

Heap of Trouble

You don't always know the whole story.

A Drama in One Act

by James Hutchison

Also available from www.jameshutchison.ca

What the Dickens! *Even Scrooge got a second chance.*

When Marty Fisher gets caught kissing his stage manager Samantha and the actor playing Scrooge shows up drunk Marty has to scramble to save the opening night production of a Christmas Carol and his engagement to his fiancée Tami.

Two Act Comedy, 6M, 3W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

A Christmas Carol – Two versions available -

When Scrooge's nephew Fred finds some letters Scrooge had written to his sister Fan a long time ago the past is unlocked, and Scrooge learns how his fear of poverty and pursuit of wealth have cost him a chance for love and genuine happiness.

CAST OF 10+ - Two Act Drama, 6M, 4W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

CAST OF 25+ - Two Act Drama, 15M, 10W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

Under the Mistletoe *Not every romantic evening goes as planned.*

Two couples in their late fifties, one long time friends and the other having just met, try to navigate the tricky road of love, sex and desire while spending a romantic night in the Christmas Themed Suites at the Prairie Dog Inn.

Two Act Romantic Comedy 1M, 1W or 2M, 2W Single Set, 120 minutes

Heart of Stone: A Jessica Quinn Mystery *Trusting the wrong person can be deadly.*

When Jessica Quinn uncovers the truth about her father's killer and the truth behind a woman claiming to be the long-lost daughter of her client Mary McConnell more than one person ends up dead.

Two Act Mystery, 7M, 3W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

Stories from Langford *Every town has its secrets.*

Six characters from Langford tell stories from their lives: stories about, jealousy, revenge, love and forgiveness.

Two Act Drama, 1M, 1W, Simple settings, 120 Minutes

Death and the Psychiatrist *Even Death Could Use a Friend*

Feeling depressed about having a job where no one likes him Death goes into therapy with Dr. Thompson in order to help him cope with his guilt.

One Act Comedy, 3M, or 2M, 1W, Single Set, 50 Minutes

Plus, other One Acts and 10 Minute Plays including The Blood of a Thousand Chickens, 500 bucks and a pack of smokes, and Elvis is Dead.

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PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

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The play is also available for in class use and study without royalty.

The Playwright

James Hutchison writes comedies, dramas, and mysteries. He also interviews other playwrights, actors, and directors about the business and creative aspects of theatre, film, and television. You can read his interviews on his blog and download his plays at www.jameshutchison.ca.

Heap of Trouble - Sometimes you don't know the whole story.

A Drama in One-Act

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CAST of CHARACTERS

Emily (Em) the younger sister about 8 or 9.

Charlie the older brother about 11 or 12.

SETTING

A wooded area near the train tracks a mile out of town. A knotted rope hangs from a tree branch.

TIME

It is a hot day the last week of June 1933.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Emily has run off after getting into trouble and her older brother Charlie has been sent to fetch her.

AUTHORS NOTE

If you are unable to rig a swing, then come up with another solution. At the beginning of the play have Emily drawing in the dirt with a stick or playing tic tack toe or tossing rocks into the stream.

HEAP OF TROUBLE

SCENE: A Wooded area on the Prairies

Setting: A wooded area near the train tracks a mile out of town. A knotted rope hangs from a tree branch. It is a hot day the last week of June 1933.

At Rise: EMILY leans back, closes her eyes, and swings in big arcs on the rope.

SFX: DISTANT SOUND OF A TRAIN TRAVELLING ACROSS THE OPEN PRAIRIE

Emily!

CHARLIE: (Off Stage)

EMILY doesn't answer.

Emily!

CHARLIE: (Off)

CHARLIE, who has been on EMILY's trail for over an hour, enters and watches her swing on the rope for a long moment.

CHARLIE
What in the name of Jesus are you doing way out here?

EMILY opens her eyes and looks at CHARLIE

EMILY
You better not let Pa hear you talk like that, or he'll give you a tanning you won't soon forget.

CHARLIE
Yeah, well who's going to tell him?

EMILY
I just might tell him.

CHARLIE

He won't listen to you. You're in a whole heap of trouble already.

EMILY

Well, I ain't coming back. And you can't make me.

CHARLIE

No?

EMILY

No.

Pause

CHARLIE

What you planning on doin' then?

EMILY

I don't know. Thought maybe I'd get myself a job.

CHARLIE laughs

CHARLIE

Get a job. You?

EMILY

Don't laugh at me.

CHARLIE

Who the Sam hell would hire you?

EMILY

Look here Charlie, I told you not to talk like that. Pa don't like it.

CHARLIE

Big deal. Pa ain't here. And besides you said you ain't coming back.

EMILY

Well, I haven't decided for sure.

CHARLIE

Well, you sure as hell ain't getting no job.

EMILY

I could to.

CHARLIE

Doin what?

EMILY

I could get a job on a train. I could be a conductor.

CHARLIE

You're too short. You got to be at least five feet tall to have a job like that. What are you? Three feet – maybe?

