

POLLYANNA

by Jon Jory

Copyright © 2021 by Jon Jory, All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-1-64479-153-0

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Brooklyn Publishers LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Brooklyn Publishers LLC. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers LLC. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers LLC.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this Work must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this Work. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the Work. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this Work is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: ***Produced by special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers LLC.***

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Brooklyn Publishers LLC.

BROOKLYN PUBLISHERS LLC
P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406
TOLL FREE (888) 473-8521 • FAX (319) 368-8011

POLLYANNA

A stage adaptation in two acts

by Jon Jory

Adapted from the book By Eleanor M. Porter

SYNOPSIS: True to the classic book, this adaptation tells the story of Pollyanna, the eternal optimist, and how she changes the lives of those around her for good. Full of strong female roles, Jory's full-length adaptation is a striking retelling full of community, kindness, and heart.

DURATION: 70 minutes.

TIME: Early 1900s.

SETTING: Middle America.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(16 females, 4 males, 1 either, 2 extras)

MISS POLLY (f).....A woman of fifty. *(137 lines)*
 NANCY (f).....Miss Polly's housekeeper.
(84 lines)
 MRS. THOMAS (f).....The gardener. *(25 lines)*
 TIMOTHY (m).....Young man. Helper to Mrs.
 Thomas. *(4 lines)*
 MRS. SNOW'S MAID (f)A young woman. *(11 lines)*
 MRS. SNOW (f).....An older woman. *(18 lines)*
 MR. PENDLETON (m)A man of fifty. Something of a
 hermit. *(89 lines)*
 JIMMY BEAN (m)A boy of fifteen. *(23 lines)*
 POLLYANNA (f)A girl of fifteen. *(235 lines)*
 MRS. FORD (f).....Head of the Ladies Aid. *(3 lines)*
 MRS. CANTWELL (f)A Ladies Aider. *(4 lines)*
 MRS. DONOVAN (f)A Ladies Aider. *(3 lines)*
 MRS. BEAN (f).....A Ladies Aider. *(3 lines)*
 DR. CHILTON (m)A man of fifty. *(30 lines)*
 MR. PENDLETON'S MAID (f).....A girl of seventeen. *(4 lines)*
 NURSE HUNT (f).....A nurse. *(9 lines)*

DR. MEADE (m/f)A doctor. (9 lines)
MILLY SNOW (f)A young woman. (2 lines)
WIDOW BENTON (f)A woman of forty. (6 lines)
MRS. TARBELL (f)A woman of thirty. (3 lines)
MRS. PAYSON (f)A woman of bad reputation.
(3 lines)

EXTRAS:

TWO MEN (m)(Non-Speaking)

SET

The play takes place on a three level set. The lowest being stage level. This allows us to change locales in a cinematic way. Costumed stagehands may strike and set furniture even when a scene is taking place on another level. We are in the early part of the twentieth century, somewhere between 1910 and 1920, in Middle America. Set props needed include: five chairs, one 1900s wheelchair/rolling chair, simple bed on wheels, table, short bench, and couch

COSTUMES

All costumes should be early 1900s dress and suitable for everyday life. Character specific costumes that are referenced in the script are listed below:

TIMOTHY – simply dressed
POLLYANNA – red gingham dress
MR. PENDLETON – hat
WIDOW BENTON – blue bow
MRS. SNOW – dark curly hair

PROPS

- ☐ broom
- ☐ letter
- ☐ rake
- ☐ trunk
- ☐ jelly jar
- ☐ stick
- ☐ old pocket knife
- ☐ set of keys
- ☐ thermometer
- ☐ umbrella
- ☐ prescription paper
- ☐ white pills
- ☐ pitcher and glass
- ☐ crutches

DO NOT COPY

AT START: *At lights up, NANCY, the housekeeper is sweeping on the highest level. MISS POLLY, a woman in her early fifties, enters.*

MISS POLLY: Nancy!

NANCY: *(Cheerful but continuing her work.)* Yes, ma'am?

MISS POLLY: When I talk to you, Nancy, I wish you to stop work.

NANCY: Yes, ma'am. I was only keeping on as you told me this morning to hurry with the dishes.

MISS POLLY: I did not ask for explanations.

NANCY: Yes, ma'am.

MISS POLLY: You may clear the small room in the attic. My niece, Miss Pollyanna Whittier is coming to live with me.

