

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