eve goodall

A play

By

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CHARACTERS

EVE GOODALL BLACK FEMALE 30s

EDUCATED, SPEAKS ENGLISH, FRENCH OF SOME blackfoot -algonquian. Wife of ephraim, mother of two children. raised an educated by white widow. works inu.s. customs – refugee divison.

EPHRAIM GOODALL BLACK MALE 40s

michigan representative to the house – republican party. served in military- 102nd, for the north during the war between the states. husband to eve.

fannie harper black female 40S

educated. runs school for children and former slave adults. owns her own house. rumored to have gotten wealth from relationship with white man whom she lived with in germany.

ELIJAH mCNEIL BLACK MALE 40S

educated. runs a cargo vessel company that run between michigan and canada. Also served in the 102nd. husband to constance.

CONSTANCE MCNEIL BLACK FEMALE 40S

educated. wife to elijah and socialite.

gOODALL CHILDREN BLACK 8,10

MUMSIE MIXED RACE NATIVE WOMAN 50s. takes care of goodall household.

PACKSTON Donnelly WHITE MALE 40S.

police LT.

GREYSON BLACKFeeT NATIVE MALE 50S

u.s. customs employee. detroit office manager. member of blackfoot tribe.

TIME

1870

PLACE

Detroit.

SCENE 1

Setting: The Goodall Home. It’s dark. We can see a lit candle in the vestibule window. The stairs and remainder of the house can barely be seen.

AT RISE: There is a knock at the door. The house doesn’t stir. Then there is a thunderous knock. And Older Women a shift enters from stage right. She lights a candle and then puts on a large shawl around her neck. As she passes the stairs, a candle light illuminates from the top of the stairs. Elijah Goodall is there. He calls down to Mumsie.

ELIJAH

(putting on his housecoat)

Hold on Mumsie.

(ELIJAH goes back into the bedroom and comes out with a pistol. EVE, his wife, emerges from the bedroom wearing her housecoat. She grabs Elijah’s coattail. Two children emerge from another bedroom. They are in their night clothes. Elijah looks back at his wife.)

ELIJAH

Remain here with the children.

(Mumsie is down stairs and is waiting by the door. Another thunderous knock. Elijah goes to the door. We see Mumsie reach behind a piece of furniture and withdraws revealing a sheathed hunting knife. She places it in her shawl.)

ELIJAH

Who’s there?

LT. DONNELLY

Police, Mr. Goodall.

(Elijah turns to Mumsie and nods for her to open the door. Elijah takes a step back. The Police LT. and 2 OFFICERS into enter with behind him. The LT. takes notice of the pistol in Goodall’s hand. LT. Donnelly comes in wipes the snow off his feet. The OFFICERS stay at the door. The LT. looks up the stairs and sees Eve with the children.)

LT. DONNELLY

Please forgive the lateness of the hour. Are you expecting someone else?

GOODALL

The world hasn’t all together changed, and this is not the McLean House.

LT. DONNELLY

The war is over, Sir.

(Goodall puts his gun down.)

GOODALL

Donnelly, please forgive me. How may I be of service.

LT. DONNELLY

Actually, we’re here for your wife. There is a pressing matter that we’d like to discuss with Mrs. Goodall.

GOODALL

My family has turned in for the evening, LT. Perhaps the morrow would be more appropriate.

EVE

(calling from upstairs)

How may I be of service LT.

LT. DONNELLY

(he removes his cap)

Ma’am.

(Eve kisses her children and they return to their bedrooms, keeping the door ajared to peep. Eve tights her robe and descends the stairs. Once down the stairs, Mumsie lights more candles. House lights come up to reveal the elegance of their home.)

EVE

Mr. Donnelly do sit down.

LT. DONNELLY

Winter is still upon us. I pray not leave slush on the carpet.

(Eve approaches Donnelly. Goodall grabs her hand and stands beside her.)

LT. DONNNELLY

Mrs. Goodall, there is a sensitive matter I must discuss with you. A child, rather children have gone missing. We have reports that the child and Mother was lately with you.

EVE

I meet with lots of families, Sir. Could it be possible that the child is not missing but simply lost? There have been several returning refugees from Ontario since the war. And Detroit is not the easiest to navigate.

LT. DONNELLY

Well, ahh, we feel that this particular missing child issue may be, uh, of a serious nature. See the sibling was, (the Lt. coughs) please forgive me Ma’am.

EVE

Mumsie, water.

