

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.

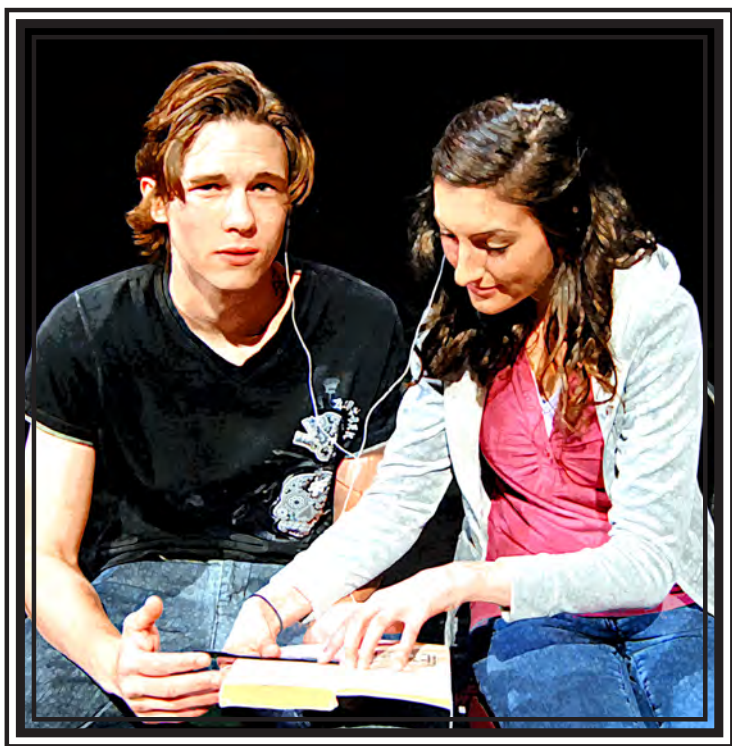
Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

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

Colorized covers are for web display only. Most covers are printed in black and white.

hard 2 spel dad



Drama by
Linda Daugherty and Mary Rohde Scudday
© Dramatic Publishing Company

hard 2 spel dad

Drama. By Linda Daugherty and Mary Rohde Scudday. Cast: 3m., 5w. Imagine that every time you open a book, letters play tricks on you. They flip, they reverse, they jump upside down. Every sentence you read takes so much effort--so much energy--because the letters don't behave. By the time you reach the end of the sentence, you've lost its meaning. You're embarrassed and feel stupid. This is what two young people with learning differences face in *hard 2 spel dad*. Still grieving and angry over the heroic death of her fireman father, 13-year-old Pamela hopes to make a "fresh start" when she and her mother move to a new town to help care for her grandfather. Pamela has a learning difference, dyslexia, and so, she thinks, does her new skateboarding friend Zak, 15 years old and still stuck in middle school. The two young people struggle to read their class assignment, *Romeo and Juliet*, but when, after watching the modern DVD version, Zak passionately retells the entire story, Pamela concocts a scheme she is convinced will show how smart Zak is. When this backfires, Zak, humiliated and angry, seeks solace in prescription drugs and alcohol with near tragic results. But hope triumphs as, finally, Pamela accepts her father's death, Zak's learning difference is diagnosed and addressed and they both look forward to starting high school. *hard 2 spel dad* dramatizes the loss of self-esteem, isolation, and risky behaviors that all too often accompany learning differences. The play will give audiences an understanding of what it feels like to learn differently, the school's critical role in accommodating learning differences, and the strength, courage and perseverance of those who turn these differences into distinctions. Premier production at the Dallas Children's Theater. Area staging. Approximate running time: 1 hour. Code: HA8.

Cover photo: Dallas Children's Theater, Dallas, Texas, featuring Skyy Moore and Kimberly Kottwitz. Photo: Copyright Linda Blase 2010. Cover design: Jeanette Alig-Sergel.

ISBN-10 1-58342-687-6
ISBN-13 978-1-58342-687-6



Dramatic Publishing

311 Washington St.
Woodstock, IL 60098
ph: 800-448-7469

www.dramaticpublishing.com



Printed on recycled paper

© Dramatic Publishing Company

hard 2 spel dad

By

LINDA DAUGHERTY and MARY ROHDE SCUDDAY



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

© Dramatic Publishing Company, Woodstock, Illinois.

*** 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 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.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, 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.

©MMX by
LINDA DAUGHERTY and MARY ROHDE SCUDDAY
Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(hard 2 spel dad)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-687-6

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the authors 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 names of the authors *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 (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on the authors, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

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

hard 2 spel dad premiered at Dallas Children's Theater (Robyn Flatt, Executive Artistic Director) from April 9 through April 25, 2010, directed by Robyn Flatt.

