

Excerpt terms and conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

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 you read the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.



**Dramatic
Publishing**

© Dramatic Publishing

River City

By

DIANA GRISANTI

Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., 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: THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., 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 that are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

©MMXVII by
DIANA GRISANTI

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(RIVER CITY)

ISBN: 978-1-61959-133-2

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, INC., of Woodstock, Illinois.”

River City was originally produced by Actor's Theatre of Charlotte, Charlotte, N.C., in September 2014.

Cast:

Mary Christopher Kayla Carter
Javier Cintrón Matt Cosper
Edward Christopher Jeremy DeCarlos
Sister Alice/Ruthie Polly Adkins
Father Schroeder/Roger Tommy Foster
Whitney Deeley Jonavan Adams

Production Staff:

Executive Director Dan Shoemaker
Artistic Director Chip Decker
Dramaturg Martin Wilkins
Stage Manager/Costumes Carrie Cranford
Asst. Stage Manager Kelly Truax
Master Carpenter Mike Snow
Scenic Designer Dee Blackburn
Lighting Designer Hallie Gray
Sound Designer Chip Decker
Scenic Artist Cat Colley
Scenic Artist Deshawn Stevenson

River City

CHARACTERS

MARY CHRISTOPHER: Late 20s, mixed race.

JAVIER CINTRÓN: Early 30s, Mexican-American, can pass for white/Anglo with ease.

EDWARD CHRISTOPHER: 14, then 20, mixed race.

SISTER ALICE: 50s, white Italian. Pronounced ah-LI-che. Same actor plays RUTHIE.

FATHER SCHROEDER: Late 20s, white. Same actor plays ROGER.

WHITNEY DEELEY: 29, then 35, and then an old man. Black.

SETTING

Louisville, Ky., 1968, 1974 and now

NOTES

As the story progresses, time and space should become more fluid. Let the worlds collide.

A slash (/) indicates when the next character should interrupt.

While the play's characters are invented, the Louisville represented here is based on historical narratives and includes actual geography and events. I owe a debt of gratitude to Kentucky Educational Television for their excellent chronology and analysis of the Civil Rights Movement in Kentucky: <http://www.ket.org/civilrights>.

SCENE 8

(Deeley Radio, 1968.

A modest repair shop. The poster of Muhammad Ali hangs on the wall. WHITNEY DEELEY huddles over a broken radio.

EDWARD enters.)

EDWARD. Is Mr. Deeley in?

WHITNEY. We're just about closing up here.

EDWARD. Yes, sir. I'll be outta your hair in a minute. I was wanting to talk to Mr. Deeley.

WHITNEY. What you wanna talk to him for?

EDWARD. Maybe I could come back when he's here?

WHITNEY. I'm Mr. Deeley, but don't call me that; call me Whitney. What business you got here?

EDWARD. I was wondering if y'all were hiring, sir.

WHITNEY. Not at the moment.

EDWARD. Oh.

WHITNEY. And it ain't sir. It's Whitney.

EDWARD. OK, well, uh, Whitney. I'm very dependable—

WHITNEY. That's nice.

EDWARD. And I'm punctual.

WHITNEY. Show up at 4:55 asking for a job?

EDWARD. Sorry. I just. I thought maybe y'all were looking for help.

WHITNEY. What's that you got there?

EDWARD. A radio.

WHITNEY. I know it's a damn radio, son. It's a '54 Silvertone. I worked on that exact one. Whose is it? You steal that?

EDWARD. No! No I—

WHITNEY. 'Cause I don't touch stolen radios. I got a policy about that, you understand?

EDWARD. I didn't steal it. I brought it in for a friend.

WHITNEY. A friend, huh? A nun friend?

EDWARD. How'd you know that?

WHITNEY. I'm psychic.

EDWARD. What?

WHITNEY. Loosen up, kid. The good Sister called me up, said you'd be coming down here.

EDWARD. So do I have the job?

WHITNEY. Nope. *(Grabs the radio from EDWARD.)* Tell her come back in a week. Should be fixed up by then.

EDWARD. That's it?

WHITNEY. Uh huh. Like I said, we gotta close up.

