

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

ZINK: THE MYTH, THE LEGEND, THE ZEBRA

A Play for Young Audiences

by

CHERIE BENNETT

Based on a theme from the Zink the Zebra Foundation and
commissioned by First Stage Milwaukee [Wis.].



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

*** 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.

©MCMXCVIII by
CHERIE BENNETT
Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(ZINK: THE MYTH, THE LEGEND, THE ZEBRA)

ISBN: 0-87129-864-3

The song: "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" by George Weiss, Luigi Creatore and Hugo Pretti, ©1961 Abilene Music Inc., c/o Songwriters Guild of America, ASCAP, used by permission, all other rights reserved.

The song: "ZZZZ Z-Z-Z Zebras of Course" by Chris Gantry, ©1997 Chris Gantry, ASCAP, used by permission, all other rights reserved.

Copyright clearances for all music except the above songs is the responsibility of the producer.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author 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 *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 author, 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”

For my dad, Dr. Bennett H. Berman, who has gone to his
own land of the zebras, but who lives on in my heart,

for my husband, Jeff Gottesfeld, my partner in life and in
art, who brilliantly served as dramaturge for this play,

and

in memory of Kelly Weil.

SCRIPT HISTORY

Zink was commissioned by First Stage Milwaukee (FSM), one of the nation's leading professional equity companies for youth and the family, and was based on a theme suggested by the Zink the Zebra Foundation. FSM offered the commission to the playwright in early 1997. The mission: write a play about a girl with leukemia, zebras, and in keeping with the foundation's mission of promoting diversity in all forms.

The first draft was completed in April and read publicly at FSM in late May. The world premiere was in November 1997 at First Stage Milwaukee, Rob Goodman, Artistic Director.

Chris Gantry, author of many No. 1 country songs, wrote and licensed the song "ZZZZ Z-Z-Z Zebras of Course!" while "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" was licensed by its publisher to the playwright.

The play won the 1997-98 Jackie White Memorial Children's Playwriting Competition based in Columbia, Mo., making the playwright the only two-time winner of that prestigious competition. She previously won the 1995 competition with *John Lennon & Me* (Dramatic Publishing Company, 1996).

ZINK: THE MYTH, THE LEGEND, THE ZEBRA

A Play for Young Audiences
For 11 to 16 or more actors

CHARACTERS

The Humans:

REBECCA (BECKY) ZASLOW A leukemia patient, 10.
DIANE ZASLOW Becky's mother.
TED ZASLOW Becky's father.
LEE ZASLOW Becky's sister/brother, 8.
NURSE PAT (f or m) Becky's nurse.
DARLENE DUNBAR Becky's hospital roommate, 11.
TERRY BELCHER (f or m) Becky's teacher.
ASHLEY CHAFFIN A classmate of Becky's, 10.
SARA BOWDER Ashley's follower, 10.

The Animals:

SHLEP (f or m) A monkey who wants to be a zebra.
PAPA (or MOMMA) ZEKE Leader of the zebras.
ICE Z (f or m) A zebra
who sings lead in the Zenzational Z'Bras.
ZIP (f or m) A member of the Z'Bras trio.
ZAP (f or m) Zip's twin, also in the Z'Bras trio.
ZILCH (f or m) Another zebra.
ZUZI (f) A young zebra.

TIME: Now.

PLACE: The African plains, Becky's home,
Ashley's home, the hospital, Becky's school.

DOUBLING SUGGESTIONS FOR A CAST OF 11:

Becky Zaslow

Diane Zaslow

Ted Zaslow

Lee Zaslow—doubles as Ashley (cast female)

Shlep

Papa/Momma Zeke

Zip

Zap

Zuzi—triples as Sara and Darlene

Zilch—triples as Nurse Pat, Mrs. Belcher

Ice Z

- Color-blind casting is encouraged. Also, there are many opportunities for the director to select the sex of the cast member, as indicated in the cast list.

- The cast can be as small as 11, with doubling as suggested, or as large as 16 or more without doubling, depending on the needs of the producer.

- If the producer chooses to double actors, the doubling actors should not in any way be recognizable as any other character that actor portrays.

- Whenever possible, all actors should serve as extra zebras in all zebra scenes. The more zebras, the better.

