

Chapter Thirteen

Royalties

by Debra Bruch

A playscript is an original product which needs to be paid for in order to be used. The copyright laws in the United States are written to protect those people who create original works. For many, writing is a means of livelihood, and playwrights depend on production for support.

Consequently, we need to pay royalties. Playscript publishers will require the amount of royalties to be determined by the number of seats in an auditorium and the number of productions. For instance, in an auditorium having less than four hundred seats, royalties may cost \$50 for the first night's performance and \$35 for each other performance.

It is an infringement of the copyright to copy part or all of a published play, or copyrighted manuscript, by any means. It is also an infringement of the copyright to give any public performance or reading of any copyrighted play or copyrighted dramatic reading script, either in its entirety or in the form of excerpts without the prior consent of the publisher or writer. The only persons having the right to copy or perform at will is the publisher and the author.

Either enter into an agreement with the publisher to purchase scripts and pay royalties, or, if the manuscript is copyrighted but not published, enter into an agreement with the author. Church organizations are not exempt from paying royalties. However, sometimes an author will write in a no royalty clause for his or her play. Also, excerpts of scripts may be read with written consent from the publisher without paying royalties.

The three most reputable publishers of scripts for production in the United States are Samuel French, Inc., Baker's Plays, and Dramatists Play Service, Inc. These three publishers are committed to quality plays. For instance, Samuel French often publishes only those scripts which have had a first-class, professional production. Other outlets do exist, but

their scripts seem to lack quality. Each company publishes a catalogue, and those wanting information should request one. Besides its general catalogue, Baker's Plays also offers a Religious Drama Catalogue. Samuel French has a religious drama section in its catalogue. Instructions on how to order are in the catalogue.

None of this applies to what's on this website, Danillitphil Productions. For these works here, you can assume that performing these works are free.

Copyright 1990 Debra Bruch