Original Cast

Pop-Pop Larry Randolph*
Evelyn Hanson. Fay Fuselier
Pamela Massey Kimberly Kottwitz / Alex Mutti
Katherine Massey Lisa Schreiner*
Zak Porter Will Altabef / Skyy Moore
Ms. Donahue Sally Fiorello
Annie Porter Amber Devlin
David Porter Steve Jones

Original Production Staff

Scenery Design. Randel Wright
Costume Design Barbara Cox
Sound Design Marco Salinas
Properties Design Jen Spillane
Lighting Design & Production Stage Manager . . Linda Blase*

** Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union for professional actors and stage managers in the United States.*

hard 2 spel dad

CHARACTERS

- POP-POP/Mr. Sperry an elderly man with
Alzheimer's disease
- EVELYN HANSON the caretaker, 40s to 60s
- PAMELA MASSEY girl about 13
- KATHERINE MASSEY Pamela's mother, early 30s
- ZAK PORTER boy about 15
- MS. DONAHUE 30s to 40s
- ANNIE PORTER Zak's mother
- DAVID PORTER Zak's father

hard 2 spel dad

SETTING: *The recent past. A bare stage that becomes various locations.*

AT RISE: *Big Band-era music plays from a boom box. EVELYN sits to the side in sturdy lawn chair, relaxing and reading a book. POP-POP is sitting in his wheelchair center, staring out blankly. After a moment or two he checks his wristwatch.*

EVELYN (*not looking up from her book and talking over the music*). Now you don't need to be looking at your watch. Your family'll be here, Mr. Sperry.

(*POP-POP stares out blankly a moment, then looks at his watch again.*)

EVELYN (*cont'd. Still reading her book*). It's still early. You don't need to get all worked up. You just sit here and enjoy the sunshine, honey.

(*No response from POP-POP. He checks his watch.*)

EVELYN (*cont'd*). You'll get your good vitamin D out here today.

(Annoyed, he jiggles his wrist and looks at his watch. EVELYN turns off the boom box.)

EVELYN *(cont'd. Gently scolding)*. I don't know why you wear that watch. It just upsets you.

(He taps his watch, annoyed. She abruptly closes her book.)

EVELYN *(cont'd)*. See, I can't even finish this chapter. *(Patting him on the shoulder.)* I'll be right back after I put the dishes in.

(POP-POP looks at his watch. EVELYN sighs, lifts his chin to look him in the eyes and gives him a big smile.)

EVELYN *(cont'd)*. You just sit here and enjoy the sunshine, Mr. Sperry. And don't look at that watch!

(She exits. POP-POP stares into space. After a moment he looks at his watch and shakes his head, confused and annoyed. He sighs and, resigned, stares blankly into space. A car horn honks. Sound of car stopping and a car door slamming. PAMELA, excited and happy, rushes on shouting.)

PAMELA. Pop-Pop! Hey, Pop-Pop! We're here! We made it! *(Dropping her stuff.)* We finally made it! *(She enthusiastically spins his wheelchair in a circle. Startled, POP-POP laughs.)*

POP-POP. Hey...hey...hey!

(She stops and, holding his face between her hands, stares at him intently.)

PAMELA *(gently)*. Hello, Pop-Pop, it's me.

POP-POP. Martha!

PAMELA *(clearly and gently)*. No, Pop-Pop, it's not Martha. It's me—*Pamela*. Mom and I are here. We're going to take really good care of you.

(She pecks his cheek and points off.)

PAMELA *(cont'd. Excitedly pouring out of her)*. See? There's Mom. See, by the car? It doesn't look like a car, does it, 'cause we've got so much stuff piled on top? We got all our stuff in. Well, we sold all the furniture. But Mom says you've got too much furniture anyway. Oh, I'm so glad to get out of that car! It took days to get here! *(Patting POP-POP's cheeks affectionately.)* Hey, Pop-Pop, you look so good!

(POP-POP smiles and PAMELA rubs noses with him and he responds.)

POP-POP. Where's Billy?

(PAMELA, frozen, stares at him. After a moment, KATHERINE calls from offstage.)

KATHERINE *(off)*. Pammy!

PAMELA *(coming to and calling off)*. Coming! You like walks, don't you, Pop-Pop? I mean, of course, I know you can't *walk* much. But do you like to *go* on walks?

I'm going to push you all over this town! (*Reaching in her pocket and taking out coins.*) Look, Pop-Pop, I got all these squished pennies—like from four different states. We stopped at all these truck stops and they had these machines that squished them with different pictures. I'm going to collect them. Look at this one with—

(*KATHERINE enters.*)

KATHERINE. Pamela, I need your help.

PAMELA. Mom, look! Pop-Pop looks really happy to see us!

KATHERINE (*preoccupied*). Yeah?