- A larger cast version (20 to 25 or more actors) is also available from Dramatic Publishing.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Set

The only definite prop is the tree, as described at the beginning of the play. It is large and should be able to be climbed easily. Otherwise, the set is at the discretion of the production team: simple, with a few easily moveable pieces and careful lighting to indicate location, or as complex as the director and the designer desire. A rocking chair may be a useful item for the director to employ.

Costumes

ZEBRAS' faces should not be obscured. Costumes should allow free movement, with quirky additions that typify the individual personality of each zebra. Zebras walk like people. SHLEP THE MONKEY should be green and able to shed. BECKY can lose her hair by having her put her own hair under a bald cap, covered by a wig from the opening of the play. Then, she need only remove the wig offstage at the appropriate time.

Language

Idiomatic teen language (such as “the bomb,” meaning something is terrific) may be altered at the discretion of the director.

Additional Character Notes

REBECCA (BECKY) ZASLOW: Kind, on a journey where she discovers the indomitable power and spirit of her own heart.

DIANE ZASLOW: Loving, strong, sometimes overpowering, overly protective of her ill daughter.

TED ZASLOW: A policeman. Gentle, loving.

LEE ZASLOW: A regular kid who is scared and angered by Becky's illness.

NURSE PAT: An honest, straightforward, caring nurse.

DARLENE DUNBAR: Also has leukemia. Manipulative, bratty to cover up her fear.

TERRY BELCHER: Earnest and sincere.

ASHLEY CHAFFIN: The prettiest, most popular girl in Becky's class. Conceited. Accustomed to winning.

SARA BOWDER: Tentative, sweet.

SHLEP: A very small, very enthusiastic, green monkey who desperately wants to be a zebra.

PAPA (or MOMMA) ZEKE: Old-school borscht-belt sensibility. Old, smart, impatient, blunt, funny, the elder leader of the zebras.

ICE Z: The coolest of the cool, lead singer in the Zenzational Z'Bras.

ZIP: Also an incredibly cool zebra who sings doo-wop in the Z'Bras trio.

ZAP: The third incredibly cool, doo-wop-singing zebra in the Z'Bras trio.

ZILCH: A pompous, snobby, conceited, zebra.

ZUZI: A very perky, young zebra.

Percussion and Music

On-stage and/or off-stage percussion may be used throughout the play to set mood, add humor, heighten tension, etc. If percussion is not used, music that takes us from scene to scene or for internal use is at the discretion of the director.

Intermission and Ending

This play is designed to be produced without an intermission. If needed, an intermission may be taken at a point in the play determined by the director. Depending on his or her individual interpretation, the director may bring the play to an end by fading lights to black during the final savannah sequence, as indicated at the end of the play by an asterisk.

ZINK:
THE MYTH, THE LEGEND,
THE ZEBRA

AT RISE: A spot up on BECKY ZASLOW, thin, pale, timid, and insecure, but with the light of something very special in her eyes. She holds a small, stuffed zebra in one hand and a hairbrush, which she pretends is a microphone, in the other, and plaintively sings the first two lines of “The Lion Sleeps Tonight” into it.

BECKY (singing slowly and sweetly). “In the jungle, the mighty jungle, the lion sleeps tonight. In the jungle, the quiet jungle, the lion sleeps tonight...”

(Fade to black. In blackout, the roar of a distant lion. Lights up on the plains of Africa. Noises of wild animals. UC is a large tree. In it is SHLEP. He blends in with the tree. Downstage, an audition is in progress, held by PAPA [or MOMMA] ZEKE, who is clearly in charge. Right are a few zebras who have already auditioned. Left are ZILCH, ZUZI, plus the doo-wop trio of ICE Z, ZIP, and ZAP, who wear black leather jackets with Z'BRAS printed on the back. ZIP and ZAP, as twins, are in perfect synch. A buzz of excitement; a lot is at stake. A mike stands center. A sign clearly reads: SAVANNAH ROOM TALENT SHOW AUDITIONS TODAY. ZEBRAS ONLY.)

PAPA ZEKE. Okay, okay, who's next, who's next? Time is money, zebras. (*He consults his list*). Let's see... Zilch, the Zebra.

