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*Dramatic Publishing*

# CATHY'S CREEK

Book by ELISE FORIER

Music by TINA LEAR

Lyrics by TINA LEAR and ELISE FORIER



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(CATHY'S CREEK)

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This play is dedicated with great affection to  
Elena Terrone and Faye Moskowitz—  
two women who have inspired us to listen to  
the music of life and to face the toughest  
times with faith and courage.

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CATHY’S CREEK was originally commissioned and produced by the Whidbey Center for the Arts in Langley, Washington, in June 2001. It was directed by Amy Windecker, with set design by Amy and Bob Windecker, Beno Kennedy, Dave Gignac and Chris Spencer, costumes by Alex Martin and lighting by Ray Jarol. The stage managers were Dwight Zehm and Adriana Gallagher. The production’s dramaturg was Vanessa DeWolfe. The music was played by Tina Lear and David Brogan.

Cathy . . . . . AMY WALKER  
 Jeanne . . . . . KARLA GILBERT  
 Myrna. . . . . MARY MCLEOD  
 Jack. . . . . TOM FISHER  
 Mike . . . . . LOGAN MCINERNEY  
 Jason . . . . . ELIOT COLE  
 Mrs. Marsh . . . . . DEANA DUNCAN  
 June . . . . . GAEA VAN BRED A  
 Chris . . . . . RYAN KARAMANYAN  
 Adelaide. . . . . KATRINA ELLISON  
 Lucy . . . . . STEPHANIE METZ  
 Billy. . . . . KEITH KINSEY

CATHY’S CREEK was selected for development at the 2003 Waldo M. & Grace C. Bonderman Playwriting for Youth National Symposium where it received a staged reading at Indiana Repertory Theatre, directed by Christopher Gurr.



CATHY’S CREEK was subsequently produced at Stages Theatre Company in Hopkins, Minnesota, in October 2004. It was directed by Sandy Boren-Barret and associate directed by Bruce Rowan, with set design by Gretchen Katt, costumes by Lori Opsal, lighting by Rob Johnson, props by Jim Hibbeler, and make-up by Paula Lee. The stage managers were Melanie Salmon-Peterson and Kristin Larsen. The music was played by Karen Ouren and Josh Kaplan.

Cathy . . . . . MOLLY DWORSKY & TARA BORMAN  
Jeanne . . . . . SARA SAWYER  
Myrna . . . . . MARILEE MAHLER  
Mike . . . . . THOMAS BEVAN  
Jack . . . . . BRUCE ROWAN  
Jason . . . . . MATT OUREN  
Mrs. Marsh . . . . . ALIA MORTENSEN  
Chris . . . . . DEREK PRESTLY  
Adelaide . . . . . ZOEY SCHULTZ  
Inquisitor . . . . . BRENT TECLAW

# CATHY'S CREEK

A Play in Two Acts

For 5m., 5w.

(with doubling, 4m. instead of 5) extras as desired

## CHARACTERS

CATHY SCRUGGS . . . . . female, 13-14 years old  
JEANNE D'ARC . . . . . female, 16 years old  
MYRNA SCRUGGS . . . . . female, 35-45 years old  
JACK DECASTRO . . . . . male, 45-55 years old  
MICHAEL SCRUGGS . . . . . male, 16 years old  
CHRIS DECASTRO . . . . . male, 13-14 years old  
ADELAIDE . . . . . female, 13-14 years old  
JASON PRITCHARD . . . . . male, 13-14 years old  
MRS. MARSH . . . . . female, 35-55 years old  
INQUISITOR (or, an offstage male VOICE, which can be  
sung by the actors playing JASON and/or  
MICHAEL)

THE TIME: Present day.

THE PLACE: A small town in the Iowa farm country.

The action, for the most part, takes place in three locales: by the banks of Angel Creek, in the dining area and front porch of Cathy's house, and in Mrs. Marsh's classroom.

I believe the play is best served by a flexible unit set. Much of the story takes place in Cathy's imagination—thus characters, both imaginary and real, must be free to enter

and exit with the ease and speed of thought. Clunky and unwieldy scene changes would slow this down considerably and might distract from Cathy's internal journey.

At the same time, I have to admit, a "real" creek, with actual water, running down the middle of the stage would be great. Stars, for the night scenes, and a big moon would also be lovely. It would be great if there were a tree to climb, or a tire to swing on, and plants...

But a production would also work just fine with a couple of platforms, some sturdy chairs and clever lighting. After all, in the end, this is a play about what happens inside and between people, before they go out and change the world.

