work to come alive on stages worldwide.

We look forward to being a part of your next theatrical production.

Eldridge Publishing... for the start of your theatre experience!