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DEDICATION

This play came together very similar to storyline of Bone Soup. I needed some help casting the show and so, I called upon friends and community members to lend a hand by suggesting actors they knew who could bring the play to life. Who knew that these friends (some who had never celebrated Kwanzaa before) would become the actors who ended up performing in the play? Thank you catching the Kwanzaa spirit and for helping over 1,000 audience members to become educated and excited about its principles during the Kwanzaa play tour. You all deserve the Kwanzaa Spirit Award for your amazing work! I would also like to dedicate this play to all of the Culture Kingdom Kids participants, parents, clients and other supporters who have been involved in the program since 2010. I truly appreciate your support in making my dreams come true. Happy Kwanzaa today and forever!
# BONE SOUP: A KWANZAA STORY

By JESSICA MARIE SMITH

CAST OF CHARACTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
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<td>MAULANA</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>NEIGHBOR ONE</td>
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<td>NEIGHBOR TWO</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEIGHBOR FOUR</td>
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</tbody>
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# SETTING

Place: Culture Kingdom.
Time: During the time of recession.

The Pan-African flag makes up the UPSTAGE backdrop. A full Kwanzaa table with all elements is also UPSTAGE. All items on the Kwanzaa table are oversized so that the AUDIENCE can see them.
BONE SOUP: A KWANZAA STORY

1 AT RISE: GRIOT ENTERS, crosses to the storyteller’s position at the edge of the stage, then speaks directly to the AUDIENCE.

GRIOT: Once upon a time, in a land called Culture Kingdom, not too far from (insert name of the city where performance is taking place), lived people who celebrated Kwanzaa, an African American holiday that celebrates culture, family and community! (NEIGHBORS ENTER.) Each day, the citizens sang their national anthem together in the spirit of Umoja, the Kwanzaa principle for Unity. (GRIOT and NEIGHBORS create a beat and rap to the rhythm.)

“Kwanzaa Spirit Rap”

10 GRIOT/NEIGHBORS: Habari gani?!
What’s the news?
The Kwanzaa spirit lives in you!
Umoja!
Ujima!

15 Kuumba and Nia!
Ujamaa!
Imani and Kujichagulia!
With these seven principles combined,
We are the spirit of Kwanzaa time!

20 Harambee!
Harambee!
Let’s pull together! (NEIGHBORS lie on the floor in sleeping positions.)

GRIOT: Each morning, the citizens of Culture Kingdom woke up and gave thanks to the creator. (As NEIGHBORS stretch to wake up.) Then, they asked themselves, “What is my Nia?” or “What is my purpose?” (NEIGHBORS pantomime asking questions, then pause in a thinking position.) Once they figured it out, they would use Kujichagulia, the Kwanzaa principle for Self Determination to decide how they would carry out their goals for the day. (NEIGHBORS chant reflectively.)

“Kujichagulia Chant”

NEIGHBOR ONE: Who? Who?
NEIGHBOR TWO: Am I…
Really who I say I am?

35 NEIGHBOR THREE: Am I…
All that I ought to be?
NEIGHBOR FOUR: Am I…
Really who I say I am?
Am I...
All that I ought to be?

**ALL:** Am I...
Really who I say I am?

Am I...
All that I ought to be?
Am I...
Really who I say I am?
Am I...

All that I ought to be? *(NEIGHBORS run OFF, NEIGHBORS ONE, TWO and THREE quickly RENTER with items to prepare for Kwanzaa. NEIGHBOR ONE begins weaving a straw mat. NEIGHBOR TWO carves a wooden candle holder [the kinara]. NEIGHBOR THREE makes red, black and green candles.)*

**GRIOT:** They used Kuumba, the Kwanzaa Principle of Creativity prepare for Kwanzaa.

**NEIGHBOR THREE:** *(To NEIGHBOR ONE.)* Jambo, neighbor! What are you doing?

**NEIGHBOR ONE:** *(Holds up the straw mat.)* I’m using my Kuumba to weave a mkéka, the mat that we place on the Kwanzaa table. *(To NEIGHBOR TWO.)* Habari gani, sister?! What are you doing?

**NEIGHBOR TWO:** *(Holds up the candlestick.)* I’m using my Kuumba to carve a kinara, the candle holder we place on the Kwanzaa table.

