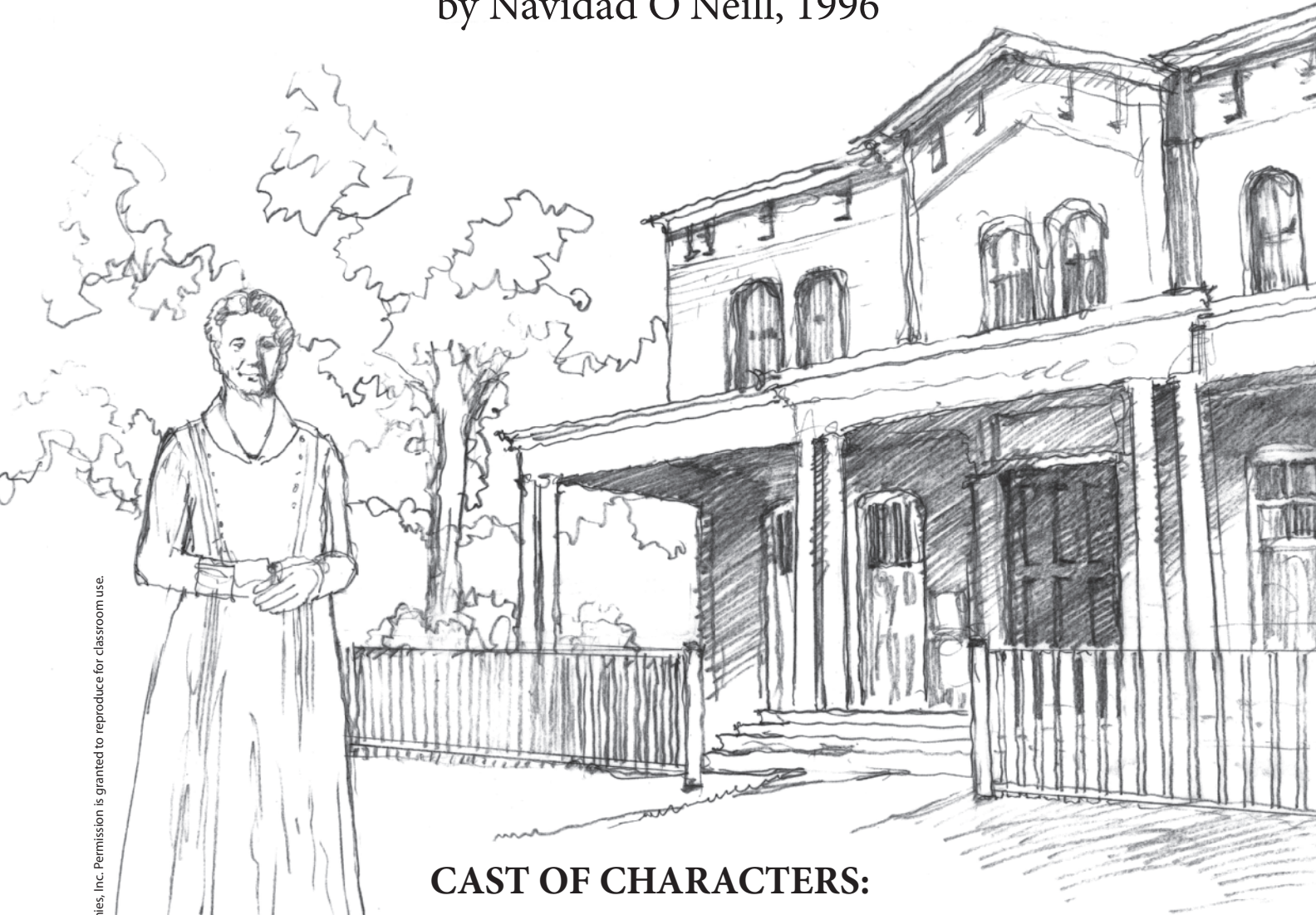


JANE ADDAMS AND HULL HOUSE

by Navidad O'Neill, 1996



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CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Narrator

Jane Addams

Ellen Gates Starr, her friend

**George, John, Charles,
Alice, Mary and Julia,
all Hull House volunteers**

**Marie and Helen,
German immigrants**

**John and Joseph,
Italian immigrants**

In the early 1900s many immigrants came to the United States to find a better way of life. Unfortunately, the way was not always easy for them. Many were poor and did not speak English. Others worked long hours in factories and mines for very little pay. Jane Addams decided that she had to do something for the poor. At first she decided to share her knowledge of art and literature, but soon she realized that they had more basic needs that had to be met. She and her friend, Ellen Starr, opened Hull House, the first settlement house in our country. Why do you think Jane Addams and her friend wished to help the poor?