NANCY: *(Pleased.)* How very nice for you, Miss.

MISS POLLY: Is it? Just because I happened to have a sister who was silly enough to bring unnecessary children into a world full of them, doesn't mean it's nice. Finish your work elsewhere. *(NANCY exits. MISS POLLY takes out a letter. She reads.)* "You deceased sister's husband, the Reverend John Whittier, died two weeks ago leaving a daughter fourteen years of age. Hence I am writing you..." And then off he sends her like a package. I never heard of such a thing. *(As she exits.)* Pollyanna. What a ridiculous name.

NANCY enters on level two and meets MRS. THOMAS, the gardener, who has a rake in hand.

NANCY: Mrs. Thomas, did you know a young girl was coming here to live with Miss Polly?

MRS. THOMAS: Surely you're jokin'? A gardener's told nuthin'.

NANCY: Her sister's girl.

MRS. THOMAS: Miss Jennie?

NANCY: Don't know the name, but she's passed.

MRS. THOMAS: She's not the woman for a child in the house. She's prickly to deal with and crazy particular.

NANCY: Well, that she is. I can't please her no matter how hard I try.

MRS. THOMAS: There's people born who don't like to be pleased. She's one.

NANCY: Be nice to have a child's pleasure in the house though.

MRS. THOMAS: If she's allowed it.

MRS. THOMAS exits. NANCY moves to the stage level, where she meets TIMOTHY, a young man simply dressed.

TIMOTHY: Miss Polly said I should drive you to the station – says to look for a young girl in a gingham dress.

NANCY: I hope for her sake she's quiet and sensible and don't bang doors.

TIMOTHY: For our sake as well as hers. Miss Polly don't like sound she don't make.

Lights change. TIMOTHY points.

NANCY: *(Pointing.)* Train's in.

POLLYANNA dressed in a red gingham dress enters looking around.

POLLYANNA: Oh, I'm glad, glad, glad to see you. I hoped you would come to meet me! I'm so glad you look just like you do look.

NANCY: This is Timothy, the odd-jobs man.

POLLYANNA: Timothy, how wonderful. I've a trunk over there.

Lights change. Three chairs are set on level two representing the wagon. TIMOTHY is the driver. POLLYANNA in the middle. NANCY on the outside. SFX: horses' hooves.

POLLYANNA: I hope it's far. I love to drive. What lovely wood. Father told me all about it. You probably wonder at my red gingham dress. Well, there just wasn't any black things in the last missionary barrel the church got.

NANCY: Well, I'm sure it... it'll be all right.

POLLYANNA: I've been a bit alone you know. But oh, Aunt Polly, I'm so glad I've got you.

NANCY: No, no, girl... I'm only Nancy the hired girl and not Aunt Polly at all.

POLLYANNA: But there is an Aunt Polly?

TIMOTHY: *(Chuckling.)* You can be sure there is.

POLLYANNA: Well, I'm glad after all she didn't come to meet me, for now I've got her still coming and you besides.

TIMOTHY: You can see the house up ahead.

POLLYANNA: Oh, how very, very pretty! Is my Aunt Polly rich, Nancy?

NANCY: Rich indeed.

POLLYANNA: Well, it will be a great adventure to see what that is.

A chair is set on level one. MISS POLLY sits in it. TIMOTHY, NANCY, and POLLYANNA exit the carriage. Lights change. TIMOTHY and NANCY exit. POLLYANNA moves down to level one.

POLLYANNA: Hello.

MISS POLLY extends her hand.

MISS POLLY: How do you do, Pollyanna.

POLLYANNA runs to her and kneels beside her.

POLLYANNA: Oh, Aunt Polly, Aunt Polly. I'm ever so glad you've let me come to live with you!

MISS POLLY: Don't mess me, please. Nancy! (*NANCY appears.*) You have a trunk, I presume?

POLLYANNA: Yes, ma'am. There's not much in it but Father's books, but I love having anything of his.

MISS POLLY: I would like it understood that I do not care to have you talk of your father to me. (*She rises.*) You may follow me to your room.

POLLYANNA is looking about her.

POLLYANNA: How awfully glad you must be that you're so rich.

MISS POLLY: (*Taken aback.*) The lord has not seen fit to bestow riches. What a thing to say. Follow me.