EMILY

I'm taller than that.

CHARLIE

Not by much.

EMILY

Well then maybe I could be the engineer.

CHARLIE

You can't just walk in off the street and get a job on a train as an engineer. I'd like to see you try. They'd laugh at you. They'd tell you to skedaddle on home.

EMILY

That's not true. I know for a fact, that Billy Jo Harrison worked a whole summer with his dad on the Langdon to Rockyford run.

CHARLIE

He sure as hell didn't drive the train.

EMILY

He said he did.

CHARLIE

Then he was lyin'.

EMILY

You ask him yourself.

CHARLIE

I'll do that. Next time I see him I'll say Billy Jo – my sister tells me you spent the whole summer running a train between here and Rockyford. We'll see what he has to say about that.

EMILY sticks her tongue out at CHARLIE

CHARLIE

Come on Em, lets go.

EMILY

I told you I ain't going back and you can't make me.

CHARLIE

Can too.

EMILY

Oh yeah? You and what army?

CHARLIE chases EMILY around the tree.

CHARLIE

Me and the Royal Canadian Army that's who. Get back here you bloody Hun.

EMILY

Don't call me a Hun.

CHARLIE

Would you rather I called you a Kraut?

EMILY

I'm not a Kraut!

CHARLIE

Well then, you must be a Hun!

CHARLIE grabs EMILY and pins her to the ground.

EMILY

Stop it. Get off me!

CHARLIE

Not until you say uncle.

EMILY

No way. Stop it.

CHARLIE

You shouldn't go stickin your tongue out at people. Now say uncle.

EMILY

I won't, and you can't make me.

CHARLIE

Can too.

EMILY

Come on Charlie get off. You're too heavy.

CHARLIE

Say Uncle.

EMILY

It's not fair. You're bigger than me.

CHARLIE

Come on you bloody Hun. Say Uncle.

EMILY

Don't call me names Charlie. I don't like it.

CHARLIE

You give up.

EMILY

Quit it, Charlie. You're hurting me.

CHARLIE lets EMILY roll out from under him.

CHARLIE

Aw don't go getting all girly on me. I was just funning ya.

EMILY

I told you it's not fair. You're bigger than me.

CHARLIE

Come on Em. I'm hungry. I want to go home.

EMILY

Go ahead. I ain't stopping ya.

CHARLIE

Aren't you hungry?

EMILY

No.

CHARLIE

Well, what are you gonna do when you get hungry?

EMILY

I haven't figured that part out yet.

CHARLIE

You gonna steal a loaf of bread?

EMILY

None of your business what I'm gonna do.

CHARLIE

Cause if you do – and you get caught – you'll go to jail.

EMILY

Well, I ain't planning on stealing nothing. So there!

CHARLIE

I ain't saying you're planning on stealing anything, but when you start to get hungry and you've got nothing to eat what are ya gonna do?

EMILY

I'll just knock on a door and ask for a meal. Ma's always handing out food to people that come to our door.

CHARLIE

That's cause Ma believes in charity, and a lot of people are out of work, but not everyone's so charitable, Em. Some people see you walking up to their kitchen door, and they'd just as soon set the dogs on ya as give ya a meal. What-cha-ya gonna do when that happens you bloody Kraut!

EMILY

I can run faster than any stupid old dog. And stop calling me names.

CHARLIE

You don't even know what a Kraut is, do ya?

EMILY

Do to.

CHARLIE

Okay. What is it?

EMILY thinks for a long moment but doesn't know.

EMILY

Okay, well maybe I don't know what it is, but I don't like being called one.

CHARLIE

You got all riled up, and you didn't even know what it is.

EMILY

Well, what is it then?

CHARLIE

It's what we called the Germans in the War on account they like to eat sauerkraut.

EMILY

I didn't even know we were at war.

CHARLIE

We ain't at war any more you dope. Don't you know nothing?

EMILY

Don't call me a dope.

CHARLIE

Pa was in the war. Haven't you seen his medals?

EMILY

Pa has medals?

CHARLIE

Yup. A whole bunch of em.

EMILY

Why doesn't he ever wear em?

CHARLIE

I don't know. Ma says he used to wear them on Armistice Day, but he don't do that no more.

EMILY

How come?

CHARLIE

I don't know Em. He just doesn't. That's all.

EMILY

So, what's a Hun then?

CHARLIE laughs.

CHARLIE

Same thing as a Kraut. Danny Oliver's dad says all those bloody Huns can burn in hell as far as he's concerned.

EMILY

How come.

CHARLIE

You know how he's missing two fingers?

EMILY

Yeah.

CHARLIE

It was a German sniper got those two fingers.

EMILY

No way.

CHARLIE

Yes way.

EMILY

He told you that.

CHARLIE

That's why he hates Germans.

EMILY

That the only reason?

CHARLIE

Ain't that a good enough reason.

EMILY

I don't know Charlie. That's why I'm askin.