"Modern day Iowa teenager Cathy Scruggs is having a hard week: her widowed mother Myrna appears to be dating an odious, self-satisfied factory farm owner named Jack DeCastro, Cathy's got a huge crush on a boy named Jason, but can't seem to have a civil conversation with him and to top it off, she has to prepare an oral biography report on Joan of Arc and hasn't really started reading her book yet. To complicate matters, Cathy's brother Michael keeps pestering her about the polluted water in nearby Angel Creek, but that's something she can't really talk about, because Michael died of leukemia two years before. Taking temporary refuge from her troubles by the banks of the creek, Cathy pulls out her biography book, only to have a strange girl interrupt her homework. When the girl introduces herself as Jeanne D'Arc, Cathy is at first taken aback--it's crazy enough that her brother's ghost is talking to her, and now it's Joan of Arc?--but the French girl is so earnest and compelling, Cathy finds herself making friends, instead of running away . . ."

*(JEANNE appears at the other side of the creek. CATHY looks up.)*

CATHY. Hey! You came back—

JEANNE *(prostrating herself)*. Holy Saint Catherine. I beg your pardon.

CATHY. What?

JEANNE. You are Saint Catherine, are you not? And I was afraid before, and I ran from you when you called me, but now—

CATHY. Whoa, I didn't call you. Okay? And I'm not a saint, I'm just a girl.

JEANNE. You do not look like a girl.

CATHY. Thanks a lot. Who are you?

JEANNE. I am called Jeanne. But do you not know this?

CATHY. How would I know?

JEANNE. You are one of my holy voices. *(CATHY looks at her, puzzled.)* I have heard voices of angels since I was thirteen years old.

CATHY. I'm not an angel. But I hear voices sometimes, too. Like Michael, my brother...you heard him yesterday, right?

JEANNE. Yes.

CATHY. That's so cool. He...you know, died...two years ago. But when I'm down here, and I clear out my mind, it's like I can still see him and hear him. Like he never went away.

JEANNE. He is not dead to me. He appears a shining young man, with a sword.

CATHY. That's his baseball bat. He was gonna grow up and hit homers for the Twin Cities or Chicago. But then...he got some kind of blood disease. What do your voices talk to you about?

JEANNE. They say I am to restore peace to the kingdom of France. I am to protect the dauphin—the Crowned Prince—and see to his coronation. I have waited almost four years to act, but soon I will ride to meet the prince, and wear armor, and fight for him.

CATHY. You're going to be a knight in armor?

JEANNE. But surely you know about this. Do you not know me, Lady Catherine? I am Jeanne D'Arc, and I am to save the king.

CATHY. Jeanne...Jeanne D'Arc? Jeanne—Joan of Arc?

JEANNE. Have you come to give me leave to ride to the dauphin?

CATHY. I don't know! This is really... *(To the air.)* Hey, Mike! Are you doing this?

JEANNE. Are you not a holy messenger?

CATHY. I'm just a girl.

JEANNE. What is this beautiful place where you live, if it is not heaven?

CATHY. This is...Angel Creek.

JEANNE. Ah. You see? God has sent you!

**YOU'RE AN ANGEL  
FROM THE BLUE**

CATHY.

**I'M A FARM GIRL...**

JEANNE.

**I AM TOO**

*(Puzzled.)*

**YOU WEAR...BREECHES?**

CATHY.

**SO WILL YOU  
HERE IS A PICTURE THEY DREW OF YOU**

JEANNE. You can see me dressed as you? *(They look at one another.)*

**WHAT A WONDER**

CATHY.

**THIS IS WEIRD**

JEANNE.

**I PRAYED FOR GUIDANCE  
AND YOU APPEARED**

CATHY.

**CAN'T EXPLAIN IT  
STILL I FEEL  
SURE THAT I'VE MET YOU**

**AND SURE THAT YOU'RE REAL  
HAVE YOU BEEN WITH ME ALL MY LIFE?**

JEANNE.

**WILL YOU BE WITH ME ALL MY LIFE?**

Instruct me, messenger! When do I ride to the dauphin?

CATHY (*looking it up in the book*). Um. Well. Okay, you have a cousin who's gonna have a baby soon?

JEANNE. Yes.

CATHY. So you tell your folks you got to go visit her. To help with the baby. But when you get to her village you look up a guy called Commander Baudricourt. He'll help you get to the prince.

JEANNE. Thank you, Catherine. (*Memorizing.*) As soon as the baby is born, I will begin.

