

Excerpt terms and 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.

Dramatic Publishing

SUNDAY GOLD

A Play in Two Acts
by
JOANNA H. KRAUS



Dramatic Publishing
Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty fees are given in our current catalog and are subject to change without notice. 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. All inquiries concerning amateur and stock rights should be addressed to:

DRAMATIC PUBLISHING
P. O. Box 129, Woodstock, Illinois 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 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.

©MCMXCVIII by
JOANNA H. KRAUS

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(SUNDAY GOLD)

ISBN 0-87129-867-8

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 this book, may be used on all programs. *On all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SUNDAY GOLD was commissioned by The Raleigh Little Theatre in partnership with the North Carolina Museum of History. The project was supported by a grant from the North Carolina Arts Council and a grant from the United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County with additional support from the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. After the premiere in November 1996, a professional production (spring 1997), produced by RLT, toured educational institutions and museums throughout North Carolina. It was a winner in the AATE (American Alliance for Theatre and Education) 1997 Unpublished Play Reading Project.

Workshop Production, June 8 and 9, 1996

CAST

LIZZIE JOHNSON Natalie Ford
ZEB JOHNSON Phil Crone
MARY CATHARINE JOHNSON Kathleen Rudolph
ANNIE Tiffany Finch
DANIEL SCOTT Anthony Finch
DR. THORNTON Jim Sullivan
MATTHEW MARTIN Anthony Hefner
ADAM Tracy Hoggard

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director Richard P. King
Assistant to the Director Ellen Landau
Stage Manager Elizabeth Baldwin
Scenic Designer Brent A. Menchinger

Premiere Production, November 15-17 and 22-24, 1996

CAST

LIZZIE JOHNSON Jennifer Bobbitt
ZEB JOHNSON Scott Renz
MARY CATHARINE JOHNSON Kathleen Rudolph
ANNIE Lauren Hillari-Marie Greene
DANIEL SCOTT Anthony Finch
DR. THORNTON Carroll Credle
ADAM Tracy Hoggard

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director Richard P. King
Scenic Designer Brent A. Menchinger
Costume Designer Guy Lee Bailey
Lighting/Sound Effects Designer and Technical Director
Kirt Landry
Music Designer Harlan Needham and Jon Newlin
Stage Manager Ellen Landau

SUNDAY GOLD

A Play in Two Acts
For 3 Women and 3 or 4 Men

CHARACTERS

LIZZIE JOHNSON. A rocker girl, strong-minded,
impulsive, 12.

ZEB JOHNSON Lizzie's father, a laborer,
focused on his own needs, 32.

MARY CATHARINE JOHNSON. Lizzie's mother,
pragmatic, 28.

ANNIE A hired-out slave, feisty, resourceful, 12-15.

DANIEL SCOTT* Owner of store, craftsman.
Free African-American, 50s.

DR. THORNTON. Kindly, progressive, mid-30s.

ADAM*. A hired-out slave, 30s.

* Can be played by same actor.

TIME: Summer, late 1840s.

PLACE: The mining town of Gold Hill, N.C.

Approximate running time: One hour

THE ACTS

ACT ONE

Scene One:	Main Street
Scene Two:	The Johnsons' home
Scene Three:	The rocker area.
Scene Four:	The mine shaft.

ACT TWO

Scene One:	The Johnsons' home.
Scene Two:	Creekside.
Scene Three:	The Johnsons' home.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

SCENE: A unit set with levels and suggested set pieces to depict a mining town.

AT RISE: A dark stage. Shining, suspended in the air is a large rough-hewn gold nugget. LIGHT comes up slowly, silhouetting "single jacks" [miners] at work, a kibble [large iron bucket], someone panning creekside, LIZZIE JOHNSON on a rocker. SOUND: sledge hammer of drills, ringing of pickaxes, rumble of explosions as ACTORS begin to move; SOUND: a clanging of bell. Some ACTORS exit climbing up narrow shaft ladder. One comes up seated on the rim of a kibble. LIGHT comes up on LIZZIE as she rocks one last time, checks the rocker and leaves. LIZZIE, barefoot, crosses down Main Street swinging a gray, tin round-lidded lunch pail by its wire handle. She stops transfixed outside Scott Shoe Company. She gazes at a magnificent pair of red leather ankle boots in the window. They are trimmed in black patent at the heel and toe and are fastened with round, black-domed buttons made of glass. She is mesmerized. DANIEL SCOTT crosses to doorway.

DANIEL. Evenin', Miss Lizzie.

LIZZIE. Evenin', Daniel.

DANIEL. Just gettin' ready to close up. Something I can help you with?

LIZZIE. Them boots...are they for someone...in particular?

DANIEL. Made them for Mr. Coffin's daughter, Miss Victoria. (*Looks down the street.*) Supposed to show up and try them on.

