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Family Plays

ROCK BOTTOM

Comedy/Drama by
Dan Roberts



ROCK BOTTOM

With a desire to offer this heart-warming script with possibilities for a spectacular performance, *Rock Bottom* is published in two scripts, one musical the other non-musical.

Musical. By Dan Roberts. *Cast: 7+ actors, flexible.* “Rock” is thrown from a volcano in the beginning of time, and he spends the next few million years determined to prove that he is more than he appears. He is visited periodically by the Sand Pebbles, the Gold Nuggets and the Gem Stones—all of whom are living exciting lives of travel and adventure—while the farthest he has ever traveled is a few yards down the beach between the toes of a brontosaurus. In the play, Rock knows he won’t ever help to build pyramids, be as valuable as gold, or be as beautiful as a gem. He never forgets, however, that he’s much more than just a conglomeration of minerals, fossils, dead plants and bones. As he says, “There’s a heart in this little body,” and it’s this spirit that sees him through the tough times. “I may be a rock, but that’s not who I am,” is his mantra. However, his confidence begins to seriously waver as time passes with no changes in his dreary existence. That is, until—by being in the right place at the right time—he becomes one of the most famous landmarks in America, Plymouth Rock. This is a meaningful and humorous play, suitable for actors or audiences of any age. It even introduces bits of geology, geography, anthropology and American history. Most of all, it shows that no matter how humble our origins, we all have the chance to do something important with our lives. *Set: rocky beach at the beginning of time. Costumes: as simple as shorts with t-shirts of appropriate colors. Add-ons for specific characters could include a large floppy hat for Dusty, a robe and turban for the king, flowing skirts and scarves for the dancing girls, and jewelry for the Gem Chorus. Approximate running time: 350 minutes. Music score available. Demo/accompaniment CD available. Code: RC9.*

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ISBN-13 978-0-88680-505-0



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Rock Bottom

ROCK BOTTOM

A ONE-ACT PLAY FOR CHILDREN
BY DAN ROBERTS

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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DAN ROBERTS

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(ROCK BOTTOM)

ISBN: 978-0-88680-505-0

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

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CAST

Rock
Goldie/Child#1
Sandy/Child#2
Ruby/Child#3
Nugget/Child#4
Dune/Child#5
Diamond/Child#6

The mix of boys and girls is flexible, and the cast size may be as small as seven. To accommodate larger casts, dialog may be easily divided and shared. Costumes are simple tunics of appropriate colors and materials capable of being shed quickly for the final scene. It is recommended that music be played during scene changes.

About the Play

“Rock” is thrown from a volcano in the beginning of time, and he spends the next few million years determined to prove that he is more than he appears. He is visited periodically by the Sand Pebbles, the Gold Nuggets, and the Gem Stones--all of whom are living exciting lives of travel and adventure--while the farthest he has ever traveled is a few yards down the beach between the toes of a brontosaurus.

“I may be a rock, but that’s not *who* I am,” is his mantra, but his confidence begins to seriously waver as time passes with no changes in his dreary existence. That is, until--by being in the right place at the right time--he becomes one of the most famous landmarks in America.

This is a meaningful and humorous play, suitable for actors or audiences of any age. It even introduces bits of geology, geography, anthropology, and American history. Most of all, it shows that no matter how humble our origins, we all have a chance to do something important with our lives.

A suggested follow-up discussion, designed for young audiences, follows the play.

PRODUCTION NOTES***PROPERTIES*****Scene One**

Talcum Powder worn by Rock

Scene Three

Driftwood log sitting by Rock
Conquistadors Saddle

Scene Four

Treasure Chest
Tunics
Ship in the water

Scene Five

Children's Tour Pamphlets

Follow-up Discussion For Young Audiences

This play is about a little rock who is born out of a volcano in the beginning of time. After visits by the Sand Pebbles, the Gold Nuggets, and the Gem Stones, he says over and over that *what* he is may be just a simple rock, but it's not *who* he is. He then spends the next few million years determined to prove that he is more than what he appears. Finally, by being in the right place at the right time, he happens to become the famous American landmark, Plymouth Rock.