Jane Addams should be alone at the beginning of the play. Either the playing area can be set with empty chairs or each character can bring in a chair when entering. The narrator serves the tea, either by miming it, or by bringing in new tea cups for each character. The effect should be of the play beginning with one person and then accumulating and expanding throughout until the end.

Narrator: Jane Addams sits down to tea and ponders her future—and that of others.

Jane: In Chicago, there are people who sit in their large comfortable homes and drink tea. But in the slums of Chicago there are many people who live in small, crowded apartments. Sometimes 9 people live in one room. There is no time to sit down and rest because many of them work 16 hours a day. I wish I could do something to help them. But what? And how? What should I do with my life that would help change people's lives for the better?

Narrator: (A doorbell rings off-stage, or the narrator rings a bell to indicate each new arrival.) Jane is joined by Ellen Gates Starr, her friend from college, who sits down with her for tea.

Jane: I am sick of asking myself what I am and what I ought to be, Ellen.

Ellen: You haven't been happy since our return from England.

Jane: Ahhh. England. Remember Toynbee Hall, Ellen? Wasn't it inspiring? There in the middle of the London slums is a place where educated men and women share their knowledge and their lives with those around them. There they teach people how to read, how to paint, how to write, and how to sing. They help them get jobs and live full lives.

Ellen: Yes, I remember our visit there. The young men and women of Toynbee Hall live and work among the poor. They don't simply hand out food on holidays.

Jane: Do you think we could create a "Settlement" house like Toynbee Hall, here in Chicago where surely it is needed?

Ellen: Jane, I think you could create anything. You never think anything is too difficult, once you set your mind to it.

Jane: Would you help me?

Ellen: What do we do first?

Jane: Find a large table. And a large house in which to place it.

Narrator: (Doorbell rings) It is one month later. Jane and Ellen are joined by George, John, Charles, Alice, Mary, and Julia, who discuss how they can volunteer their time to make Hull House work.

Jane: Welcome, one and all, to Hull House. So do we all know our assignments for today?

George: I'm trying to locate more books for our library. We have the complete works of Shakespeare, but I think we could use more Greek classics and drama. We have many people from Greece in the neighborhood who would appreciate such literature.

Mary: I've purchased the paints and will set up the easels in the sunroom for the art classes that begin tonight.

John: The cribs for the child care room will be delivered this afternoon. I'll need help putting them together.

Ellen: I'll help you with that.

John: Great. There are 12 of them. There is a desperate need for a place where babies can be cared for while their parents are at work.

Julia: I'm going to find out how many children are actually working in factories 12 hours a day. I believe some are as young as five years old.

Jane: Do you want my help with that?

Julia: Not just yet. I'll let you know when it's time to present our findings to the American public. Then, when they know the facts, hopefully we can start to change this situation.

Charles: I'll see if I can get a doctor to volunteer to give the babies the shots they need.

Jane: Great. Try Dr. Alice Hamilton. She said she wanted to help.

Charles: Jane, what about the problem of garbage on the streets?

Ellen: It's not collected on a regular schedule and when the workers do collect it, they often dump it a block away. Last week a horse died in the middle of the street, and it's still there.

Julia: This is a serious problem. It's unhealthy for everyone who lives nearby.

Jane: I'll see what I can do. If I have to, I'll follow the garbage wagons all the way to the city dump to make sure the garbage is properly disposed of.



John: Would you really do that?

Jane: Why not? That's our job, to do anything it takes to make things better in our community.

Mary: Oh, and another thing. Jane, I think we need to buy more tables.

Narrator: (Doorbell rings again.) It is two weeks later. The neighborhood comes to Hull House for tea, and finds many reasons to stay.

Marie: I'm bringing my embroidered curtains. Miss Addams wants us to display our best work.

Helen: But Marie, what will you put on your windows in the meantime?

Marie: Plain, ordinary curtains. I want to save my best work for the Labor Museum, where all of the neighborhood can see it. What are you bringing, Helen?

Helen: You know the church I made from cookies and sweets?

Marie: With the steeple of cookies and the sugar-stained glass?

Helen: Yes. We will put that on display, on a high shelf where little hands won't be able to reach it and take a bite!

Marie: This Labor Museum is a good idea. Miss Addams said she noticed some of the young people thinking that the new ways people do things in the United States are better than what they call the old-fashioned ways of their parents.

Helen: We'll show them "old-fashioned"! We'll teach them to be proud of their culture and of what good things the "old folks" can make.

