

UNTITLED

"Sticks and stones may break my bones,
but names can never hurt me."

CHARACTERS

SARAH SPARROW: For the first scene she is 10 years old,
very thin and tough, hair shortish and
straggly, wearing a school dress, not
a very nice one, might be a hand-me-down.
She wears a ratty jacket over this and bright
red wool mittens, and a boy's stocking cap.

For the remainder of the play, she is 25
years old, slim and attractive, tall. She

carries herself well, for the most part,
but when she is feeling low, she slumps
~~when she does not will be pointed out in~~
~~her shoulders over her chest, seems shorter.~~
~~stage directions.~~ *not exaggerated, however.*

CHARLES ROBINS: Tall (taller than Sarah), slim, he is 35,
light-haired, his face is showing his dis-
sipation a bit, but he is good-looking des-
pite this. He wears clothes well without
realising it, without caring. *freed* Sport jacket,

*Her hair is long, dark,
and thick,
but she is
very fair-skinned.
She wears
jeans, rolled up
over cowboy
boots, very scuffed
and worn-in.
Sweater, very
the long-sleeved,
scarf around
neck.*

~~Tweedy~~, sweater-vest underneath, Arrow
shirt (slightly dirty) open at the collar,
nice creased slacks, slightly soiled, ~~1¢~~
tan desert boots ~~shoes~~^{shoes}, hush puppies.

STACY MERCEDES: 35, silvery-blonde (does she or doesn't she?)
hair, *longest but kept in place.* ~~Very attractive for her age,~~ *and* well-
kept, her attractiveness is different from
SARAH's, it hits you less hard. She wears
matching pant-suits, tasteful, light (pastel).
~~Her/H~~ Face sort of blandly attractive.

BILL JOHNSON: Big, bear-like, gruff but with a heart of
gold, he is 50, with thick ~~dark~~^{black} hair that is
starting to gray around the edges. A bit on
the heavy side.

POSSIBLY: Mike Robins and Jack Johnson

EXTRAS: School-boys, 12 to 14 years of age, about
four or five of them, in much the same
shape as SARAH, tattered clothing, skinny.

SET & LIGHTS

For the first scene, the set is a street in a
residential area, can be constructed according to budget.

The ~~rest~~^{remainder} of the play takes place in the newly
rented cottage of SARAH and CHARLES. There are two rooms,

a kitchen and living room/study. Kitchen at stage left has absolutely no furnishings in the beginning, except a sink, but there is no water. The living room, too, has nothing in it, to start with, except boxes and other scattered belongings. The outside door is in kitchen, in far-left wall, toward front of stage. There is a wall separating two rooms, coming to front of stage vertically, and a doorway connecting rooms toward front of stage, opposite outside door. No walls in front, of course. Windows on both back walls and on side walls of kitchen. A Doorway in right wall of living room that leads to bath.

As the play progresses, these two rooms slowly get furnished with tables and chairs, sofa-bed, stove, refrigerator, ^{telephone,} curtains, book-shelves and -cases, easy-chairs, lamps, etc, and the boxes slowly diminish. These ^{additions} ~~changes~~ will be noted throughout.

Through the windows it can be seen whether it is night or day, and the lighting in the kitchen is harsh, this is where the sofa-bed will be. The living room lighting should be soft, when the lamps ^{arrive} ~~have come~~.

ACT I:

The street scene. Group of boys on stage right side of street, SARAH on left. The boys are pelting

SARAH with snowballs, fast and hard, they make some direct

hits on her ~~head, her arms, chest, back, legs.~~ *back, mainly, when she is making more ammunition. She dodges*

most of the balls very agilely when she sees them coming ~~miss her several times.~~ SARAH is fighting back, but she

pause to has to make her own snowballs, and gets hit while doing

this. She makes quite a few hits, too, *she throws very well,* but for every

hit she makes, she gets back three. She is trying hard

not to cry, but failing, and her tears get in the way of

her aiming sight, so she swipes at her eyes furiously,

leaving red marks *on her face* where she rubs with her mittens. While

all of this is going on, there is some dialogue *that can be heard*

BOY 1:

Hey, sparrowhead, catch this! (whips snowball at her back as she is making one of her own)

above the din of name-calling, boys should ad-lib background noise of shouts.

