

Excerpt Terms & Conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

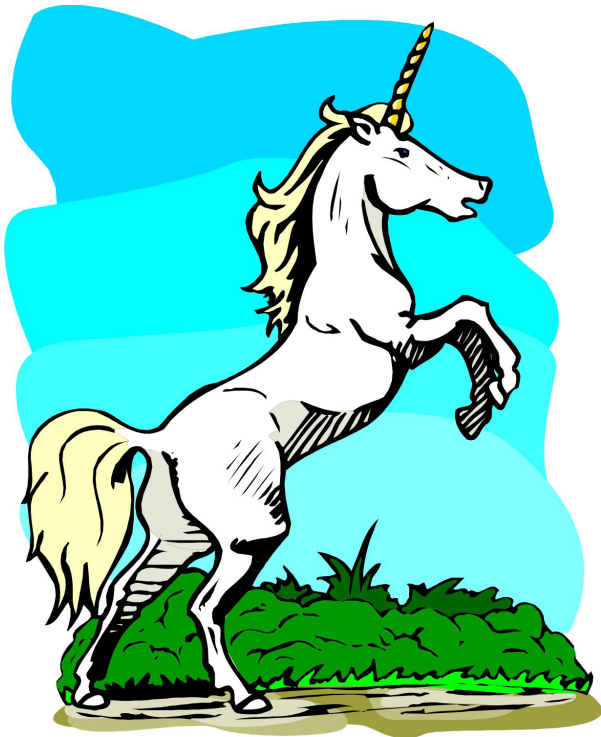
Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity of scripts.

Family Plays

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

**OR, HOW THE UNICORN
LOST HIS SPOT**



Comedy/Drama by H. Michael Krawitz

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

OR, HOW THE UNICORN LOST HIS SPOT

Comedy/Drama. By H. Michael Krawitz. *Cast: 2m., 2w., extras.* Have you ever seen a unicorn? No? Well, do you know why? This delightful little play tells you why. You see, when Noah was nearly finished building his ark, he advertised for animals to apply for space. Larry, a male unicorn, wanted to take the cruise, but his wife thought it was a ridiculous idea. Larry struggled with the problem—he even considered faking a mate, but ... well, you already know he missed the boat. That's why there are no unicorns today. The scenes leading up to the departure of the ark without Larry provide an exquisite comedy for all theatres and a good lesson for the audience: Many people miss the boat because they can't make up their minds. *The author designed this play to be a "cartoon for the stage." Sets and costumes should be colorful, and movement and dialogue should sparkle. Casting notes: The play may be performed by as few as four people—two men and two women. Or it may have a large cast by adding other animals on their way to the ark. Places where these additional animals might appear are indicated in the script. One ext. set. Time: a few minutes before the flood. Approximate running time: 25 minutes. Code: CK6.*

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098-3308
Phone: (800) 448-7469 / (815) 338-7170
Fax: (800) 334-5302 / (815) 338-8981

www.FamilyPlays.com

ISBN-10 0-88680-021-8
ISBN-13 978-0-88680-021-5



The Chance of a Lifetime
Or, How the Unicorn
Lost His Spot

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME
Or, How the Unicorn Lost His Spot

**A Cartoon for the Theatre
In One Act**

By H. MICHAEL KRAWITZ

Family Plays
311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by FAMILY PLAYS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website www.FamilyPlays.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: FAMILY PLAYS, 311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

© 1981 by
H. MICHAEL KRAWITZ

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME)

ISBN: 978-0-88680-021-5

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author(s) of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author(s) *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author(s), if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
Family Plays of Woodstock, Illinois”

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

NOAH, *an old Jewish seaman*

MRS. NOAH, *his wife*

LARRY, *a unicorn*

MARILYN, *a beautiful, charming extinct animal*

Other animals if desired

The action takes place on a wharf leading to the ark. The time is a few minutes before the Flood.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME was first produced at the Roundhouse Dinner Theatre in Manchester, Vermont, under the direction of Josephine R. Abady as part of an evening of one-act plays by the author under the general title “Just So So Stories.”

ABOUT THE PLAY

Have you ever seen a unicorn? No? Well, do you know why? This delightful little play tells you why: The unicorn missed the boat.

Isn't that what happens to so many people who can't make up their minds? And according to this play, the unicorn's unwillingness to cooperate also caused another animal to become extinct. Ironically, history doesn't even record the species of this other, more intelligent animal (identified in this script only as Marilyn). How much history do you suppose has been changed—or unchanged—because a wise person was unable to persuade skeptical associates to act?

The author designed this play to be a “cartoon for the stage.” Sets and costumes should be colorful, and movement and dialogue should sparkle. The play may be performed by as few as four people—two men and two women. Or it may have a large cast. The author intended for the unicorn (Larry) to be played by two people, costumed in much the same manner as the dancing horses in vaudeville acts. The same goes for the other extinct animal (Marilyn); if desired, Noah's wife can fill the rear of Marilyn's costume. See more information about costumes in the Production Notes at the back of this book.