A simple bed and chair have been set on level three.

MISS POLLY: Here you are. I am sure this will be quite adequate. I will send Nancy to you.

MISS POLLY exits. POLLYANNA looks about and then sits on the bed wiping her eyes. NANCY enters.

NANCY: Put you in the attic has she? Fine way to be treated.

POLLYANNA: It's a... well, a very nice room, don't you think so? And I can be glad there's no looking glass as I won't have to see my freckles. *(Goes to an imaginary window.)* How beautiful! Meadows and trees – what could be nicer.

NANCY: Well, you're an angel straight from heaven, you are, stuck in the attic with but one chair and one drawer.

SFX: a bell rings.

NANCY: Lordy, she's a callin' for us. Get yourself situated. I'll hold her off. I'll be back. *(Exits.)*

POLLYANNA: *(At the window.)* What a great spreading beauty of a tree – and a limb within reach. *(Looks around her.)* Should I? Or rather, why shouldn't I?

Lights down. POLLYANNA exits. NANCY rushes across at stage level.

NANCY: Mrs. Thomas! Mrs. Thomas!

MRS. THOMAS: *(Enters.)* Good heaven's girl, are you on fire?

NANCY: The child's gone, vanished and the window open.

MRS. THOMAS: *(Looking off.)* Now is there a child alive that doesn't prefer a tree to a room?

NANCY: Yes, but...

MRS. THOMAS points off and up.

MRS. THOMAS: On the huge rock there. Got to as near heaven as she could, I'd say.

NANCY: Well, she'll have no dinner if I don't drag her back. If the mistress calls for me, tell her I've gone for a stroll. *(Exits.)*

MRS. THOMAS: Oh she'll like that.

MRS. THOMAS exits. Lights change. POLLYANNA enters and sits on the ground on level two. NANCY enters level two, huffing and puffing.

NANCY: Good lord, Polly, you scared the hair off my head. Thought you'd flew right up through the roof.

POLLYANNA: Except I flew down instead of up. Down the tree outside my window.

NANCY: Let us pray your aunt don't know that. You're late for supper which means bread and milk in the kitchen with me.

POLLYANNA: I'm glad for I'll get to be with you.

NANCY: Is there any trouble in being glad about everything?

POLLYANNA: Well that's the game, y'know.

NANCY: What game?

POLLYANNA: The game is to find something about everything to be glad about. Father taught me.

NANCY: Well that's queer doin's.

POLLYANNA: The harder it is, the more fun to figure it out. When you're hunting for the glad things, the harder it is, the greater the fun. It's a lovely game, Nancy. It'll be a bit harder now that there's no one to play it with. Perhaps Aunt Polly?

NANCY: There's no play in that woman.

POLLYANNA: Oh.

NANCY: See here now, I don't say I'll play it well, but I'll do the best I can in my fashion.

POLLYANNA: *(Embraces her.)* Oh, Nancy!

The lights change. POLLYANNA moves down to level one. MISS POLLY is there seated in her chair.

MISS POLLY: There you are. Have you had your supper?

POLLYANNA: Yes, Aunt Polly.

MISS POLLY: I am sorry to have been obliged to send you to the kitchen for bread and milk.

POLLYANNA: You mustn't feel bad about that one bit. I liked it, and Nancy too.

MISS POLLY: To bed then. Tomorrow we must plan your hours and see to your clothes. Breakfast at seven. See you are down for that.

POLLYANNA hugs her.

POLLYANNA: I've had a beautiful time so far. I will love living with you. Goodnight. *(Exits.)*

MISS POLLY: Quite extraordinary. Glad I punished her and loves to live with me? What can be wrong with her?

Lights change. MRS. THOMAS enters. The chair is struck as the scene plays.

MISS POLLY: So, Mrs. Thomas, the work is clear with the chrysanthemums. I'll just have a look at the hedges.

POLLYANNA enters rushing from offstage and gives MISS POLLY a hug.

POLLYANNA: I saw you from my window, and I was so pleased to have you as my aunt that I just had to come down and hug you.

MISS POLLY: The difference between your hugs and being attacked by a wild lion is very hard to calibrate. Release me, please. We will speak of the roses later, Mrs. Thomas. *(Exits.)*

POLLYANNA: Do you always work in the garden?