PAMELA. Really, really happy! (*Handing him a penny.*)

Look at this one, Pop-Pop. It's Mt. Rushmore with the presidents' faces. We didn't get to go there but we got the penny. It's my favorite.

(*KATHERINE crosses to POP-POP.*)

KATHERINE (*warmly*). Hi, Dad. How you doing?

(*POP-POP, holding the penny, stares blankly at her.*)

PAMELA. He's doing just great.

KATHERINE (*kneeling before wheelchair*). Dad...it's me.

POP-POP. Martha...?

KATHERINE. No, Dad. It's Katherine...your daughter.

(*POP-POP stares at her blankly. KATHERINE pats his arm gently.*)

KATHERINE (*cont'd. Standing, resigned*). Pamela, come on. We've got a whole car to unpack.

POP-POP. You get Billy to help you.

(*KATHERINE stops a moment, frozen, then continues.*)

KATHERINE (*resigned*). Come on, Pamela. I need you.
(*She exits.*)

PAMELA (*overly cheerful*). Okay, Pop-Pop. We'll be right back. (*With a conjuring gesture.*) *Don't go anywhere!*
Just kidding.

(*PAMELA runs off. POP-POP stares after her. After a moment, ZAK enters on skateboard, stops next to POP-POP and stares in direction of car. He flips skateboard up and catches it, startling POP-POP.*)

ZAK. Hey.

POP-POP. Hey...

ZAK (*still staring in the direction of the car*). What's going on?

POP-POP (*turning to ZAK*). Hey...

ZAK. Mr. Sperry, it's me. It's Zak.

POP-POP. Hey...Zak...

ZAK. Who are those people?

POP-POP. I...don't know...

ZAK. What you got there, Mr. Sperry?

(*POP-POP hands ZAK the penny.*)

ZAK (*cont'd. Examining the penny*). Oh...cool.

(KATHERINE enters, carrying suitcases.)

KATHERINE. Hi.

ZAK. Hi.

(She exits as if into house.)

ZAK *(cont'd. To POP-POP)*. They moving in?

(PAMELA enters with hat, backpack and arms full of stuff.)

PAMELA. Hi. Who are you? Oh, yeah, you live around here, right?

ZAK. Yeah. You moving in here?

PAMELA. Well, duh. What does it look like? *(She drops everything in a pile.)*

ZAK. You going to live here? With the old man?

PAMELA *(annoyed)*. Yeah, with my *grandfather*. *(Taking penny from ZAK.)* And that's Mr. Sperry to you. What's your name anyway?

POP-POP. Zak.

PAMELA *(to ZAK, surprised)*. Yeah?

ZAK. Yeah.

PAMELA *(pulling up POP-POP's hand to "high five")*. Way to go, Pop-Pop!

ZAK. Yeah, way to go, Mr. Sperry. *(To PAMELA.)* What grade you in?

PAMELA. Eighth. And my mom's making me go to school *tomorrow*. I've been in that car for days and we're not even moved in and she's making me go to school *tomorrow*.

ZAK (*turning to go*). Yeah, life's tough. See you later.

PAMELA. Hey, how old are you?

ZAK. Fifteen. (*He skates off.*)

PAMELA (*calling after*). Yeah, well, I know how to skateboard, too!

(*EVELYN enters, drying her hands on her apron.*)

EVELYN (*throwing her arms around PAMELA*). Pamela, baby, let me look at you! My heavens, you have grown! Oh, you're so pretty! Your momma wants you to hurry up and get your stuff inside. Now, come on, I'll help you. (*To POP-POP.*) Come on. You can help, too.

(*She piles boom box and some of PAMELA's stuff in POP-POP's lap. PAMELA picks up her dropped hat and puts it on POP-POP's head. He laughs joyfully.*)

PAMELA. I got him, Miss Evelyn!

EVELYN (*exiting*). That's enough sun for you. Let's not turn your grandfather into a French fry.

PAMELA (*collecting her backpack and pushing POP-POP*). Come on, Pop-Pop. Man, I'm totally starving! Aren't you hungry, Pop-Pop? What do you want to eat? You got peanut butter? I sure hope you've got some peanut butter! (*Pushing POP-POP and continuing to talk, exits.*)

(*Lights cross fade, school bell rings and, with popular music underscoring, ZAK storms on, holding a paper airplane. He angrily throws it into the air and sits apart, head in his hands. From another direction, KATHERINE*

hurries on holding a stack of papers, which she quickly flips through, checking. PAMELA enters with backpack, dragging her heels. Music fades.)

KATHERINE. Okay, this is your classroom. You'll need to give these to your teacher. *(She hands PAMELA a stack of papers.)*

PAMELA *(dropping her backpack on the floor, whining)*.
Oh, Mom—

KATHERINE. Now don't start. I let you sleep in, right? I rushed over here on my lunch hour to get you enrolled. We can't meet with the counselor until tomorrow. Now I've got to get back to work. Pamela, it's a fresh start, new school, be nice.