LIZZIE. They're the most beautiful boots I ever saw!

DANIEL. Are they now? I don't mind telling you they're the finest pair of ladies' boots I ever made. Best kid leather I could find, and that's real patent leather on the heel and toe. And see those little black-domed buttons, Miss Lizzie? (*She nods, transfixed.*) They're glass. Glass from Bohemia. Bought them from a peddler passin' through. (*Takes one out of the window.*) Why these boots are so soft a kitten could curl up in 'em and sleep tight. (*Holds out the boot, LIZZIE touches it reverently.*)

LIZZIE. How much...does a pair...like them cost?

DANIEL. Mighty costly.

LIZZIE. I'm working now at the mine.

DANIEL. Aren't you too young to be doing that?

LIZZIE. I turned twelve last week, Pa got me the job.

DANIEL. Doing what?

LIZZIE. All those last specs of gold, I just rock 'em all out. Pa says it's important.

DANIEL. Your pa's right. No point in him and all the miners diggin' the gold out of the ground and then losing it. So you turned twelve. Reckon your feet done all the growin' they're going to do. You tell your pa I got some sturdy sensible shoes here if he's a mind to get you some. (*DANIEL points to ugly, graceless stout black shoes. LIZZIE focuses on the red boots.*)

LIZZIE. In all my life I ain't never seen anything like them boots!

DANIEL. Why's that, Miss Lizzie?

LIZZIE. Them boots, they could take you anywhere in the whole wide world. Anywhere.

DANIEL. Reckon you're right. After the weddin', Miss Victoria's travelin'.

LIZZIE. Travelin'? My pa said she just got back!

DANIEL. That was from the academy in Salisbury. Made all Miss Victoria's shoes while she was away at school. (*Looks down the street again.*) Been waitin' on her all afternoon.

LIZZIE (*sighs*). It must be grand to read and write and wear boots like that. If'n she decides she don't want 'em—

DANIEL. The trouble with a gold mining town, Miss Lizzie, is some folks get rich and some folks don't. But everyone starts wantin' things they don't need and can't have.

LIZZIE. Can't, Daniel?

DANIEL. Now you think about them other shoes, Miss Lizzie. Just right for a rocker girl. (*DANIEL has returned boots to the window, locks his door, tips his hat.*) Evenin', Miss Lizzie.

LIZZIE. Evenin', Daniel. (*DANIEL exits. LIZZIE reluctantly leaves the unattainable boots, turning once to look back before she exits. LIGHT fades on shoe store.*)

SCENE TWO

SCENE: *The Johnsons' rented one bedroom log cabin which rests on a stone foundation. The log cracks are sealed with mud. The home has an earthen floor, a log mantel over a stone fireplace and a wood-shingled roof.*

AT RISE: *LIGHT comes up on MARY CATHARINE, practical, weary and expecting another child. She removes the bread that has been baking in a pan on a flat stone and stirs greens in a huge iron pot hanging near the stone hearth. Wiping her hands on her full apron, she goes to the door which is latched with a piece of rope.*

MARY (*calling into the darkness*). Lizzie. Lizzie. Elizabeth Anne Johnson. Girl, don't keep me callin' you.

(*LIZZIE enters lugging two pails.*)

LIZZIE. I'm here, Ma. Had to fill two buckets. Why do we need so much water?

MARY. Washin', cleanin', cookin'.

LIZZIE. Ma, you know the water that's at the bottom of the mine?

MARY. Your pa comes home with half of it in his clothes every night!

LIZZIE. Suppose they could send it right from the mine to our home. Like having a creek inside.

MARY. It would run over the floor.

LIZZIE. Make it easier.

MARY. Might as well get hot water without a fire while you're dreamin'. (*They laugh companionably as they*

prepare the evening meal.) Lizzie, Lizzie, Lizzie! You always want to make things better than they are. It'd be better if you take things as they is.

LIZZIE. I just got to thinkin', Ma. I bet we both walk a few miles each day to get water.

MARY. Elizabeth Ann Johnson, life wasn't meant to be easy. Thank the Lord there's no drought. At least we don't have that to worry about.

LIZZIE. I ain't complainin', Ma. But it seems like the good things in this world ain't evenly divided.

MARY (*continues to work, looks up*). Lizzie, mind the soup.

LIZZIE (*stirs soup*). Ma, didn't you have dreams when you was young?

MARY. Ain't got no time for dreams. Your pa's the dreamer. A family can't take but more than one. (*Under the next few speeches, they finish the preparation of supper, set table, etc.*)

LIZZIE. Ma, did you ever see anything so beautiful it made you catch your breath?

MARY. Sunrise in the mountains. Lordy, I miss that. Gold Hill is sure one ugly place. Dead tree stumps. Broken rocks. Torn-up earth. Like we wasn't meant to be here at all.