(*ZILCH, an affected snob, comes forward.*)

PAPA ZEKE. Zilch, babe, make me weep. Whaddaya got? ZILCH (*haughtily, into the mike*). A marvelous recitation by marvelous *me*, Zilch, the Zebra. (*Assumes Shakespearean recitation stance, "prepares" ostentatiously, recites dramatically but badly.*) I, Zilch, the Zebra, am a zebra. We roam in herds on the vast savannah plains of Africa and are herbivores, meaning we eat only plants. We travel far and wide to find pond water to drink. All we fear are meat-eating predators, such as lions, who want to make us their breakfast, lunch and dinner. Or as we say *en l'Afrique francophone, le petit déjeuner, le déjeuner, and le—*

PAPA ZEKE (*interrupting*). Thank you. *Next!*

ZILCH. But there's so much more. And it's so brilliant!

PAPA ZEKE. Zilch, babe, how can I say this so it won't hurt your feelings? You *stink!* *Next!* (*He looks at his list.*) Zuzi Zebra.

(*ZILCH moves huffily to stage right with the other zebras who have already auditioned. Perky ZUZI crosses center.*)

ZUZI (*like Baby June in Gypsy with hoof-gestures, into the mike*). Hi! My name's Zuzi! What's yours? (*Belting it out in song.*) "If you knew Zuzi, like I know Zuzi,—"

PAPA ZEKE (*interrupting*). Thank you for your heartfelt audition. *Next!* (*He checks his list again.*) Last, and I hope not least, twins Zip and Zap (*They do a hip-hop dance step together.*) and Ice Z, (*ICE Z gives a clenched-fist salute.*) the Zenzational Z'Bras.

(ICE Z, ZIP, and ZAP cross center. ICE Z grabs the mike, all three turn their backs to the audience.)

ICE Z (*into mike*). Ladies and gentleman, animals of all ages, the Savannah Room is proud to present...the one, the only...the Zenzational Z'Bras!

(ZIP plays a note on a pitch pipe. Z'BRAS swing around. They have donned zebra-striped sunglasses. They sing "ZZZZ Z-Z-Z Zebras of Course," a cappella, with ICE Z in lead. If the director prefers, the number may be rapped.)

WEE-OO, BABOON-A RHINO RHINO

WAY OUT IN AFRICA ON THE SAVANNAH
WHEN IT COMES TO BEIN' COOL WE'RE TOP
BANANA

WE'RE PRETTY AND WE'RE TOOTHY
WITH MICK JAGGER LIPS
WE KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING
WE'RE NATURALLY HIP

WE GOT A HOOF, HOOFY STRUT
THAT SAYS WE'RE BAD

CRUISIN' ALL THE WATERHOLES
THAT'S OUR BAG

WE AIN'T A TIGER, A MONKEY, A
CANDY-STRIPED HORSE
WE'RE THE ZZZZZZ ZZZZZZ Z-Z-Z ZEBRAS OF
COURSE

BRIDGE

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR KICKS OR SOME
AFRICAN ACTION
CHECK OUT ZEBRAS WE'RE THE MAIN
ATTRACTION
IF YOU WANNA KNOW THE INSIDE SCOOP
WHERE IT'S AT
ASK FOR ICE Z, ZIP AND ZAP

WE'LL ROCK YOU ALL NIGHT
DANCE YOU 'TIL DAWN
'TIL YOU GIVE OUT A
BIG HIPPOPOTAMUS YAWN

WHEN YOU'VE BEEN WITH US
YOU KNOW YOU'VE BEEN WITH THE BOSS
WE'RE THE ZZZZZZ ZZZZZZ Z-Z-Z ZEBRAS OF
COURSE

WE AIN'T THE RHINOS, WE AIN'T THE HIPPOS,
THE LIONS
THE OSTRICHES, THE GATORS, THE CROCS
WE'RE THE ZEBRAS...YEAH

(They are beyond great. ZEBRAS, except ZILCH, applaud wildly.)

PAPA ZEKE. Fantastic. Congratulations, Z'Bras. You're the winners. Tell 'em what they've won, Zuzi.