Marie: Miss Addams said there will be many guests at the opening of the Labor Museum. Even the newspaper reporters will be there.



Helen: We should tell Elsa to bring her needlepoint.

Marie: And Hubert should display his clocks.

Helen: Let's tell all of our neighbors.

(The narrator rings the doorbell. Joseph and John take tea at another table.)

John: Someone told me that Miss Addams got the idea for her Labor Museum from you. Is that true?

Joseph: I don't know if it's true, but I do know that she came to visit my wife and I one night and stood admiring the stairpost I had carved in our hallway.

John: The one with the angels?

Joseph: Yes, that's the one. She said, "This should be on display for the whole neighborhood to see." And then she asked me if I would bring something else I had carved.

John: My wife told me that Miss Addams wanted me to bring in one perfect tomato to show in this museum of our labors.

Joseph: And look at all the wonderful work everyone in the neighborhood is bringing. I'm glad we have a place where we can all gather together to celebrate what we give to America.

Narrator: (Doorbell rings.) Many people came to Hull House for help.

Mary: We must work to get the country to agree to an eight-hour work day. Only then will everyone have enough time to take care of their families and stay healthy.

(The narrator rings the doorbell.)

Julia: Adults should earn enough so that their children don't have to work and can go to school.

Ellen: Jane, can we really do all that needs doing?

Jane: Why not? That's our job—to do anything it takes to make things better.

(The narrator rings the doorbell seven times in a row. Everyone is arranging themselves in a semicircle facing the audience. All together everyone applauds. In the middle of clapping they freeze and the narrator speaks.)

Narrator: Children in the neighborhood put on plays quite often at Hull House. Jane Addams helped to make costumes and direct scenes. Parents and friends attended the performances after work.

(The other characters unfreeze.)

Marie: What a lovely play!

Joseph: I wish there were more things like this for the children to do.

John: Yes, me too.

Jane: We've been talking to City Hall about the need for public spaces where children can play safely.

Ellen: They agreed to clear out an empty lot on the next block, and help create a ballfield where the children can play. They will build a jungle gym, too.

Jane: This way the children will get exercise in the fresh air.

Joseph: Will the city really go along with this plan?

Jane: Why not?

Narrator: And it did happen. Jane Addams started the country's first public playground in Chicago, because she set her mind to it and worked hard for it.

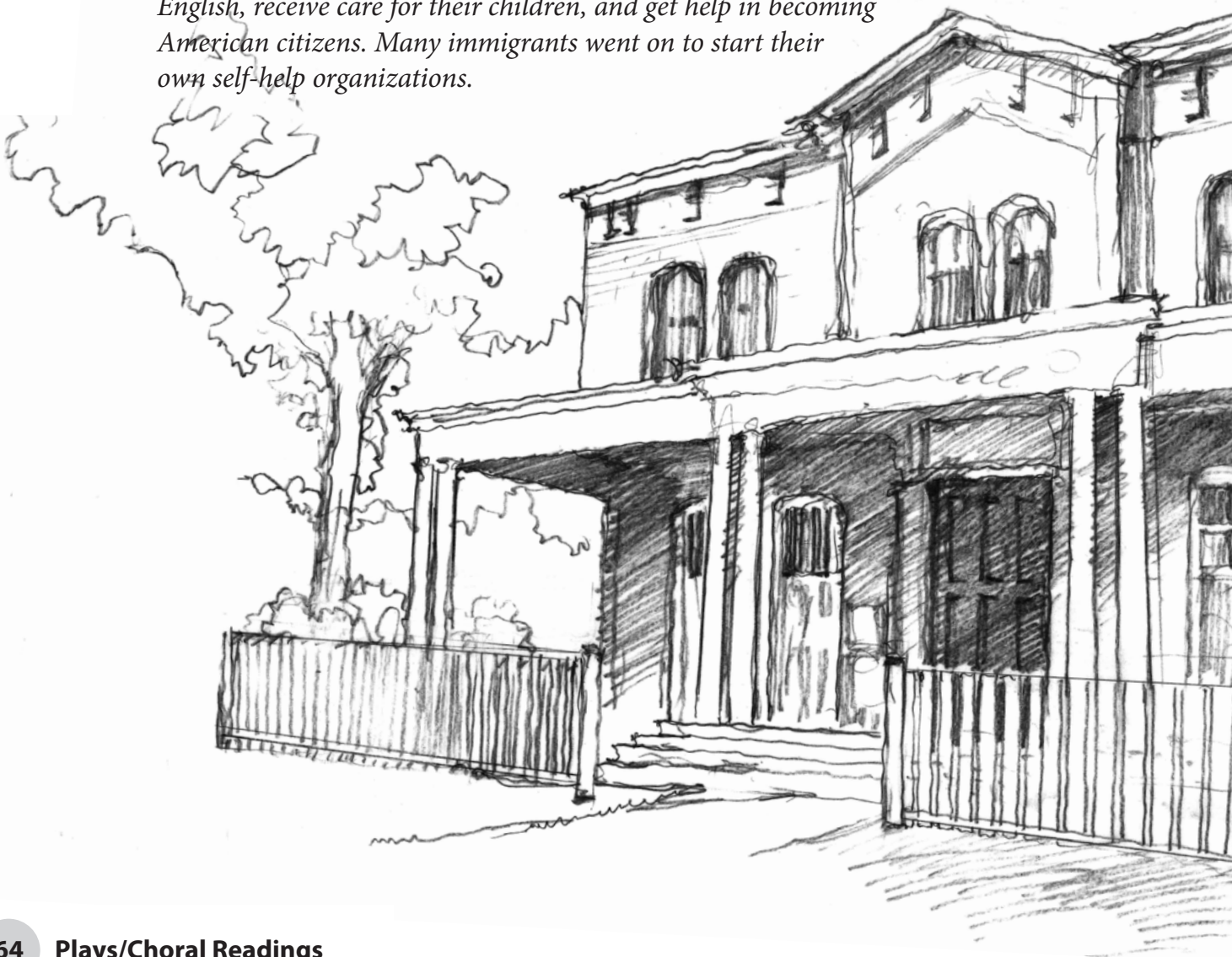
(The group applauds.)