BOY 2:

Sparrowhead, sparrowhead, Sarah is a sparrowhead! (misses her with snowball and scowls) Shit! (bends down to make another)

BOY3:

Tweet-tweet-tweet! Hey, Sparrow! I'm calling you, don't you answer to your own name?! (SARAH's snowball hits him in the

face, hard, he registers surprise, first, and anger, second, and takes the ball offered him by BOY 4, throws and hits her on the back as she is making another.)

SARAH: (wiping at face viciously) You know what my name is, peckerhead! Pick on someone your own size! (makes direct hit on ~~his~~ Boy 1's chest)

BOYS 1234: Sparrow is a sparrowhead! Sparrow is a sparrowhead! Tweet-tweet-tweet! (a rain of snowballs lands on and around her as she is making another of her own)

SARAH: (muttering) Sticks and stones may break my bones but names can never hurt me. (turns and throws ball)
~~(loud, as she throws snowball and hits one of them)~~ *wiping at back*

BOY 2: Sparrow is a cry-baby! (taunting) Sparrow is a cry-baby! (other boys join in, they shower one last load of balls on her and start to drift away, throwing another snowball randomly as they go off stage right.

SARAH: (throwing another ball in their direction that she frenziedly made) *(loud)* Sticks and stones

may break my bones, but names can never hurt me! I hate you! I hate you! (screaming in blind rage with fists clenched at sides) I HATE YOU! (wipes at eyes, looks down at ground, sees her schoolbooks and picks them up, slowly, wiping at tears, organises books in arms and walks off stage left, squaring her shoulders and tossing back her head.

"Bed-wetters and bullies!"

Rework entire act,
make it smooth.

Connect and unify.

ACT II, SCENE I:

It's 15 years later. → The curtain rises on the two-room cottage, completely unfurnished. There are boxes scattered around, and two rolled-up sleeping bags. There is the sound of a key fumbling in a lock, and the outside door into kitchen is opened, held for SARAH by CHARLES, as she enters first. Her shoulders are squared defiantly, her posture is aggressive. CHARLES is as usual, his posture is always good, he is ^{rarely} ~~never~~ aggressive, he fluctuates only very slightly.

SARAH: (crossing over to sink, turning one of taps)
Do you think we'll have water by Christmas?

CHARLES: Don't worry, Sarah. We'll have it for
Thanksgiving, too.

SARAH: Hah! (strides through living room and out
door to bathroom, there is a pause, and
CHARLES looks after her with an expression
of thoughtful concern. SARAH comes back
into kitchen) Sheeit. Can't flush the
toilet without any water, can you.

CHARLES: (hastily, eagerly, glad for something to do)
I'll go down to the river to get some. (picks
up buckets sitting at door and goes out)

(SARAH sighs, her eye falls on sleeping bags, and she kicks one of them viciously against the wall, watches as it settles, coming back at her. She sighs again, then rolls a cigarette, taking her time about it, peering at it in the harsh light of the kitchen, is lighting it when CHARLES kicks open the door, carrying two full buckets of water. SARAH watches him as he goes by, the buckets are heavy, and there is the sound of water filling a tank, then CHARLES comes back into the kitchen, wiping his hands on his pants.)

SARAH: How long are we going to have to live like this?

CHARLES: (exasperated, trying not to let it get the better of him) Sarah, we just got in here today, and we were damned lucky to get this at all.

SARAH: We didn't look very far or long. And there are lots of apartments for rent.

CHARLES: And risk getting another landlady like Donna? Honey, have you forgotten why we're here?