(Mumsie exits.)

LT. DONNELLY

It has been the most trying day.

GOODALL

Would you like a sherry? You’re men?

LT. DONNELLY

No thank you. We will be retiring once we’re done here.

EVE

Tea?

LT. DONNELLY

EVE, (glances at Ephraim) Mrs. Goodall, the child that is missing was a resident of Chatham, Ontario in Windsor. He came over with his mother and sister to reunite with family…. from the Southern States. They were interviewed by you and cleared for reunification with the typical stipulation that they were to remain in Michigan for 6 months. As you know, the city is ill equipped with handling the influx of Reunifers from the South and Canada….

GOODALL

They’ll change. The House Bill I am working on will reallocate and redirect 2% of Tariffs for the Ex Slave Reunification Project. We are in the transitional phase, but the Republican Party guarantees that from the country’s surplus of over $140 Million, families will be rejoined and placed in sustainable living situations. Beforehand, we must come to an agreement with the Civil War Pensions Bureau.

LT. DONNELLY

I don’t know about all your Fredrick Douglas fancy talk Mr. Goodall. I’m just a farm boy from West Ireland.

(Mumsie re-enters with a tray of tea.)

EVE  
Mumsie, you’re so good. Gentleman, please.

(Eve serves the 2 Officers first. She then hands Donnelly a cup, followed by her husband, who waves the tea away.)

EVE

Lt. Donnelly, where is the mother and sibling now? Maybe they have reunited with the boy.

DONNELLY

I’m afraid that is unlikely. You see, the Sister has died., She was found in Belle Isle, with her feet and hands removed.

(We here the children gasp from upstairs.)

MUMSIE

(yells)

To sleep with You!

(Mumsie rushes upstairs. She slams the children’s bedroom door behind her.)

Lt. DONNELLY

What do you remember?

(Eve is speechless. Goodall comforts his wife.)

GOODALL

It’s rather late Lt. This is all very shocking. Do you mind if we give a statement in the morning?

(The Lt. takes a deep breath.)

Lt. DONNELLY

I apologize for intruding at this hour. A child who’s been, well, I’ve never seen anything like…. Yes, the morrow will be more expediate.

(The Lieutenant motions to his Officers.)

Lt. DONNELLY

Thank for the tea. Mr. Donnelly. Ms. Donnelly.

(The Lt. and the Officers exit out the door, stage left.)

Goodall closes the door behind them and stares at this wife in shock.

Stage Black.

END OF SCENE 1

SCENE 2

Lights Up on Stage Left.

Stage Right is dark.

SETTING: The Office of U.S. Customs – REFUGEE OFFICE. DETROIT.

EVE is sitting at a desk, wearing glasses looking at a newspaper. Her boss, GREYSON BLACKFEET comes out of his office

GREYSON BLACKFEET

Eve?

EVE

Yes, Mr. Blackfeet?

GREYSON BLACKFEET

Where are you? I’ve been calling you.

(Eve looks embarrassed)

GREYSON BLACKFEET  
 (sighs)

This missing… let’s try to remain focus. We have a bigger issue.

EVE

I apologize Mr. Blackfeet.

GREYSON BLACKFEET

Don’t apologize, just get back to the task at hand. There are hundreds of reclaimers who need to be processed. The sooner we are able to get through the paperwork the sooner Tribes can rightfully reclaim their land.

EVE

My husband says that Congress is quite busy with the fight between the Civil War Pension Bureau and the Railroad.

BLACKFEET

To Hell with the Railroad and Pension Bureau! Has the whole world been hypnotized by the got darn railroad or what to do with the slaves? (pause) I apologize Eve. I’m short with you. I’m short with myself. Let me know later how your meeting with Lt. Donnelly goes. That poor Mother. I think, I’ll retire early today.

(Eve watches Greyson Blackfeet grab his hat to exit the office.)

EVE

Greyson? I will have these papers complete by the end of the week, Sir.

(Greyson Blackfeet forces a gentle smile and exits Stage Left. Eve rises and looks out at the audience. We hear seagulls and the river. A foghorn blows.)

Lights dim to dark on Stage Left.

Lights up on Stage Right.

Setting: McNeil House the Livingroom. There is a fireplace stage left with a mirror above the mantle. The room is richly furnished in the Victorian fashion of the day. The room consist of 2 big comfy chairs with an end table between them. A couch and a Ladies chair.

Constance McNeil is checking over the place settings. She goes to check herself in a mirror.