CHARLIE

He hates Germans, and Jews, and Spics. Says the world would be better off without them.

EMILY

What's a Spic?

CHARLIE

Same as a Dago.

EMILY

What's a Dago?

CHARLIE

Same thing as a Spic. You can call an Italian, a Spic, or a Dago.

EMILY

How come you know so much about what we're supposed to call people Charlie?

CHARLIE

That's because I've been going over to Danny's house, and when his dad gets a couple of shots in him – he starts talking about the war and how much he hates Germans and all the other crummy people in the world. Only he don't say crummy.

EMILY

How come Pa never talks about the war like that?

CHARLIE

Ma says he don't like to talk about it much. She says the war changed him.

EMILY

Changed him how?

CHARLIE

I don't know Em. Why don't you ask her yourself? Come on. Let's go home.

EMILY

I told you. I don't want to go home. Why don't you just go away and say you couldn't find me.

CHARLIE

Can't do that Em. Pa told me to find ya.

EMILY

Well, I ain't coming back. I ain't gonna get punished for defending myself.

CHARLIE

You gave Cory Robinson a bloody nose.

EMILY

He deserved it.

CHARLIE

I ain't sayin he didn't, but Pa don't put up with any fightin. Don't matter what that Robinson kid said or did.

EMILY

He said we was nothing but trash.

CHARLIE

I told you. It don't matter what he said. It's up to us to turn the other cheek.

EMILY

He said you were stupid.

CHARLIE

He said what!

EMILY

He called you stupid. He said you was too stupid to win that spelling bee.

CHARLIE

That little rat.

EMILY

He said there was no way trash like you could be that smart. He said the only way you could have won was by cheating.

CHARLIE

Cheating!

EMILY

Cheating and lying.

CHARLIE

That bastard.

EMILY

That's when I hit him.

CHARLIE

You hit him because he called me a cheat.

EMILY

I did.

Beat

CHARLIE

Well, I didn't know that.

EMILY

He just got me so mad. I just closed my eyes and swung at him as hard as I could. His nose made an awful cracking sound when I hit it.

CHARLIE

You broke it.

EMILY

I didn't mean to break his nose. But I ain't sorry I did it.

CHARLIE

Well, I ain't sorry you did it either. I got a pretty tough little sister, I guess.

EMILY

Charlie, will you let Pa know what happened?

CHARLIE

It won't matter Em. You're still gonna get punished.

EMILY

Maybe so. But I want him to know why I did it.

CHARLIE

You can tell him yourself. If you tell Pa the truth it won't be so bad.

EMILY

Is he steamed?

CHARLIE

He's calmed down some.

EMILY

What do you think he's going to do?

CHARLIE

Well, he's gonna make you apologize that's for sure.

EMILY

I don't want to apologize.

CHARLIE

Don't matter what you want. You're gonna have to face Cory Robinson and tell him you're sorry.

EMILY

That's just not fair.

CHARLIE

I know it ain't fair, but that's what's gonna happen.

EMILY

I just get so mad sometimes.

CHARLIE

That's because you can't control your temper.

EMILY

I just hate people like Cory Robinson. You ain't stupid Charlie. You're smart. Real smart. I know it. And Pa – he knows it too. That Cory Robinson – he's just jealous because we're poor and he's rich and you're smarter than him.

CHARLIE

That Cory Robinson – he's just ignorant. That's what he is.

EMILY

It don't matter what he thinks.

CHARLIE

You bet. Come on Em. Let's go. We could stop at the drug store on the way home, and I'll buy you a soda.

EMILY

How you gonna do that? You ain't got no money.

CHARLIE

I got a dime.

EMILY

Where'd you get that?

CHARLIE

I've been saving it.

EMILY

You sure you want to spend it on me?

CHARLIE

Sure. Why the hell not.

EMILY

Charlie!

CHARLIE

Sorry. (Beat) Come on Em.

EMILY

I don't know.

CHARLIE

You sure showed that little runt Cory Robinson that he can't push us around.

EMILY

You think so.

CHARLIE

You bet. You broke his nose, didn't ya?

EMILY

I didn't mean to.

CHARLIE

He don't know that. As far as he knows you'll break it again if he ever says anything bad about me or our family again. Come on Em. Let's head home.

EMILY

Do I have ta?

CHARLIE

You want that soda, don't ya?

CHARLIE starts to run backwards towards the edge of the stage.

EMILY

Charlie, wait up.

CHARLIE

Don't be such a slow poke!

EMILY

I ain't no slow poke.

CHARLIE

Oh, no? Prove it. I'll race you to the road.

CHARLIE jogs off stage.

EMILY

(Shouting) No fair.

CHARLIE jogs back onto stage.

CHARLIE

Alright, I'll give you a head start. One. Two. Three. Go!

EMILY takes off like a shot running as fast as she can. CHARLIE laughs and trots after EMILY.

CHARLIE

Wait up would ya.

End Play