**GOD HAS CHOSEN ME, I MUST GO  
MY HEART IS GRATEFUL  
FOR THIS I KNOW  
HE HAS SENT YOU  
TO MY AID  
SOMEONE LIKE ME  
A GIRL, A FARM MAID**

CATHY.

**I JUST HOPE THAT  
I CAN DO  
ALL THE THINGS  
YOU NEED ME TO**

JEANNE.

**I HAVE WAITED FOR THIS SIGN  
PART OF A SACRED DESIGN**

**RIVER OF ANGELS, A FARM UP ABOVE  
PROOF ONCE AGAIN OF GOD'S LOVE  
HAVE YOU BEEN WITH ME ALL MY LIFE?**

CATHY.

**WILL YOU BE WITH ME ALL MY LIFE?**

*(Indicating book.)* I see here some people don't believe in your voices. They laugh at mine, too. I'm glad you understand.

**ONLY THING IS**

**I CAN'T SAY**

**WHAT A NICE TIME I HAD WITH YOU TODAY**

**CAN'T YOU SEE IT? "OH, OH, CHRIS—**

**ME AND JOAN OF ARC, WE'RE LIKE THIS"**

JEANNE.

**WHAT A BLESSING THOUGH, I HAVE YOU**

CATHY.

**FEEL LIKE I'VE KNOWN YOU FOREVER TOO**

**IS THIS REAL OR JUST PRETEND?**

**STILL I CAN CALL YOU MY FRIEND**

JEANNE & CATHY.

**HAVE YOU BEEN WITH ME ALL MY LIFE?**

**WILL YOU BE WITH ME ALL MY LIFE?**

CATHY. Jeanne? Does your mom get mad when you tell her about the voices?

JEANNE. I tell no one of my voices, Catherine. If my father knew what I had been told and what I planned to do, he would disown me, or have me killed.

CATHY. But you listen to them anyway?



JEANNE. I ignore them at my peril. As would you, my lady. What does Saint Michael ask of you, when he comes to you to speak?

CATHY. Mike? Well, lately, he's been talking about— water, but—

JEANNE. This river?

CATHY. I guess so. There's this big hog farm over the hill there, spilled a bunch of manure in the creek a few years back and killed all the fish—

JEANNE. A farmer poisoned the water?

CATHY. Oh, yeah. A...big farmer, like—I guess what you'd call a duke? He's got so many thousands of hogs, they make a lake a manure almost every day. No kidding, it's really gross. And most of the time it's, like, pumped into these pipes and canals, for fertilizer? But back in sixth grade, a pipe broke and something like a million tons of manure spilled all over this place. It killed almost everything down here, and it smelled—well, you know.

JEANNE. No doubt the archangel Michael is angry, because a lord who poisons his people is a false lord, my lady, as the English lords in my land are false. (*As they exit.*) I have some questions regarding this commander you say I must meet...

CATHY. From what I've read, it mostly looks like you got to just march up to him and tell him off, Jeanne.

JEANNE (*exiting*). I am to "tell off" a large, formidable soldier? God give me strength.

*(Lights shift to MYRNA in the house, with JACK. She is setting the table, he is diverting her.)*

MYRNA. Was she unfriendly to you, then?

JACK. More like...disengaged.

MYRNA. Well, that's Cathy for you. Always got her head stuck in the clouds.

JACK. Unlike her practical mother.

MYRNA. Believe it or not, I used to be quite the dreamer too, once upon a time. But I have to see things for how they are, now. Have had to, for some time.

JACK. Well, I believe I've made you a very practical offer, ma'am.

MYRNA. Jack. I've lost too much already. That's something you can't understand—

JACK. I understand more than you think. Myrna. I know what it is to be poor, and to think you got nothing. To think you are nothing.

MYRNA. What you're talking about is huge. Huge. Flatten my house. Pave over my land. This is all I have, all I have, and you want to use it to expand your factory—

JACK. Our factory, that's part of the deal. You'd be made a full partner, Myrna. Your land for a partnership in my company.

MYRNA. I don't know anything about hog farming—

JACK. You know a hell of a lot about zoning laws and building permits and the new bills on the docket for factory farm expansions—

MYRNA. I do know that.

JACK. And I know you can use the money. (*As MYRNA scoffs.*) You say Cathy's got learning disabilities... couldn't she use a tutor? You say she's troubled, talks to herself. Well, how 'bout if you could afford to get her help? Look. Right now we can get a loan from the federal government—close to three million dollars—to ex-

pand the factory over your land here. But we gotta jump on it. (*As she tries to interrupt.*) I could use the loan, the town could use the expansion and you—you and Cathy could use a sea change, Myrna. Don't deny it. I can have my lawyer draw up the papers next week.