**NEIGHBOR ONE:** *(To NEIGHBOR THREE.)* Jambo, brother! What are you doing?

**NEIGHBOR THREE:** *(Holds up the candles.)* I’m making red, black and green candles to place in the kinara that goes on the Kwanzaa table.

**GRIOT:** They used Kujichagulia, Self Determination, to define for themselves, name themselves and create for themselves. *(NEIGHBOR THREE EXITS. NEIGHBOR FOUR ENTERS carrying a baby wrapped in kente cloth.)*

**NEIGHBOR ONE:** Jambo, neighbor! What shall you call the baby now that he is born?

**NEIGHBOR FOUR:** I shall give him a Swahili name. Since he was born during Kwanzaa time, I will call him Zawadi. It means “Kwanzaa gift” in Swahili. *(NEIGHBORS place their Kwanzaa items on the table.)*

**GRIOT:** The citizens of Culture Kingdom used Ujima, the Kwanzaa principle of Collective Work and Responsibility to work together to solve their problems and meet their needs.
NEIGHBOR ONE: (Calls NEIGHBORS TWO and FOUR over to him.) Hey, neighbors, since Kwanzaa means first fruits, we must have fresh fruits for the Kwanzaa table. Can you help me pick fruits from my garden?

NEIGHBOR TWO: Sure! I would be glad to help you! We'll need muhindi or corn to place on the Kwanzaa table. Can you help me pick the corn?

NEIGHBOR ONE: Sure! I'll get some of my friends to help us, and we'll finish the harvesting the crops in no time! (NEIGHBORS pantomime gardening chores like picking, weeding, digging, etc.)

GRIOT: Everyone owned a business and supported each other's businesses around them in the spirit of Ujamaa, the Kwanzaa principle for Cooperative Economics.

NEIGHBOR THREE: (ENTERS, waving the Pan African flag.) Red, black and green flags for sale! Get your Pan African flags for the best prices in Culture Kingdom! (NEIGHBORS ONE and TWO run up, pantomiming money in their hands.)

GRIOT: Through it all, they believed in Imani, the Kwanzaa principle for Faith, which meant to believe and trust in themselves, their parents, their teachers and their leaders and our ability to overcome adversity while making progress as a people. (NEIGHBORS line up DOWNSTAGE.)

NEIGHBOR ONE: When I grow up, I will be like President Barack Obama, the first African American president of the United States.

NEIGHBOR TWO: When I grow up, I will be like (insert name of famous African American inventor), inventor of the (insert their invention).

NEIGHBOR THREE: When I grow up, I will be like (insert name of a famous African American leader), the first African American to (insert accomplishment).

NEIGHBOR FOUR: When I grow up, I will be just like (insert name of a famous African American youth) the youngest African American to (insert accomplishment).

GRIOT: One day, a terrible plague called “The Recession” hit Culture Kingdom. (SOUND EFFECT: THUNDER. ALL shudder in fear at the sound. During the following, NEIGHBORS slowly turn and cross UPSTAGE, depressed and sad, and form a line with their backs to the AUDIENCE.) Once the recession hit the kingdom, it affected everyone in many ways. People lost their families, jobs, cars, businesses and their homes. Pretty soon, everyone forgot to celebrate the Kwanzaa principles because they were all so stressed out. This left the community very depressed and even more disconnected. It was a very sad time. (MAULANA and.
KARENGA ENTER with their travelling bags.) Several months later, two scholars Maulana and Karenga returned to their homeland Culture Kingdom after a yearlong study abroad trip in Africa. (SOUND EFFECT: MAGICAL WIND CHIME. [NOTE: Whenever anyone says “Africa,” it’s spoken as if it is a magical and fascinating place.]) They had visited all 54 countries on the continent of Africa... (SOUND EFFECT: MAGICAL WIND CHIME.) ...to learn about its many cultures and diverse people. (MAULANA and KARENGA cross the stage and pantomime traveling through Africa, sightseeing, taking pictures, meeting with people, trying new foods, etc.) They were so excited to share with their community all the knowledge they had obtained, but when they got home, they were sadly surprised at how much their kingdom had changed for the worse. The first thing they noticed was that they could not find employment. Though they were highly-qualified, they could not find jobs as professors or in any other field. Day by day, they began to run low on resources. They hoped to get the support of the citizens of their hometown. They stopped at the University of Culture Kingdom and knocked on the door of the university President. (MAULANA and KARENGA cross to the line of NEIGHBORS. MAULANA knocks. SOUND EFFECT: KNOCK. NEIGHBOR ONE turns around.)