(WHITNEY starts to put his tools away. EDWARD doesn't budge.)

WHITNEY. Was you wantin' something?

EDWARD. I'm all right.

WHITNEY. Then whatcha standin' there for? Go on.

EDWARD. The bus doesn't come back for another twenty minutes.

WHITNEY. So you gonna wait here?

EDWARD. If that's all right with you.

WHITNEY. In that case, you gotta buy somethin'.

EDWARD. I don't have any money.

WHITNEY. You best wait outside then.

EDWARD. Maybe I wanna browse.

WHITNEY. No browsing allowed.

EDWARD. What kinda store is this? No browsing?

WHITNEY. It's my father's store, and he says if you ain't got money, you can't browse.

EDWARD. How old're you?

WHITNEY. How old you think I am?

EDWARD. Old enough not to hafta do everything your daddy tells you.

WHITNEY. I'm twenty-nine.

EDWARD. That's old.

WHITNEY. You think so? How old're you?

EDWARD. Fourteen.

WHITNEY. You're pretty tall for fourteen.

EDWARD. You're pretty short for twenty-nine.

(They stare at each other.)

WHITNEY. All right. You can browse till your bus gets here. Don't touch anything.

EDWARD. I won't.

(EDWARD wanders. WHITNEY tidies. They eye each other.)

EDWARD *(cont'd)*. So you fix radios?

WHITNEY. Uh huh.

(More wandering and tidying.)

EDWARD *(indicating the poster)*. You like Cassius Clay?

WHITNEY. His name's Muhammad Ali. And yes.

(EDWARD finds a camera.)

EDWARD. You fix cameras too?

WHITNEY. Hey! I said don't touch anything.

EDWARD. Sorry. I didn't hurt it.

WHITNEY. I don't care if you didn't hurt it. The point is, don't touch. I saved up for this camera.

EDWARD. What do you take pictures of?

WHITNEY. Life as it happens. Make yourself useful, grab that broom and start sweeping up.

EDWARD. Yes, sir. I'm an excellent sweeper, sir.

WHITNEY. It's Whitney.

(EDWARD starts sweeping.)

EDWARD. I think I'm supposed to ask you for a job 'cause you're a negro.

WHITNEY. Is that so?

EDWARD. I'm a negro too, sir. My mother came from German stock, but I'm still a negro, I think.

WHITNEY. What's your name?

EDWARD. Edward.

WHITNEY. Edward. Afro-American.

EDWARD. Sorry?

WHITNEY. You are an Afro-American. I am an Afro-American. You understand? You got that nomenclature through your head?

EDWARD. I think so. Nomenclature. Uh huh.

WHITNEY. What they teach you up there at St. Ben's?

EDWARD. I dunno. Math, science. Reading?

WHITNEY. They teach you about history.

EDWARD. Oh yeah, history too. We got history.

WHITNEY. What you learn in history class?

EDWARD. We went on a field trip to Frankfort. Saw Daniel Boone's grave.

WHITNEY. Daniel Boone, huh? Tell me, what'd he do?

EDWARD. He was a pioneer.

WHITNEY. No, no, no, wait a second. Who told you that?

EDWARD. That's what he did. He was a pioneer explored Kentucky. I got an A on that test.

WHITNEY. Well shoot, Ed! Long as you got a A, you done learned it all, is that right?

EDWARD. I don't know.

WHITNEY. This country—this state—this city. We're haunted. We got ghosts.

EDWARD. I never seen a ghost.

WHITNEY. That's 'cause you're ignorant.

EDWARD. Hey! I'm a good student. I may've messed up on the football team, but I do my schoolwork.

WHITNEY. It ain't meant to be an insult. It's just a fact.

Ignorance is a lack of knowledge. You know everything there is to know?

EDWARD. I dunno.

WHITNEY. Then you're ignorant. You feel that?

EDWARD. What?

WHITNEY. It's tension. You got history books calling Daniel Boone a pioneer. You know what they call pioneering in the West End of Louisville, Kentucky? ... You know?

EDWARD. No—Uh uh.

WHITNEY. They call it “Urban Renewal.” You know what that means?

