

# The Blathersons Give Back

Drena Heizer



**ArtAge**  
Publications



ArtAge supplies books, plays, and materials to older performers around the world. Directors and actors have come to rely on our 30+ years of experience in the field to help them find useful materials and information that makes their productions stimulating, fun, and entertaining.

ArtAge's unique program has been featured in *Wall Street Journal*, *LA Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *American Theatre*, *Time Magazine*, *Modern Maturity*, on CNN, NBC, and in many other media sources.

ArtAge is more than a catalog. We also supply information, news, and trends on our top-rated website, [www.seniortheatre.com](http://www.seniortheatre.com). We stay in touch with the field with our very popular e-newsletter, *Senior Theatre Online*. Our President, Bonnie Vorenberg, is asked to speak at conferences and present workshops that supplement her writing and consulting efforts. We're here to help you be successful in Senior Theatre!

***We help older performers fulfill their theatrical dreams!***

**ArtAge Publications**

Bonnie L. Vorenberg, President

PO Box 19955

Portland OR 97280

503-246-3000 or 800-858-4998

[bonniev@seniortheatre.com](mailto:bonniev@seniortheatre.com)

[www.seniortheatre.com](http://www.seniortheatre.com)

## NOTICE

**Copyright:** This play is fully protected under the Copyright Laws of the United States of America, Canada, and all other countries of the Universal Copyright Convention.

The laws are specific regarding the piracy of copyrighted materials. Sharing the material with other organizations or persons is prohibited. Unlawful use of a playwright's work deprives the creator of his or her rightful income.

**Cast Copies:** Performance cast copies are required for each actor, director, stage manager, lighting and sound crew leader.

**Changes to Script:** Plays must be performed as written. Any alterations, additions, or deletions to the text must be approved.

**Permission to Film:** Rights to produce, film, or record, in whole or in part, in any medium or in any language, by any group amateur or professional, are fully reserved.

**Royalty:** Royalties are due when you perform the play for any audience, paying or non-paying, professional or amateur. This includes readings, cuttings, scenes, and excerpts.

The royalty for amateur productions of this show is posted online. It is payable two weeks prior to your production. Contact us for professional rates or other questions. Royalty fees are subject to change.

Insert the following paragraph in your programs:

*“Performed with special permission from ArtAge Publications’ Senior Theatre Resource Center at 800-858-4998, [www.seniortheatre.com](http://www.seniortheatre.com).”*

Copyright 2009

THE BLATHERSONS GIVE BACK

By Drena Heizer

CAST

NARRATOR

HENRY

GLADYS

STAGE POSITIONS: Optional

PROPS: A telephone and the sound effect of a phone ringing. If this sound effect is not available, the characters can just say their lines: "Oh there's the phone..." etc. (It's all make-believe anyway).

PERFORMANCE NOTES: The narrator has two speeches—first the introduction and then the lines that set the scene a week later, after which he/she exits (or simply steps back and turns away from the audience).

NARRATOR: Back in the days before television, there were big stars with weekly variety shows on radio, and one of them featured comedy skits called "The Bickersons." This was a married couple, John and Blanche Bickerson, played by Don Ameche and Frances Langford. She was the self-centered wife who nagged and made unreasonable demands, and he was the poor shmoe who had to put up with her. With a nostalgic look back at those days of radio, here is our version of the shrewish wife and the long-suffering husband, Gladys and Henry Blatherson, in a sentimental little story. (*the narrator remains in place for lines later on*)

HENRY: I see there's a package from your Aunt Hetty on the hall table.

GLADYS: Yeah. It came in the mail today.

HENRY: Well, aren't you going to open it?

GLADYS: Why bother? It's just the same old leftover homemade fruitcake she sends me for my birthday EVERY year.

HENRY: Oh. Yeah. I remember now. Same thing every year.

GLADYS: I hate fruitcake. Especially hers.

HENRY: Oh, I don't think it's so bad—except that she soaks it in prune juice.

GLADYS: Well, that prune juice hasn't loosened HER up any, the old tightwad. She's got millions, but all she ever gives ME is that lousy fruitcake. Which reminds me—what are YOU giving me for my birthday?

HENRY: I don't know yet.

GLADYS: Well, I want a whole new outfit.

HENRY: Have a heart, Gladys! I'm still making payments on the birthday present I gave you last year.

GLADYS: Well, I can't believe THAT cost very much. It was only a fur coat.

HENRY: Well, in case you didn't notice it was the DELUXE model! It had sleeves!

GLADYS: You're a cheapsake, Henry.

HENRY: No, I'm not. It's just that you keep me broke trying to pay for all that stuff you buy.

GLADYS: Why do you begrudge me those necessities, Henry?

HENRY: Necessities? What about the hand-carved book case you bought? We don't even have any books.

GLADYS: Well, I'm writing one.

HENRY: You're doing what?

GLADYS: I'm writing a book.

HENRY: What about?

GLADYS: About two hundred pages.

HENRY: Very funny, Gladys. What kind of book are you trying to write?

GLADYS: Well, it's fiction. It's a story about what my life might have been like if I'd married Harold Frumpkin instead of you.

HENRY: That story has already been done, Gladys. It was called "The Bride of Frankenstein."

GLADYS: Oh, come now. Harold wasn't that bad-looking.

HENRY: No? I heard that he used to haunt houses for pocket money.

GLADYS: He did not. He had plenty of money. His family was very wealthy, and he was their only child.

HENRY: So you think he's probably very rich by now.

GLADYS: Yes, and sometimes I can't help wondering what would have happened if I'd married him instead of you.

HENRY: I wish you had.

GLADYS: What did you say?

HENRY: Oh—uh—I said I think that's sad.

GLADYS: No. I heard what you said, Henry. You wish I had married Harold.

HENRY: No, I don't.

GLADYS: Yes, you do. You don't love me!

HENRY: Sure I do, Gladys. I just wish you wouldn't spend so much money. That emerald pin you bought has set me back plenty.

GLADYS: Well, that's gratitude for you! I did that to save you money on dry cleaning bills!

HENRY: What?

**FreeView: This is copyrighted material**

**Now buy the entire show — such fun!**