MAULANA: Excuse me. We have just returned home from a yearlong study abroad trip to the continent of Africa... (SOUND EFFECT: MAGICAL WIND CHIME.) ...and would be honored to teach at your fine university. Are you hiring?

NEIGHBOR ONE: Absolutely not! We are in a recession— (SOUND EFFECT: THUNDER. EVERYONE shudders.) —and I have had to let go most of the professors. Come back next year. Good day!

GRIO: Now, the travelers had the spirit of Imani, the Kwanzaa principle for Faith, and were not ones to give up easily. They decided to keep trying and went to a successful business owner near the University of Culture Kingdom. (MAULANA and KARENGA move down the line. KARENGA knocks. SOUND EFFECT: KNOCK. NEIGHBOR TWO turns around.)

KARENGA: Pardon me. We have just returned home from a yearlong study abroad trip to continent of Africa... (SOUND EFFECT: MAGICAL WIND CHIME.) ...and are looking for work. Are you hiring any workers for your business?

NEIGHBOR TWO: I most certainly am not. We are in a recession! (SOUND EFFECT: THUNDER. EVERYONE shudders.) I’ve had to downsize my company. I barely have enough work to give my workers let alone some strangers. I’m sorry.
GRIOT: The scholars went to the office of another successful business owner, one who was known for being very wealthy. (MAULANA and KARENGA move down the line. MAULANA knocks. NEIGHBOR THREE turns around.) They asked him if they could work for him to earn some money and his response was—

NEIGHBOR THREE: Absolutely not! We are in a recession! (SOUND EFFECT: THUNDER. EVERYONE shudders.) I have worked very hard to have a life of luxury. Why would I want to share it with a stranger? Happy holidays!

GRIOT: No matter where the scholars Maulana and Karenga went everyone said the same thing— (NEIGHBOR FOUR turns to join them.)

NEIGHBORS: We are in a recession! (SOUND EFFECT: THUNDER. EVERYONE shudders.)

GRIOT: The travelers became very disappointed in the citizens of Culture Kingdom.

MAULANA: This is not the Culture Kingdom we left one year ago. Maybe we should move to another kingdom. Our own people have not welcomed us as we expected. (MUSIC CUE: “Culture Queen’s Theme Song.” [See PRODUCTION NOTES.])

CULTURE QUEEN: (From OFF.) “Up, you mighty race! You can accomplish what you will!” (CULTURE QUEEN surprises MAULANA and KARENGA by “flying” IN from the back of and the AUDIENCE. She wears a cape and a crown, a royal superhero.)

GRIOT: Just then, out of nowhere appeared the superfly, black-history-knowing, pride-showing, race-upholding super-heroine Culture Queen. Culture Queen was the queen of Culture Kingdom. She was part warrior queen, part superhero on a mission to uplift the citizens of Culture Kingdom—

CULTURE QUEEN: Through education and inspiration! (CITIZENS cross to CULTURE QUEEN, walking reverently. One CITIZEN is holding a baby doll wrapped in kente cloth and gives it to GRIOT.)

GRIOT: As a baby, she was given the seven super powers of Kwanzaa by the Almighty Ancestors. Umoja! Kujichagulia! Ujima! Ujamaa! Nia! Kuumba! Imani! With those powers combined, she inspired her citizens to turn the world right side up. (CULTURE QUEEN stands in an empowered “warrior woman” position with her legs about shoulder width apart, one hand on her hip and a fist in the air.) Now, Culture Queen wasn’t the type of ruler to just sit high and mighty upon her throne while her people were suffering. Nor did she try to solve all of their problems. (CITIZENS start pantomime like they are bickering about a problem.) Instead, Culture Queen used her super powers to inspire her people to uplift themselves.