In 1931, Jane Addams was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. She donated her prize money of \$16,000 plus \$10,000 more of her own funds to it to the Women's International League of Peace and to Hull House.

(The group applauds, louder this time, and rises to give Jane Addams a standing ovation.)

THE END

Hull House served as a model for other settlement houses in the United States. At the settlement houses, people could learn English, receive care for their children, and get help in becoming American citizens. Many immigrants went on to start their own self-help organizations.



★ Activities

DRAMA ACTIVITIES:

JANE ADDAMS AND HULL HOUSE



Make an Entrance

Jane Addams and Hull House starts off small, with only Jane and the narrator on stage. As the play continues, more people join them. By the end of the play, the stage is full of characters. This staging helps show how Hull House itself started small but grew into a large settlement house.

- Think about how you would show this growth on the stage. The narrator tells the audience when each new character joins the group on stage. How would you have these characters make their appearances? Practice different kinds of entrances for different characters.
- Also, think about where each new character should stand on stage. Sometimes the stage directions tell actors to arrange themselves in a pattern, such as a semicircle. At other times, the actors must decide for themselves. Which arrangements do you think work best? Explain why.

Compare and Contrast

Jane Addams and Hull House is a fictional play based on a historical person. Use the Internet or the school library to find a biographical article or essay about Jane Addams.

- Read the biographical text, and reread the play. On a sheet of paper, draw a table with two columns and three rows. Label the columns *Play* and *Biography*. Label the rows *Plot*, *Setting*, and *Characters*. Record details about the play and the biography in your table.
- Then write two to three paragraphs comparing and contrasting the play and the biography. Discuss how a biography can be adapted into a play.

DRAMA ACTIVITIES:

JANE ADDAMS AND HULL HOUSE



Getting to Know Jane Addams

In the beginning of the play *Jane Addams and Hull House*, Jane Addams wants to help people who live in her city. However, the Hull House project gradually becomes much more ambitious. Addams does so much to help people that she is eventually awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In a small group, discuss Jane Addams and how she helped others. Answer the following questions.

1. What gives Jane Addams the idea to start Hull House?
Who helps her run Hull House?
2. What services does Hull House offer at first?
What is added as time passes?
3. What issues outside Hull House does Jane Addams work on?

Think of a person in your community who works to help others. In your small group, discuss how he or she is similar to and different from Jane Addams.

Performance Activity: A Round of Movements

In a play, actors must work together and follow one another's lead. This activity will help you learn to pay attention and follow another student's lead.

- Everyone in the class should sit in a circle. The first student will say "Jane Addams in the House" while clapping his or her hands. The phrase and movement will be copied by the circle. The student to the left will repeat the words and the clapping movement. Then this student will say the phrase a little differently and change the motion slightly. The students in the circle will say the phrase differently and do the new motions, too. This pattern will continue around the circle until everyone has said the phrase and created a new motion.
- The group as a whole will then come to a stop. Discuss the kind of concentration actors need to work together as a group.