PAMELA. Mom, I'm always nice.

KATHERINE. You know what I mean.

PAMELA. It's too hard having to start a new school in the middle of the year!

KATHERINE. Pammy, my dad needs me now. He only has me.

PAMELA. And me!

KATHERINE. Right. And we really couldn't afford the house anymore.

PAMELA. I know, Mom, I know. Hey, I wanted to move, too, you know.

KATHERINE. So what's the problem?

PAMELA. The problem is *school*.

KATHERINE. You have to go to school, Pamela. *(No reply from PAMELA.)* "The greater the difficulty, the greater the glory."

PAMELA. Yeah, right.

KATHERINE. Go straight home after school. Miss Evelyn's going to leave at four-thirty. You keep your eye on your grandfather, okay? I'll be home about five. Love you.

PAMELA. Bye, Mom. I love you, too. (*KATHERINE starts to go.*) It's gonna be okay.

(*KATHERINE gives her a hug and exits. PAMELA takes a deep breath, trying to prepare herself. She notices ZAK sitting apart.*)

PAMELA (*cont'd*). Hey, what're you doing out here?

ZAK. Leave me alone.

PAMELA. I mean, what are you doing *here*?

ZAK. What's it look like?

PAMELA. I mean, you're fifteen, right? Why aren't you at the high school?

ZAK. Because I'm stupid.

PAMELA. No, you're not.

ZAK. So why am I still in the eighth grade?

PAMELA. Oh...

ZAK. Aren't you supposed to be in class?

PAMELA. Yeah, unfortunately. (*Looking at schedule.*)

Hey, what kind of teacher's Ms. Donohue?

ZAK (*laughing too loudly*). Oh, man!

(*MS. DONOHUE enters from classroom. ZAK turns away. MS. DONOHUE notices the paper airplane and picks it up.*)

PAMELA. Hello.

MS. DONAHUE. Zak, who's your friend?

(No response from ZAK.)

PAMELA. Hi, I'm Pamela Massey. (*Handing MS. DONAHUE the papers.*) I'm your new student. We just moved here, like yesterday.

MS. DONAHUE. Why don't you go on in, Pamela?

PAMELA. Okay. (*She turns to go and stops, checking schedule.*) Hey, what class is this— Oh, I see, uh, English I. (*To MS. DONAHUE.*) Oh, are you Zak's teacher, too?

MS. DONAHUE. Yes.

PAMELA. Can he come back to class now?

MS. DONAHUE. Go on in, Pamela. I need to talk to Zachariah.

PAMELA (*amused*). Zachariah?

MS. DONAHUE. Go find a desk, Pamela.

(PAMELA exits.)

MS. DONAHUE (*cont'd*). Zak, we need to have a meeting. (*Handing note to ZAK.*) Here's a note for your parents. This is the second time you've taken my English class. You have to keep up with the reading. If you'd just try harder—

ZAK (*stuffing the note in his pocket*). You want me to go back into class now?

MS. DONAHUE. No. I want you to sit out here a little longer and reflect on your behavior. (*Handing paper airplane to ZAK.*) And I want you to finish this essay. And proofread it. You would make a much better grade if you would just check your spelling. When you're done you can come back to class.

(MS. DONAHUE exits into class. Popular music underscores as ZAK sits a moment, smooths out the crumpled paper airplane, looks at it, disgusted, and rips it in two. He takes out his cell phone, texts, looks a moment at the screen, angrily pushes the send button and exits. Lights cross fade as EVELYN pushes on POP-POP as if from inside his house. EVELYN sits and reads newspaper while POP-POP snacks from a bag of goldfish. After a moment, PAMELA enters with a groan, carrying a heavy backpack stuffed with books and drops it on the floor. Music fades.)

EVELYN. My word, what you got there?

PAMELA *(annoyed)*. Books. *(Kissing POP-POP on the cheek.)* Hey, Pop-Pop.

POP-POP. Hey...

EVELYN. How was your first day at Jefferson Junior High?

PAMELA. It's school.

EVELYN. You need all those books?

PAMELA *(opening backpack and pulling out books)*. I guess. This one's for English...this is algebra, earth science, health.

EVELYN. Health?

PAMELA. Yeah. Stuff like AIDS and drugs and safe sex.

EVELYN. Oh, my, Lord. Well, I guess that's good.

PAMELA *(holding up paperback of Romeo and Juliet)*. And this we have to read for English.

EVELYN *(lovingly taking book from her and thumbing through it)*. *Romeo and Juliet*. You ever read it?

PAMELA. No.

EVELYN. Ever seen it?