1) Have you ever felt the way Rock did? That people sometimes don't understand who you are inside?

2) Have you ever wished that you could look different?

The way we look is usually the first impression people have of us. That's why it's important to take good care of our bodies, dress appropriately, and wear smiles. Unfortunately, there are some things about ourselves that we cannot change as easily.

3) Can you name some of those things? (Possible answers: the color of our skin, the shape of our eyes, how big we are, or how many freckles we have.)

Who we are is so much more important than what we are, because *who* we are is a big part of us that we can do something about.

In the play, Rock knows he won't ever help to build pyramids, or be as valuable as gold, or be as beautiful as a gem. He never forgets, however, that he's much more than just a "conglomeration" of minerals, fossils, dead plants, and bones. As he says, "there's a heart in this little body," and it's that spirit that sees him through the tough times.

Then one day, a group of weary Pilgrims stepped off a boat from England, and Rock was the first to meet them. They weren't pyramid builders, or as valuable as gold, or as beautiful as gems, either; but they played a big part in building the strongest country on Earth. And Rock became a symbol of how important it is to realize that, no matter where you came from, or what color your skin is, or how much stuff you have, what really matters is what you're like inside.

ROCK BOTTOM

by Dan Roberts

SCENE ONE

[SCENE ONE: The beginning of time.

SETTING: A few pieces suggest a rocky beach with a primeval jungle in the background.

AT RISE: BLACKOUT, with flashing LIGHTS and SOUND of a volcanic eruption.

SOUND FADES, and LIGHTING reveals ROCK lying on the floor at the center. The CAST enters cautiously and gathers around him.]

GOLDIE. What's that?

SANDY. Too big for a sand pebble.

NUGGET. Too dull to be gold.

RUBY. No sparkle. Not a gem, that's for sure.

DUNE. Well, if it's not a sand pebble or gold or a gem, then what's it doing by itself?

DIAMOND. It must be special.

GOLDIE. Doesn't look very special to me.

[ROCK begins to awaken.]

SANDY. It's moving!

[ALL step back as ROCK sits up and shakes HIS head to clear it.]

ROCK. Where am I?

RUBY. The surface.

ROCK. The surface of what?

NUGGET. Earth.

ROCK. *[Standing]* Say, I've heard of this place. *[Dusts himself off, as ALL cough and cover their mouths and noses. Talcum powder serves very well as dust.]*

DUNE. He must have come from that volcano over there. *[To Rock]*

Trip a little rough for you?

ROCK. [*Checking HIMSELF over*] Rough isn't the word for it.

DIAMOND. We've been here *forever*. What took *you* so long?

ROCK. Aw, I got hung up on a rock shelf for a millenium or two.

Heck, I must have settled there before that volcano even existed.

GOLDIE. Settled?

[*ALL gasp and step back*]

SANDY. You mean you're *sedimentary*?

[*Again THEY gasp and hold THEIR ears.*]

ROCK. [*Defensively*] Hey, I may be sedimentary, but I'm still one gem of a guy.

RUBY. You still settled? And here you are?

ROCK. [*Becoming a bit angry*] Well, there's a little more to it than *that*. There was all that heat. And you wouldn't *believe* the *pressure* I've been under!

NUGGET. Hot squashed mud, huh?

ROCK. Will you *stop* it?

ALL. A *rock*?

RUBY. What kind of gem is a rock?

SANDY. [*Pulling HER aside and speaking quietly*] It's not *any* kind of gem. It's kind of a conglomeration.

GOLDIE. A conglomeration?

SANDY. [*Still quietly*] Fossils...

GOLDIE. Fossils?

SANDY. [*Even more quietly*] Dead plants...

GOLDIE. Dead plants?

SANDY. [*Very quietly*] Bones...

GOLDIE. *Bones? Disgusting!*

ROCK. All right, so I'm a rock!

NUGGET. Yeah! He said it! He is a rock!