If the producer wants a larger cast, other animals may be added—animals on their way to the ark. Places where these additional animals might appear are indicated in the script. These additions are strictly optional. The play was originally performed without them.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Properties

Straw hat and cane—Noah
 Folding beach chair, Hebrew newspaper—Mrs. Noah
 Coil of rope—on wharf

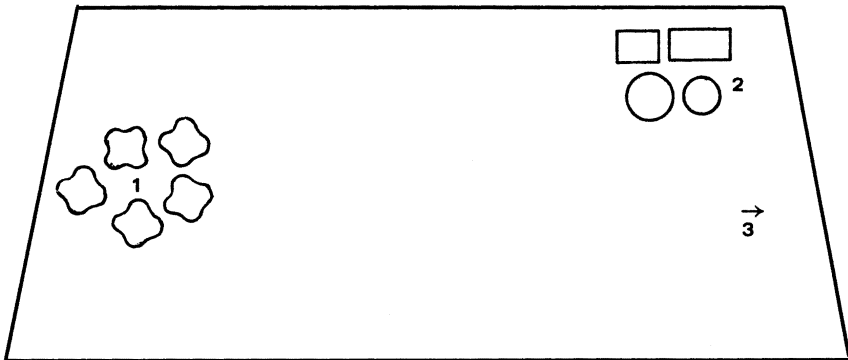
Costumes

Animal costumes may be the two-person type used for dancing horses in vaudeville acts. The rear end of Marilyn's costume may double as Mrs. Noah. Larry's costume should resemble a modern horse, with the addition of the unicorn horn on the forehead. Marilyn's costume should be very brightly colored, perhaps with big polka dots. Since Marilyn is an extinct animal that history has forgotten, the costumer can use free rein in designing her apparel, but she should be very beautiful. Neither Larry nor Marilyn should have the face obscured by a mask. If background animals are used, they should be recognizable—perhaps bears, apes, ostriches, etc. Care must be taken that these extra animals do not interfere with the main action of the play.

Special Effects

It is about to rain for 40 days and 40 nights. Thunder gets louder as the play builds toward its climax. The sound of falling rain accompanies the final dimming of the lights or closing of the curtain.

The Set



1—copse of cartoon-like trees

2—Optional—a stack of boxes and/or barrels, obviously for some other boat since the ark is already loaded

3—Optional—a sign pointing offstage: "Noah's Ark"

Other set decorations as desired—trees and hills as a backdrop, for example, or a sky drop

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

By H. Michael Krawitz

[A wharf. Softly rolling THUNDER is heard in the background and clouds are gathering. There is a small copse of trees. A man appears on the dock. He is dressed in a long toga, with sandals, and he has white hair and beard. It is NOAH. After a pause, he produces a straw hat and cane and speaks like a barker at a carnival sideshow]

NOAH. OK! Listen up. This is the cruise director talking to you. Don't miss out on this once-in-a-lifetime chance. Be the first couple of your species on the dock and win an all-expense paid luxury cruise around the world for forty days and forty nights. Remember, this cruise is for couples only! *[Aside]* After that last weekend at Sodom and Gomorrah, forget the singles. *[In a businesslike monotone—the “fine print” in the contract]* This offer is prohibited to all homo sapiens, their families and representatives. Management relinquishes all responsibility for personal property. No stops will be made except those duly noted on the scheduled itinerary. *[If a larger cast is desired, pairs of animals carrying suitcases or bedrolls may cross the stage in the background from time to time, headed for the ark, as indicated below]*

MRS. NOAH. *[Appears on the wharf]* Noah, have you been making that spiel again? *[She unfolds a beach chair, sits, and glances at a Hebrew newspaper]*

NOAH. What “spiel”? I gotta do it.

MRS. NOAH. Who says you “gotta” do it. *[THUNDER up and under]*

NOAH. He says.

MRS. NOAH. He says. He says. Everything is what He says. You should have listened years ago to the advice my father gave you. “Never go in with a partner.”

NOAH. Stop complaining, will you? You should be happy I'm in this business. Instead of working from dawn till dusk for the past year, cutting trees, mixing pitch, forging nails, sweating and straining, we might have been out with all the other "people" drinking, gambling, cheating, swearing, adulterating . . .

MRS. NOAH. *[Interrupting wistfully]* Yeah . . .

NOAH. Don't say that. He might hear you.

MRS. NOAH. He might hear. He might this, He might that. Noah, you should have gone into business for yourself. He has made you a nervous wreck.

NOAH. Better a nervous wreck on a dry ark than a soggy, drunken, adulterous gambler on a flooded planet.

MRS. NOAH. Noah, you know what I think? And I don't want you to get excited. But I think you're suffering from nervous exhaustion. *[He begins to protest]* No, really. Really, Noah. Now think about it rationally. How do you know the planet is going to be flooded? How do you know?

NOAH. He told me.

MRS. NOAH. He told you. How can you trust anyone so implicitly? Tell me one thing. Have you got anything with Him in writing? Huh? Have you?

NOAH. Well, no . . .

MRS. NOAH. No! Aha! Nothing in writing. So what if it doesn't rain for thirty days and thirty nights?

NOAH. Forty.

MRS. NOAH. Forty, thirty, fifty! What if it doesn't?