ZUZI *(like a TV game-show hostess)*. Right, Papa Zeke! Z'Bras, as winners of the talent-show audition, you'll headline Papa Zeke's Savannah Room extravaganza. But wait, there's *more!* You've also won...a trip to the human world! Yes, Z'Bras, you'll fly nonstop via the imagination right into the world of our very own human, Becky Zaslow! *(ZEBRAS all talk and argue at once, all very excited and surprised. This is a shocking development. Z'BRAS give each other their quick handshake, ending in shouting "STRIPES!")*

ZILCH *(calling to PAPA ZEKE)*. Point of order, point of order! Why is it that you, Fearless Leader, are breaching protocol and not going over to see Becky yourself?

PAPA ZEKE. What can I tell you? I'm washed up, finished, I don't have what it takes anymore.

ZUZI. Don't say that, Papa Zeke.

PAPA ZEKE. It's true. You know what it takes to cross over to the human world? Youth, energy, will to live!

ZIP & ZAP *(horrificed)*. You've lost your will to live?

PAPA ZEKE. What are you talking? I'm talking Tolive, Doctor Will Tolive, the greatest veterinarian in all of Africa and a close personal friend of my close personal friend Mel Brooks. Tolive tells me one more trip to the human world and I could—

ALL ZEBRAS *(worried)*. Could what?

PAPA ZEKE. *What* is what you don't have to worry about. No more crossing over for me. The Z'Bras will carry on.

ZILCH (*derisively*). Why should *they* be the first ones to meet our human? They're nobodies.

(*ZEBRAS all argue and take sides, as SHLEP climbs out of his tree and quickly crosses to PAPA ZEKE.*)

SHLEP. Wait, wait! Hold it, hold it, you guys! What about me? I didn't audition yet.

ZILCH (*derisively again*). *You?* Surely you jest.

PAPA ZEKE. Hello, Shlep. Sorry, but I'm only auditioning zebras.

SHLEP. Right-a-rooni-rhino! That would be me. Yep. I'm a zebra. (*Singing à la the Z'BRAS.*) Wee-oo, Baboon-a-Rhino-Rhino—

ZILCH (*laughing at SHLEP*). How droll.

ZUZI. How silly.

ICE Z. Little buddy, you're too short.

ZIP & ZAP. You're too green.

ALL ZEBRAS. You're a monkey.

SHLEP. But I wanna be one of you guys! You know, swing with the stripes, hang with the homie herd, get down with the—

PAPA ZEKE. Sorry, Shlep. Oy, something I ate for lunch is eating me back. I need a seltzer and a nap. (*PAPA ZEKE heads slowly for the exit.*)

ICE Z. Yo, Papa Zeke!

ZIP. We've never

ZAP. gone to

ZIP. the human world before.

ZIP & ZAP. We don't know what to do.

PAPA ZEKE. I didn't tell you? (*Z'BRAS shake their heads.*) Oy, my mind is going. (*Crosses to Z'BRAS, puts*

his hands on their foreheads.) There. I just did a mind-meld thing. Now you know everything you need to know about our human.

ZIP. But what

ZAP. is it

ZIP. that

ZAP. we're

ZIP. supposed

ZAP. to do

ZIP. for her,

ZIP & ZAP. exactly?

PAPA ZEKE. The answer to your question *is*: I don't know. The only one who would know is Zink the Zebra. Zink the Zebra, the—

ALL ZEBRAS (*they've heard it many times*). —wisest zebra of all, with the most courage, and the biggest heart.

PAPA ZEKE. Exactly. Wiser even—I know this is hard to believe—than me. Zink would know.

ZUZI. But isn't Zink just a made-up story, Papa Zeke?

PAPA ZEKE. My beloved great-grandmother of blessed memory, may she rest in peace, said her mother had a friend, Zaidey Zebra, who had a sister who had a cousin by marriage, Zachariah Zebra, who claimed he once drank dirty pond water next to a polka-dotted zebra named Zink. But I heard this Zachariah was a big liar. So the answer to your question *is*: I don't know.

ZILCH. A polka-dotted zebra named Zink. That sounds almost as hideous as a little green monkey named Shlep.

SHLEP. I'm a zebra, I tell ya! (*ZEBRAS all argue about ZINK.*)

PAPA ZEKE (*interrupting them*). Enough already! Five zebras, ten opinions! You're giving my indigestion indi-

gestion. *(Slowly crosses toward exit.)* Z'Bras—have a safe trip, don't forget to write, may the force be with you, phone home, et cetera, et cetera. And now, I'm dying for a seltzer.

