Free – excerpt from Founding Daughters
A play for Zoom
By Claudia I. Haas

CAST: 3 (1 female, 2 male
Kate: (f) 20’s; a slave; woman of color; said to be very tall
Stephen Heard: (,) 20’s Kate “Master,” said to be very short
British Soldier (male) any age

KATE
I was called "Mama Kate." I was said to be seven feet tall. Which is a bit of an exaggeration. It was also said that I was the daughter of an African king. Which is absolutely true. And I saved the future governor of Georgia’s life with a laundry basket. It should be noted that the future governor, Stephen Heard, was very short and could fit quite comfortably in a laundry basket.

(STEPHEN HEARD appears. He is shackled.)

STEPHEN
Let’s just say I was diminutive.

BRITISH SOLDIER
It won’t take a lot of rope to hang you!

STEPHEN
More's the pity. I would have at least liked to deplete your rope supplies.

(KATE enters with laundry basket. STEPHEN clearly recognizes KATE but wisely stays silent.)

BRITISH SOLDIER
This is a restricted area.

KATE
Just collecting laundry, sir. Trying to do my job. Do you have anything that needs washing? I am also handy with a needle if you need repairs.

(To STEPHEN.)

You look like you could use some clean clothes.

BRITISH SOLDIER
Never mind him. He’ll be dangling from a rope in three days time.

KATE
But one would like to meet his Maker in a clean set of clothes, don’t you think?
BRITISH SOLDIER
I have no care as to how he meets his Maker.

STEPHEN
I ... would be appreciative if you ... could clean up the collars and cuffs. Is that possible?

KATE
Consider it done.

BRITISH SOLDIER
I do have some clothes that need mending, I’ll retrieve them. Wait here.

(BRITISH SOLDIER exits.)

STEPHEN
What are you/

KATE
Shh! Can you pop into the basket?

STEPHEN
With my feet and arms tied?

KATE
Are you ever unshackled?

STEPHEN
For meals. They’re not too worried about me going anywhere.

KATE
What time is breakfast?

STEPHEN
6 a.m. sharp.

KATE
I need to make sure this basket is the right size for you. Can you jump in? Or roll in?

STEPHEN
You’re not thinking/

KATE
I am. I’m going to sneak you out with the laundry. Give me a few days. I will get the British to trust me.
STEPHEN
The British don’t trust easily.

KATE
Nobody sees a woman as a threat. Especially one with my skin color.

(STEPHEN manages to get in the basket.)

STEPHEN
I only have a few days.

KATE
I realize that.

STEPHEN
Kate – you could just run away. Forget about me. Be free.

KATE
And leave Jack and my babies behind? No, Sir. You have shown me many kindnesses over the years. As the daughter of an African king, I am honor-bound to repay you.

STEPHEN
By stuffing me in a laundry basket?

KATE
That’s my plan.

(STEPHEN rolls out.)

End of Excerpt