NOAH. So, I'll have a big boat filled with cranky animals. So what?

[There is a pause in the argument. (If desired, a pair of animals may cross in the background, carrying suitcases, headed for the ark.) A UNICORN enters, looks around. He is totally ignored by the Noahs. MRS. NOAH is the first to break the silence]

MRS. NOAH. Noah, you are hopeless. Hopeless. You

know that? What about the investment, the capital, to say nothing of the man hours to say nothing of the woman hours.

NOAH. *[Simply]* He won't let me down.

MRS. NOAH. Hah! How do you know?

NOAH. I have faith in Him, that's all. You have to have faith in something in this world and I have faith in Him.

MRS. NOAH. Noah, you are hopeless.

NOAH. So, I'm hopeless.

MRS. NOAH. *[Looks at sky]* Some partner! He couldn't even give us a nice day to leave. *[She almost goes off]* Oh, yeah. We got a problem. We got four rabbits in 37B instead of two.

NOAH. *[He is tired]* So, we got four rabbits. What could happen? *[THUNDER up and under]* You, uh better, uh . . .

MRS. NOAH. Don't worry, I'll handle it. *[To herself]* Hopeless! *[She exits]*

LARRY. *[Approaches Noah]* Excuse me.

NOAH. Yeah?

LARRY. Could you tell me what time it is?

NOAH. Sorry, it's too cloudy, my sun dial won't work.

LARRY. Oh. *[Pause]* Say, I was listening to what you were saying before.

NOAH. *[Anxiously attentive, wondering just how much was heard]* Oh, you were?

LARRY. Yes, I couldn't help overhearing some of the conversation.

NOAH. I see.

LARRY. I especially liked the part about having faith.

NOAH. You did?

LARRY. Oh yeah. I've got faith.

NOAH. You mean you've got faith in Him?

LARRY. Sure. I'm here, aren't I?

NOAH. Yeah, you've got a point there. *[Pause as LARRY looks away, a bit embarrassed. NOAH clears his throat]* Well, why don't you get on board. We only got a few rooms left with portholes.

LARRY. Gee, I'd like to but . . . *[looks around]*

NOAH. Yeah, I see You're all alone. What happened to the little woman?

LARRY. Well, she said she wanted to pack a few things. She'll be here though.

NOAH. Uh huh. Oh sure.

LARRY. Oh no. Hey, listen, she'll be here. She really will. She's a little slow but she's no quitter. Uh uh, not her.

NOAH. Sure, kid. Take it easy. I understand. *[Beat]* You've got a lot of faith in her.

LARRY. Oh yeah. I mean if a guy doesn't have faith in his wife, who can he have faith in? *[NOAH looks skyward]* Well, Him too. *[Another pair of animals may cross in the background. If so, NOAH may see them, motivating his next speech]*

NOAH. Look, kid, I gotta run. I got a million things to do, you know?

LARRY. Sure.

NOAH. I hope she turns up.

LARRY. Oh, she'll be here.

NOAH. Listen, kid, we're gonna have to leave pretty soon, y'know. And we gotta get the passenger lists made up and all. I mean what's the talk around? Are a lotta guys waitin' till the last minute to make plans or what?

LARRY. Gee, I really couldn't . . .

NOAH. Come on, kid, I need to know.

LARRY. Well, I'll tell you. There's an awful lot of skepticism going around these days.

NOAH. Yeah, I know.

LARRY. I bumped into George and Harry the other day at the old waterhole. You know George, the sabre tooth tiger—and Harry, the woolly mammoth?

NOAH. I know Harry. He's been a big help moving cedar trees.

LARRY. Well, to make a long story short, those guys aren't coming down here.

NOAH. Too bad.

LARRY. Right! I told 'em they were crazy. This trip is a great deal.

NOAH. Yeah.

LARRY. They said they were too busy. But I know for a fact that Harry couldn't stand being on a boat for forty days and forty nights with his wife.

NOAH. Don't get along, huh?

LARRY. Well, let's put it this way. How would you like to share a stateroom for forty days and nights with a woolly mammoth?

NOAH. Yeah, I see what you mean. Forty days and nights. In the rain too.

LARRY. How's that?

NOAH. *[He could kick himself]* Oh, nothing.

LARRY. You say something about rain?

NOAH. I might have mentioned it, why?

LARRY. Well, I mean forty days and nights of rain. I mean that's a lot of rain. That could make some flood. It could flood the whole world. In fact the only place where you wouldn't drown would be on your boat.

NOAH. Yeah, it would. *[Getting hold of himself]* I mean if it were to happen.

LARRY. Yeah! *[Thinking about it]* Maybe I better go warn the guys. *[Thunder up and under]*

NOAH. Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Don't panic, will ya? You wanna cause a stampede here? It's all just a simple little promotional cruise, that's all. The first couple of each species. You go shootin' off your mouth, you're liable to lose your place for your species. *[Looking him over]* Say, what kind of a . . .

LARRY. A unicorn.

NOAH. Well, I bet there would be lots of other of you unicorn guys rushin' down here if they was to know about this deal.

LARRY. Well, how come you're only allowing one couple of each species anyway?