[*ALL react in horror and revulsion.*]

ROCK. What's the matter with everybody? I suppose you're all perfect?

[*ALL agree simultaneously. ROCK Xs to GOLDIE and NUGGET.*]

I suppose you didn't pick up a little ash along the way?

[*THEY deny it vigorously. HE Xs to RUBY and DIAMOND.*]

Each one a jewel, huh?

[*THEY agree wholeheartedly. He Xs to SANDY and DUNE.*]

Are you sure you don't have some *gravel mixed in there somewhere?*
[THEY eyeball one another suspiciously.]

DUNE. *[Breaking the awkward silence.]* Why, don't be ridiculous!
 The white cliffs are *miles* from our neighborhood! Come on, Sandy.

[ROCK watches them exit right, then Xs to GOLDIE and NUGGET.]

GOLDIE. *[to NUGGET]* We, uh, need to make ourselves scarce.

[Chuckling at the humor in this, THEY exit right.]

ROCK. *[Calling after THEM.]* Yeah, that was pretty darned hilarious!

[HE turns back and sees that RUBY and DIAMOND are still there. HE takes a threatening step toward THEM, and THEY hurriedly exit left. Alone now, HE heaves a hopeless sigh and looks around for a good spot to spend the next million or so years. HE sits dejectedly on the floor at the center as light fades to BLACKOUT.]

SCENE TWO

[SCENE TWO: A million years later.

SETTING: The same.

AT RISE: ROCK is sitting cross-legged, leaning HIS head on one hand, and talking to HIMSELF.]

ROCK. Bob...Larry...Frank. Franklin... Yeah, Franklin.

[SANDY and DUNE enter left]

SANDY. Hi, Rock. You still here?

ROCK. My name's not ROCK anymore. It's Franklin.

SANDY *[Glancing at DUNE]* It is? Just now? I like it.

DUNE. I don't.

SANDY. Don't you think it sounds a little...fancy?

ROCK. That's why I like it.

DUNE. But you're not.

ROCK. Not what?

DUNE. Fancy.

ROCK. What makes you think so?

DUNE. Well, look at you. You're a rock. So "Rock" ought to be your name.

SANDY. That's right. We're all named for what we are. I'M Sandy, and

this is Dune.

ROCK. Well, if that's the way it is...

DUNE. You'll get used to it.

SANDY. Anyway, it's nice to see you again. How long has it been?

ROCK. A couple million years, I guess.

SANDY. And you're still here?

ROCK. Why not? I've got no place to go. You guys have been around, I suppose.

SANDY. We've seen a few things.

ROCK. *[Standing]* You, uh, wouldn't want to fill me in on the latest, would you? The last time I traveled was back in ought-nothing between the toes of a brontosaurus.

DUNE. Pretty clever of you.

ROCK. I thought so, too. But I fell out after only a few yards. I thought he might be back this way again someday, but he went extinct on me.

DUNE. Too bad.

ROCK. Then I was almost selected for slingshot ammunition by an old Cro-Magnon, but I got passed over for those old smoothies down at the creek. So what's new with your family?

SANDY. I don't think you want to know.

ROCK. Sure, I do.

SANDY. Look, Rock. Remember the last time you asked what's new with my family? And we told you how we had all gone into construction?

ROCK. No.

DUNE. About a millenium ago, we told you how we were helping carve out the Grand Canyon?

ROCK. Oh. Yeah.

DUNE. You went into such a depression, we thought you'd never come out of it.

SANDY. Rock bottom, so to speak.

ROCK. Cute. Well, I'm older now. I've learned to accept my destiny, even if it means depending upon brontosaurus toes for transportation. Tell me what you've been doing. I really want to know.

SANDY. *[Reluctantly]* Okay. We've been making...*pyramids*.

ROCK. *[Suddenly losing control and grabbing SANDY'S tunic]* *Pyramids? Pyramids?* I sit around here in the dirt with fungus growing on my head, doing absolutely no good for nobody, and you're out making pyramids? It's not fair! What did you want to tell me that for?