End of script sample.
PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES
Straw mat, wooden candlestick, red, black and green candles, Pan African flag, doll wrapped in Kente cloth, large bone resembling the Ishango bone, large cauldron, baskets, bowls, spoons (NEIGHBORS)
Travel bag with wooden spoon (MAULANA)
Travel bag (KARENGA)

SOUND EFFECTS AND MUSIC
Thunder, magical wind chime, knock, "Culture Queen’s Theme Song,” (something heroic and empowering, like a 60s or 70s style funk), instrumental version of “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”
The play uses poetry that is rapped, sung or chanted with rhythm. The beats can be created offstage by other actors or musicians using rhythmic instruments like djembe drums, chimes, kalimbas, jingle bells, maracas, cowbells, tambourines guitars and rhythm sticks to add atmosphere to the play. The sound effects can also be performed live with these instruments. Be creative.

COSTUMES
The colors of Kwanzaa are red, black and green. To honor this, all characters will wear a variety of African print outfits, fabrics and headwear in the colors of red, black and green.
CULTURE QUEEN wears a cape and a golden crown, with more flashes of gold here in there in her boots, jewelry or other accessories.

FLEXIBLE CASTING
All characters except for Culture Queen can be played by either males or females with a simple change in the pronouns used in referring to them.

GLOSSARY OF KWANZAA AND SWAHILI TERMS
Umoja: (oo-MO-jah) Unity; the first principle of Kwanzaa
Kujichagulia: (koo-jee-chah-GOO-lee-ah) Self-determination; the second principle of Kwanzaa
Ujima: (oo-JEE-mah) Collective work, responsibility; the third principle of Kwanzaa
Ujamaa: (oo-jah-MAH-ah) Collective economics; the fourth principle of Kwanzaa
NOTES

Nia: (NEE-ah) Purpose; the fifth principle of Kwanzaa
Kuumba: (koo-oom-bah) Creativity; the sixth principle of Kwanzaa
Imani: (ee-MAH-nee) Faith; the seventh principle of Kwanzaa
Asante sana: (ah-SAHN-tee) “Thank you very much!”
Habari gani: (Ha-ba-ri ga-ni) “How are you?”; “What is the news?”
Harambee: (hah-RAHM-beh) “Pull together.”
Ishango Bone: an ancient bone tool from the Congo region with multiple sets of notches or tally marks from end to end
Jambo: (ja m boh; or ya m boh) “Hello!”
Karamu: (kah-RAH-moo) feast
Kente cloth: (ken-tee klÔTH) a traditional African fabric made of interwoven strips of cloth
Kinara: (kee-NAH-rah) candlestick; a symbol of Kwanzaa representative of African heritage
Kwanzaa: (KWAN-za) Swahili for first fruits; the holiday established by Dr. Maulana Karenga. It celebrates family, community and culture and is celebrated from December 26 to January 1.
Mazao: (mah-ZAH-oh) crops; a symbol of Kwanzaa representing the rewards of collective labor
Mkeka: (em-KEH-kah) mat; a symbol of Kwanzaa representative of tradition and history, the foundation for building
Muhindi: (moo-HEEN-dee) corn; a symbol of Kwanzaa representing children and the future
Zawadi: (zah-WAH-dee) gifts; a symbol of Kwanzaa representative of love and commitment between parent and child

“Up, you mighty race! You can accomplish what you will!”
— Marcus Garvey

ORIGINAL CASTS
Bone Soup was first performed at the Smithsonian’s Anacostia Community Museum during their annual Kwanzaa Festival on December 27th, 2011.
Griot.............................Carlton Curtis
Culture Queen........................Jessica Marie Smith
Maulana............................Attiyah Jenkins
Karenga............................Daevon Gurley
Neighbor One......................Bashea Jenkins
Neighbor Two .........................Nana Malaya Rucker
Neighbor Three ......................Elise Lowery
Musician ...............................Benjamin Sands
Costumes ...............................Zoheret Elineer
Set Design .............................Carmen Smith

Griot ........................................Carlton Curtis
Culture Queen ...........................Jessica Marie Smith
Maulana .................................Shanice Jones
Karenga .................................Jared Shamberger
Neighbor One .........................Bashea Imana and Jivon Jackson
Neighbor Two .........................Lonnie Simmons
Neighbor Three ......................Adjoa Imana and Angela Harvey-Bowen

Musician .................................Benjamin Sands Jr.
Costumes ...............................Zoheret Elineer
Set Design .............................Carmen Smith
We hope you’ve enjoyed this script sample.

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