SARAH: Oh, shit, there absolutely could not be another person in the world like Donna douche-bag. It's just not humanly possible. But you're right. We're lucky. We've got a whole house to ourselves. All two rooms of it. (glances at CHARLES mischievously, sees he is not amused, is contrite) I'm sorry, Charles. But to leave that closet of a motel room to come to ^{the} a hole of a house, it's just too much. We could have afforded the motel a little longer, until we found

something more suitable. More liveable.

I know, it was small, but at least there was water. ~~Not to mention heat, furniture, electricity, etc.~~

CHARLES: (patiently) Sarah, Sarah. I know, it's hard, but it won't be for long. And who was it that was always fighting Donna? Who was it that wanted us to move so badly?

SARAH: All right, all right. (exhaling smoke, she is leaning against the sink, he against the door jamb between kitchen and living room) We had to get out of there, if we had ~~been~~ *stayed* there one more week, ~~I could not have been responsible for Donna's murder.~~ *Donna wouldn't be alive.* But why here? Why 1500 miles, instead of just five?

CHARLES: Sarah. We're looking for a farm, remember? Land is least expensive here.

SARAH: And all your ~~friends and~~ old girlfriends are here.

CHARLES: Sarah, we need friends now. I can't help it that my friends happen to be in this state, and this state happens to have the cheapest land. My friends happen to be female, because I don't get along with men. You know

that. You knew that. And you have the same problem, all your friends are male. So what's the matter? Didn't you have a good time tonight? I thought you enjoyed yourself. (Takes ~~out~~ ^{out} cigarette from shirt pocket, lights it, inhales while studying her, trying to figure her game)

SARAH:

It was all right. But she's your friend. And despite all the talk about women having their own names, she still introduced me as Sarah Robins, rather than Sarah Sparrow, which is who I am. Three times she introduced me as Sarah Robins. Or Mrs. Robins, which is worse. Then I'm just one of your appendages, like the car, or ~~the cat~~, your briefcase.

CHARLES:

(sighing, moaning, he has been through this before) Sarah, Stacy explained why she ~~called you~~ wanted to use Robins instead of Sparrow. She doesn't want her kids to get confused, she wants them to think we're married, so that they'll treat girls with respect when they grow up, so they don't treat girls the way their father treated

Stacy, ^{and} Sarah, you agreed with her.

SARAH: I agree that she should raise her kids to be respectful of people, female and male, if she's got to have kids at all. But that doesn't mean she has to lie to them. What good is that? That negates all the good things she teaches them, because if she lies for one thing, how do they know she's not lying about everything?

CHARLES: Right, I don't think that's right, either, but when we're in her house, her word goes.

SARAH: Well, I won't be in her house ever again, I can tell you. You can see her by yourself. She is your friend.

CHARLES: She's your friend too, Sarah. My friends are your friends.

SARAH: ~~Well,~~ she's not a friend I particularly want, actually. She's not extremely bright, is she.

CHARLES: That's not the point. She's a very nice person, and I think she went out of her way to make us feel welcome, and she's given us a lot of useful information about land around here. You don't have to be bosom buddies with her, if that's what you

mean.

SARAH: Bosom buddies with someone like her?! Hah! She's just a dumb rich bitch, with whom I have nothing in common. Christ. She has no idea what the real world is all about. You'd think someone her age would know a few things by now, wouldn't you.

CHARLES: Let's go to bed. (starts untying and unrolling a sleeping bag)

SARAH: Cha-as (wailing). Look, I just didn't expect to have to fight about my fucking name when we were out with friends, in a socaial situation. I prepared my self for having to pass as your wife in business situations, when we're out looking for land and for a place to rent, but not when we ~~were~~ ^{were} out for fun. And if she wants to raise her kids right, she's got to establish a good relationshipspt with them, tell the truth to them all of the time, even if it means having to take more time explaining things to them.

CHARLES: (yawning) She shouldn't be allowing the older kid to behave as if he were her man, either. Anyway, let's go to bed. We can talk about it tomorrow, or the next day, or the day after that, since it seems to be coming up all of the time.

CURTAIN