MYRNA. I—I can't make up my mind that fast, Jack. There's an awful lot to consider—

JACK.

**LISTEN, MYRNA, NOW YOU GOTTA OPEN YOUR  
MIND  
LIFE IS GONNA OPEN UP TO YOU WHEN YOU  
FINALLY SAY  
YOU'RE GONNA COME MY WAY**

MYRNA.

**WAY TOO FAST, SLOW DOWN  
WE NEED SOLID GROUND**

JACK.

**GROUND YOUR DREAMS IN REALITY  
MAKE THEM ALL ACTUALITIES AND LIVE  
JUST GIVE YOUR LIFE A CHANCE**

MYRNA.

**CHANCES ARE THERE'S MORE**

JACK. Give it a chance—

MYRNA.

**BUT I'VE BEEN WRONG BEFORE**

JACK.

**BEFORE YOU MAKE UP YOUR MIND...**

MYRNA. Jack, we need to talk, I...

JACK.

**PLEASE LET ME JUST REMIND YOU**

MYRNA. Wait a minute here...

JACK.

**YOU WILL HAVE TIME TO SPEND**

MYRNA. Time?

JACK.

**TIME WITH FRIENDS**

MYRNA. Friends?

JACK.

**TIME TO BE WITH YOUR DAUGHTER**

MYRNA.

**MY DAUGHTER**

JACK.

**TIME JUST TO REST**

MYRNA.

**OH JACK I'M SO TIRED, I NEED A REST**

JACK.

**SIT BACK AND I'M MAKING SURE  
YOUR LIFE IS THE BEST**

I've gotten where I am by doing, Myrna, not by sitting around thinking. You want more—you gotta take more, and damn the torpedoes.

MYRNA. I don't—

JACK. The potential—for everyone—is almost limitless. You could make that happen, if you just join forces with me.

MYRNA. I...wow, Jack.

**THE REST OF MY LIFE JUST DOESN'T LOOK SO  
BRIGHT  
BUT NOW THERE MIGHT BE JUST A LITTLE  
TINY LIGHT AHEAD  
MIGHT WANNA USE MY HEAD**

JACK.

**HEAD ON OUT WITH ME  
COME WITH ME, YOU'LL SEE**

MYRNA.

**I SEE IT NOW, MY LIFE HAS BEEN SO HARD  
BEEN TRYIN' AND TRYIN' TO GET OVER ALL  
THE WOUNDS AND SCARS  
BUT NOW THERE'S MOON AND STARS**

JACK.

**AND FANCY CARS**

MYRNA.

**AND SLEEPING IN**

JACK.

**AND WE BOTH WIN**

MYRNA.

**COULD BE SO GRAND**

JACK.

**WITH PEN IN HAND  
YOU STAKE YOUR CLAIM  
JUST SIGN YOUR NAME**

MYRNA.

**I'LL THINK ABOUT IT**

*(Lights change to CATHY at the creek. It is dark. JASON enters with a telescope.)*

CATHY. Who's there?

JASON. That you, Cathy?

CATHY. Jason? What are you doing at Angel Creek this time of night?

JASON. I was gonna have a look at the sky.

CATHY. That a telescope?

JASON. Yeah. Am I bothering you?

CATHY. Can I look through it?

JASON. After I get it set up. *(He does so, while they talk.)*

CATHY. I didn't know you had a telescope.

JASON. Got a job over the summer. Cleaning pens for Jack DeCastro over at the hog farm.

CATHY. Yuck!

JASON. Yeah, it sucked. But... My dad's been sick, and DeCastro let me help out. Paid me under the table, cash.

CATHY. That was nice.

JASON. It was hard. But I bought this. I like the stars, always have. *(He aims the telescope and lets CATHY look through it at different points in the sky.)*