ZILCH *(running after him)*. Wait, Papa Zeke! I'll get your seltzer! And fluff your pillow! And if I might suggest myself as the understudy— *(PAPA ZEKE and ZILCH exit, as do all except Z'BRAS and the ever-enthusiastic SHLEP.)*

SHLEP. Hey, you guys, what do you wanna do now? Wanna play a game? How about Monkey in the Middle! Who's gonna be the monkey?

ICE Z. You heard Papa Zeke. We won, little buddy. Ergo, we got business to take care of.

SHLEP *(with awe and excitement)*. Right! Human business! We're gonna be great, huh, you guys? Doncha think our human will fall in love with a small, green, furry zebra like me?

Z'BRAS. You're a monkey.

ICE Z. What say we check out the human world before we cruise over.

(ICE Z snaps his fingers. Lights up on Zaslows' living room. Some stuffed animals, including BECKY's favorite toy zebra, are scattered around. DIANE ZASLOW brushes BECKY's hair. Z'BRAS and SHLEP watch from Africa.)

BECKY. Please quiz me on African animals, Mom. *(She hands her mother a school paper.)* Start with the vocabulary words.

MRS. ZASLOW (*still brushing BECKY's hair*). Becky, honey, you don't have to do that now.

SHLEP (*to Z'BRAS*). Becky! Hey, you guys, that's our human!

BECKY. Herbivores. Animals who eat only plants.

SHLEP (*to Z'BRAS*). That's us, you guys!

MRS. ZASLOW. Becky—

BECKY. Carnivores. Animals who kill and feed on other animals. Also known as—

BECKY, Z'BRAS, SHLEP (*Z'BRAS and SHLEP, fearfully*). Predators!

BECKY (*to her mom*). That's right, isn't it? (*She checks the paper.*)

MRS. ZASLOW. Please, Becky.

BECKY. I'm sorry. But my test is this afternoon, and I—

MRS. ZASLOW. Becky, honey, you won't be at school this afternoon.

SHLEP (*to Z'BRAS*). How come?

BECKY. I have to be. We have auditions for the school talent show.

MRS. ZASLOW. There's no point in your auditioning when you won't be able to be in the show, honey.

BECKY. But I worked really hard on my song, and—

MRS. ZASLOW. You have to conserve your strength now. That's the most important thing.

BECKY. I know. I'm sorry.

MRS. ZASLOW. I'll have a talk with Mrs. Belcher.

BECKY. Do you have to?

MRS. ZASLOW. I think I do.

BECKY. But she'll tell everyone.

SHLEP (*to Z'BRAS*). Tell everyone what?

Z'BRAS. Shhhh!

(Crossfade to ASHLEY CHAFFIN and SARA BOWDER in Ashley's bedroom, getting ready for school.)

ASHLEY. ...and then, I finish like this— *(She demonstrates, her hands in the air.)* Ta-da!

SARA. Wow!

SHLEP *(to Z'BRAS)*. Hey, I can do that, too, you guys! Wanna see? *(SHLEP mimics ASHLEY.)* Ta-da!

ASHLEY. And my mother is making me this costume. It's all sequins and it's so cute.

SARA. You'll get in the talent show for sure, Ashley.

ASHLEY. I *know* that. I just want to be sure I win. Who do you think my competition is?

SARA *(tentatively)*. Well, there's Becky Zaslow.

ASHLEY. Please. Don't you just hate how she apologizes all the time? I'm like, get a life, okay? Besides, I'm way better than she is. So I guess I don't really have any competition at all. Lucky me.

ASHLEY'S MOM *(offstage)*. Girls! It's time to leave for school.

ASHLEY *(plopping her schoolbooks in SARA's arms, on top of Sara's many schoolbooks)*. Here. You can carry my books. *(Calling.)* Coming, Mom.

SHLEP *(to Z'BRAS)*. That girl is even meaner than Zilch!

Z'BRAS. Shhhhhh!

(Lights crossfade to hospital. NURSE PAT on the phone with a doctor.)

NURSE PAT. Yes, we're admitting the Zaslow girl today.

SHLEP *(to Z'BRAS, worried)*. Becky has to go to the hospital?