LIZZIE. What else, Ma?

MARY. Your little brother. When he smiled I felt a bit of heaven in the room.

LIZZIE. Tell me about him. When I squeeze my eyes, I can't see his face no more. Is that what forgettin' means?

MARY. His hair was the color of corn silk, and his eyes, they was just like the sky. The sky come summer. Clear

and blue. Oh, your pa loved him something fierce. When he died, something in your pa died too. And then the rains came that August, flood rains near to killed the few crops we had. One day he packed up the cart, and we came here. "A new start," your pa said. (*Smiles secretly.*) Now, don't you be tellin' everyone. Ain't even told your pa yet. But there'll be another little brother afore next year.

LIZZIE. Ma! How soon?

MARY. Sometime afore Christmas I 'spect.

LIZZIE. You gonna put a ribbon on him and give it to Pa as a present?

MARY (*laughs*). Well now, I might just do that. Might just find some pretty blue ribbon.

LIZZIE. Ma, how do you know it'll be a brother?

MARY (*firmly*). Your pa wants a boy. (*Affectionately.*) Now, what'd you see today that was so beautiful? (*SOUND: ZEB coming up the path.*) Oh, there's your pa.

(*LIZZIE scurries to get basin of warm water, soap and towel. ZEB JOHNSON, a self-centered dreamer, enters and sits down. MARY and LIZZIE remove his muddy miner's boots. MARY takes his jacket. LIZZIE gives him the basin of water, so he can wash.*)

MARY. Tired, Zeb?

ZEB (*nods*). My ears are still ringin' from the blastin'.

MARY. And your jacket's soaked through. Ain't there some way to get rid of all that water drippin' down?

ZEB. It's worse on the floor. Even with all this heat, my feet near froze today. But it's all gonna change, Mary Catharine. The owners are bringin' over a Cornish

pump. Heard it cost a few thousand dollars. Said it's got a steam engine.

LIZZIE. A steam engine.

ZEB. They say we'll be as dry as toast, and they ought to know. They used it in Cornwall minin' copper.

LIZZIE. Pa, what's it look like?

ZEB. Don't rightly know, but they're buildin' an engine house for it right now. Probably has a whistle and smoke.

LIZZIE. What color will it be?

ZEB. Machine color. How do I know?

LIZZIE. Can I see it?

MARY. You stay away from the mine shaft, Lizzie. Zeb, it's hard enough raising a pretty girl in a mining town.

LIZZIE. Ma, you never said I was pretty. Am I?

ZEB. Pretty is as pretty does! You work hard all day, Lizzie?

LIZZIE. Yes, Pa. Well, it ain't too hard. I just stand on a board and rock. But the other girl was sick, so it was sorta lonely.

ZEB. Never you mind. Five dollars a month is nothing to sneeze at. High time you helped the family out.

LIZZIE. Pa, I was wonderin' if...if...could some of that money I earned...could some...go to me?

ZEB. It does go to you. You got a roof over your head, food on the table, clothes on your back. What more do you need?

LIZZIE. Shoes.

MARY. She's twelve now. Feet growed. Come December it'll be cold walkin' to work.

ZEB. I'll stop in at the store and find out what they cost.

LIZZIE. I'd like to pick them out myself, Pa.

ZEB. Seems to me you're gettin' pretty particular.

MARY. Lizzie, is that what made you catch your breath? A pair of shoes?

LIZZIE. Oh, Ma, they were the most beautiful boots I ever saw. For Miss Victoria. Red leather, trimmed with black patent at the heel and toe. With little black-domed buttons made of glass. And so soft...so soft a kitten could curl up in 'em.

ZEB (*laughing*). Well, we ain't got any kittens or cats. And if we did, we'd eat 'em.

MARY (*laughing*). And here I was afraid you'd taken a shine to a miner.

ZEB. The day you wear fancy boots, Lizzie, is the day I find a seventeen-pound gold nugget like that Reed fellow over in Cabarrus county.

LIZZIE. Pa, sometimes you want something just because it's beautiful.

ZEB. Rich folks can talk like that. Not poor folks.

LIZZIE. Pa, how did Mr. Reed find that gold nugget?

ZEB. He didn't find it. His son did. Just your age too. Huge rock sitting in a stream. That's an idea, Lizzie. You could go pan for gold Sunday afternoon.

MARY. What I never could understand is how they didn't know it was gold for three years. Used it as a doorstep.

ZEB. And then they swindled the guy.

LIZZIE. How, Pa?

ZEB. A jeweler paid him what he asked for, all right, three dollars and fifty cents, just what Reed reckoned he woulda earned in a week.

LIZZIE. Pa, that's more than I earn in two weeks.

ZEB. But then that Fayetteville jeweler turned around and sold that rock for three thousand, six hundred dollars.