**FROM FAR AWAY**

**THEY LOOK SO SIMPLE**

**JUST PRETTY LITTLE LIGHTS IN THE BLACK**

**FROM FAR AWAY, THEY'RE ALL THE SAME**

**JUST A BUNCH OF WHITE STARS BLINKIN'**

**BACK**

**BUT LOOK UP CLOSE**

**IN THIS TELESCOPE**

**I'LL TELL YOU WHAT YOU'RE GONNA FIND**

**WORLDS EXPLODING AND GALAXIES**

**FLOATING**

**AND COLORS OF EVERY SINGLE KIND**

**IF YOU NEVER STOP TO LOOK UP CLOSE**

*(She and JASON make eye contact and look away.)*

**YOU'LL MISS THE STUFF THAT YOU WANNA**

**SEE THE MOST**

**MORNING STAR, EVENING STAR, WISH UPON A**

**STAR**

**CAMPING WITH MY DAD**

**OUT UNDER THE STARS**

**HE SHOWED ME HOW TO FIND MY WAY**

**AND THAT'S WHY I BOUGHT**

**THIS TELESCOPE**

**WITH SAVINGS FROM MY TAKE-HOME PAY**

**YOU LOOK UP THERE**

**THROUGH THE ENDLESS AIR**

**YOU CAN LOSE YOURSELF IN THAT AMAZING**

**PLACE**

**AND IF YOU KNOW**

**JUST HOW TO LOOK  
THEY CAN TELL YOU WHERE YOU ARE IN  
SPACE**

**IF YOU NEVER WONDER WHERE YOU ARE  
YOU'LL GET SO LOST, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR  
GUIDING STAR  
SHOOTING STAR, FALLING STAR, WISH UPON A  
STAR**

**I WATCH AT NIGHT  
AND THRILL AT THE SIGHT  
OF SOMETHING SO MUCH BIGGER THAN ME  
IT'S SO FAR AWAY  
FROM WHAT I DID TODAY  
BUT I'M RIGHT THERE IN THAT MYSTERY**

**IF YOU NEVER STOP TO LOOK UP CLOSE  
YOU'LL MISS THE STUFF THAT YOU WANNA  
SEE THE MOST  
RISING STAR, LUCKY STAR, WISH UPON A  
STAR  
EVENING STAR, MORNING STAR, WISH UPON A  
STAR**

CATHY (*looking through the telescope*). It's not one star at all! It's two!

JASON. That's a binary system.

CATHY. It looks like just one without the telescope.

JASON. They circle around each other. Connected by gravity, or dark matter. Or just because. (*Beat.*) Turns out there is such a thing as a marsh mallow plant.

CATHY. I know.



JASON. I looked it up on the Internet when I got home.

The roots taste like candy.

CATHY. So does the sap—

JASON. You were right and I was—

CATHY. A jerk.

JASON. Yeah. *(Beat.)* How come you're out so late?

CATHY. You can see Jack DeCastro's Cadillac in the driveway from here.

JASON. At my house there's nothing but medicine in the refrigerator. And my mom and dad were fighting again so it seemed like a good time to check out.

CATHY. Your dad's real sick, huh?

*(MIKE enters and sits quietly by the creek.)*

JASON. We don't know if he'll get better. It's funny how he needs so much help, and it's like we're all just—angry about it and fight all the time.

CATHY. That's how it was with Mike.

JASON. I was sorry when he died. I guess I was too embarrassed to tell you that when it happened.

CATHY. That's okay. *(Beat.)* You still working for Mr. DeCastro?

JASON. Not since school started. If I never had to go back there!

CATHY. Is it all horrible?

JASON *(accompanied by appropriate shrieks from CATHY)*. You're closed in with a hundred thousand pigs, Cathy, and, well, the smell in that place is so bad— Your nose and eyes start running from the time you walk in the door. You gotta wear these big, hot rubber boots and rubber gloves, because if you're not step-

ping in piles and piles of manure, you're slipping in rivers of—

CATHY. Ew! Stop!

JASON. You never really think about manure until you're knee-deep in the stuff all day and then it's like you can't ever really get the taste out of the back of your mouth. There's something wrong with that place. (*MIKE cups his hand to drink from the creek.*)

CATHY (*to MIKE*). You shouldn't do that!

JASON. Do what?

CATHY. I mean, you shouldn't say that.

JASON. DeCastro is all about cutting corners and making money. His factory's like a crappy little concentration camp, only worse. The cement reservoir he's got to hold all the waste? It's older than me, it's got all kinds of cracks. And the pumping system for the manure pipes—it's made out of aluminum, and dents in a rainstorm—

CATHY. He was supposed to replace all that old stuff after that spill happened down here—

JASON. Yeah, well. He makes a lot of money, Cathy, but he pays out as little as possible—whether it's in bad feed, or bad materials...or underage labor. It's not just me, either. My mom'll tell you stories about the chicken factory that're worse.

CATHY. Someone should shut him down, then.

JASON. You heard Chris's report. The factory shuts down, and you might as well shut down the county.

MIKE. You hear what he's saying?

CATHY (*to MIKE*). Oh, just be quiet!

JASON. You don't like me much, do you, Cathy?

CATHY. Oh, no! I mean, well—I...wouldn't say I hate you...exactly.