Elijah McNeil comes into the room fixing a cufflink. He sees his wife looking at herself in the mirror. He comes up behind her and kisses are gentle on the chick. He presses himself up against her and begins to lift her dress. The doorbell rings. Constance and Elijah do not stop.

EPHRAIM GOODALL

(offstage)

Do you need help My Dear?

EVE GOODALL

(offstage)

No thank you.

EPHRAIM GOODALL

(offstage)

You’re going to muddy your bustle.

EVE GOODALL (offstage)

Shhhhh. Good Lord Ephraim.

(The McNeil’s discontinue their passion. The Goodalls enter from Stage Right.)

EVE GOODALL  
Constance, please forgive our lateness.

(Constance approaches Eve and greets her with both cheeks. Constance greets Ephraim the same. Elijah remains near the fireplace. He lights a cigarette.)

CONSTANCE

None of that, please. I take it the roads are still unpleasant?

GOODALL

It hasn’t snowed in days, yet the snow is still there. Planted like fresh cobblestones.

ELIJAH

It is winter.

EVE

I wouldn’t mind it so much if were fresh snow. Not this solid gray muck that sticks to everything.

CONTANCE

Come and sit please and get yourselves warm.

Each person sits. The gentlemen sit the women, and then they take their sits.

ELIJAH

Ephraim, I hear you’re still at loggerheads with the Democrats there in DC. The railroad expansion must be a godsend with your frequent trips back to Detroit.

CONSTANCE

Which is Elijah’s subtle way of expresses HIS frustration with the expansion.

EPHAIM

Vanderbilt does throw his weight around.

EVE

He can afford to.

EPHRAIM

I thought I would be creating legislature that would solidify the Negro as a sustainable and crucial contributed to the United States, as well as all Americans. And there I am having meal after meal with money bosses.

(Fannie Harper enters from Stage Right.)

FANNIE

Careful Dear, they want you to be distracted.

EVE

Fannie Dearest.

(Constance rises to greet Fannie. The men rise as well. Fannie kisses everyone.)

CONSTANCE  
I’d given up on your appearance tonight.

FANNIE

Oh, well, I do like to keep you on your toes Constance, Dear. And Elijah, I see you’re still at your same tricks.

ELIJAH

And what tricks might that be, Old Fannie Girl?

FANNIE

Pretending to be interested in Goodalls Government work when you’re really trying to extract information for stock trades.

ELIJAH

We all can’t have earned our money the way you did, Fannie.

FANNIE

And why not? (she winks at ELIJAH)

(Everyone gives a good laugh.)

EVE

Fannie you’re horrible.

ELIJAH

Is it wrong for be to benefit from good gospel?

FANNIE

Speaking of gospel. I heard that you two were meeting with our Police Lt today. Pray tell?

EPHRAIM

If you know that much Fannie, I’m sure you know why.

CONSTANCE

Police?

EVE

I don’t think we can speak of it.

FANNIE

Quite tragic really.

ELIJAH

Now you must tell.

EPHRAIM

A child has gone missing. His family crossed over from Canada. Maybe on one of your transport vessels Elijah.

CONSTANCE

A doubt the child is missing. It’s common for parents to sell their children to the South or to Foreigners. Why would the Police think this any different?

FANNIE

But normally the mother and father leave with the money. They do not report their children missing to the police.

EPRHAIM

Why would they need to speak with you?

EVE and EPHRIAM exchange looks.

EVE

A mother and her two children arrived at our office last week. One child is missing and the other…. Murdered. Her hands and feet were missing.

(FANNIE gasp.)

ELIJAH

Good Lord. I’d thought nothing could shock me after the war.

CONSTANCE  
What are the Police saying?

EPHRAIM

They don’t know. This is why they came to Eve. They thought she might can help. They wanted her to look at the body. I accompanied her.

FANNIE

That must have been awful for you Eve. And they were from Canada? Ex-slaves?

EVE

The Mother. The children were born in Canada. The children only spoke French. However, the mother spoke of how if she hadn’t escaped she would have……

(Eve stares off into space.)

FANNIE

Eve?

EPHRAIM

Darling, are you alright?

EVE

(jumping to her feet)

I must see Lt. Donnelly now.

EPHRAIM

What on earth?

EVE

I think I know what might have happened to girl. We have to find her brother. I think he’s still in Belle Isle.

STAGE GOES TO BLACK

END OF PLAY