EDWARD. Urban's like city. And renewal's like making new—

WHITNEY. Urban Renewal equals Black Removal. When my father was comin' up, we had a space: Walnut Street. Now you got white businesses all up and down the West End.

EDWARD. I got a question: what's the West End?

WHITNEY. What's the West End? Kid, do you live in this city?

EDWARD. I live at St. Ben's.

WHITNEY. All right. St. Ben's is over there in Germantown, so y'all are right there at the edge of the East End. This here—where we're at now—this is Parkland. Which is in the West End.

EDWARD. I thought we were downtown.

WHITNEY. Uh uh. You passed downtown a few blocks back.

Now, you go down Third Street, you hit the South End. North End don't exist 'cause Indiana's in the way.

EDWARD. I know where Indiana is. I got an A on that test too.

WHITNEY. What happened on the football team?

EDWARD. I got into it with some of the guys.

WHITNEY. White guys?

EDWARD. This Irish kid.

WHITNEY. So you feel it. The tension.

EDWARD. Sure. Sure, I feel it. That's why I broke his nose.

WHITNEY. Now what's the good of that?

EDWARD. What do you mean? He was talking trash, so I hit him in the face.

WHITNEY. Fighting one-on-one is a waste of time. You gotta fight with an army.

EDWARD. What about Ali? He doesn't have an army.

WHITNEY. He's in the same army we are. He also happens to be the greatest fighter ever lived and I happen to be the only kid in West Louisville to ever knock him out.

EDWARD. You serious?

WHITNEY. You ready for a story? 'Cause I got a story for you. I got *the* story.

EDWARD. Yeah I'm ready.

WHITNEY. All right, lemme act it out for you here.

One two three, bam!

One two three, boom!

One two three, bam, boom, bam!

And he's down. Just like that. 'Fore I even know what's happened, crowd goes wild.

Five years from now, the kid at my feet'll go to Rome and bring home a gold medal. But right now, at Felix Turner's Fourth of July party, I am the champ, I am the greatest, I'm the best fighter Louisville, Kentucky's ever seen. Matter fact, by the transitive property, I'm the best fighter in the world.

So I look down, see him on the ground. He says, "Nice hook, Deeley." I look back, "Lot more where that came from, Clay." Then he says, "Like hell there is."

EDWARD. Was he right?

WHITNEY. Of course he was! I don't know what got in me that day, but that July Fourth, I reigned supreme. Got two kisses, eight baseball cards, and about five dozen pats on the back.

EDWARD. I should tell you I'm a pretty good fighter myself. I've been told I have excellent hand-eye coordination. It's good for throwing punches.

WHITNEY. It is.

EDWARD. It's also good for fixing things. Like radios.

WHITNEY. You look people in the eye when you talk. That's good.

EDWARD. Thank you.

WHITNEY. So you ain't got no parents?

EDWARD. Uh uh.

WHITNEY. So your daddy never taught you how to ask for a job?

EDWARD. I guess not. I mean, I never met my father.

WHITNEY. What about your mother?

EDWARD. She passed while I was being born.

WHITNEY. I can't pay you much. And I don't want you touching anything. But I got some work for you.

EDWARD. What kinda work?

WHITNEY. What's it matter what kind? You want a job, Ed? I'm givin' you a job.

EDWARD. No, I mean I'm grateful, really!

WHITNEY. You come in on Monday after school.

EDWARD. OK.

WHITNEY. And, Ed. Lose the tie. Now go catch your bus.

EDWARD. Thank you, Whitney. I appreciate it. *(Starts to leave.)*
And um, it's—everybody calls me Edward, actually. Whitney.

WHITNEY. All right, well, I think I'm gonna call you Ed. It's got more spark.

SCENE 9

(St. Benedict Orphanage playground, 1968.)

EDWARD. I said, call me Ed ... Leave me be else I'm gonna be late for work ... Yeah, I got a job now ... A lot, all right? My boss pays me plenty ... Oh he's real cool. He knocked out Cassius Clay ... It's true! Knocked him right out ... Nonono, uh uh ... 'Cause I'm not gonna fight you ... I told you, I don't do that anymore. *(Walks off proudly.)*