MRS. THOMAS: My husband was head gardener for thirty years, but I've lost him and stepped into his shoes.

POLLYANNA: I'm so sorry you have lost him.

MRS. THOMAS: Life goes on girl.

A table and two chairs are set on level two.

MRS. THOMAS: You look a deal like your mother.

NANCY enters rushing in.

NANCY: The bell means breakfast, Pollyanna. Else it's cold toast back in the kitchen. Run!

NANCY and POLLYANNA exit running. MISS POLLY enters and sits at the table on level two.

MISS POLLY: *(Calling.)* Nancy, where is that child?

POLLYANNA: *(Rushing on.)* Terribly sorry.

MISS POLLY: Sit.

POLLYANNA does.

MISS POLLY: You have been to school, Pollyanna?

POLLYANNA: Oh yes and Father... I mean I was taught at home too.

MISS POLLY: You will enter school here. Meanwhile, you will read aloud to me a half hour each day. Have you studied music?

POLLYANNA: Well...

MISS POLLY: It will be arranged. You sew, of course?

POLLYANNA: Yes, ma'am.

MISS POLLY: Wednesday and Friday you will spend time with Nancy and learn to cook. Mornings you will sew with me. Afternoons for music. Evenings for school studies.

POLLYANNA: But I shall be left no time to live.

MISS POLLY: You're living all the time.

POLLYANNA: Breathing but not living. What of playing outdoors? Reading for my own pleasure, talking to Mrs. Thomas in the garden, adventuring about, climbing hills.... The "living" part. Just breathing is not living.

MISS POLLY: Pollyanna, you are the most extraordinary child. Care and instruction should not be ungratefully wasted.

POLLYANNA: Oh, Aunt Polly, I could never be ungrateful to you.

MISS POLLY: Could you not? Now, I've got to see to the workmen in the barn. I usually visit Mrs. Snow on Wednesdays. She's a homebound in the gray house a mile down. I wish you to take her some calf's foot jelly in my place. Can you do that?

POLLYANNA: *(Clapping her hands.)* I should be very glad to indeed. I'm ever so curious about that house.

MISS POLLY: Mrs. Snow is a trial. See you treat her nicely.

POLLYANNA: Yes, Aunt Polly.

MISS POLLY: We'll drive into town this afternoon to get you a dress that doesn't look like a table cloth. You haven't a single thing fit for a niece of mine to wear.

MRS. SNOW enters and sits in a chair on level three. Lights change. MISS POLLY exits. POLLYANNA is handed a jelly jar. She then moves to level one where she is met by a young woman, MRS. SNOW'S MAID.

POLLYANNA: Good morning, I'm...

MRS. SNOW'S MAID: What?

POLLYANNA: May I see Mrs. Snow please?

MRS. SNOW'S MAID: Why?

POLLYANNA: Well, Miss Polly Harrington comes to visit Mrs. Snow once a week and...

MRS. SNOW'S MAID: I know.

POLLYANNA: And she is engaged and has sent me to tell Mrs. Snow so that...

MRS. SNOW'S MAID: I'll tell her.

POLLYANNA: But... but I have brought Mrs. Snow some calf's foot jelly...

MRS. SNOW'S MAID: Ugh.

POLLYANNA: ...that's really very nice and a message from...

MRS. SNOW'S MAID: Follow me.

POLLYANNA and MRS. SNOW'S MAID move up to the second level. MRS. SNOW sits in a chair.

MRS. SNOW'S MAID: Visitor.

MRS. SNOW: Why?

MRS. SNOW'S MAID: Calf's foot jelly. (*Exits.*)

POLLYANNA: How do you do, Mrs. Snow? Aunt Polly says she hopes you are comfortable today and she has sent you some calf's foot jelly.

MRS. SNOW: Jelly? Of course I'm very much obliged but I was hoping t'would be lamb broth today.

POLLYANNA: Why, I thought it was chicken you wanted when folks brought you jelly.

MRS. SNOW: (*Sharply.*) What?

POLLYANNA: It's only that Nancy said it was chicken you wanted when we brought jelly, and lamb broth when we brought chicken.

MRS. SNOW: Well, Miss Impertinence, who are you?

POLLYANNA: (*Laughing.*) Oh, that isn't my name, Mrs. Snow, and I'm so glad it isn't too. That would be worse than Hephzibah, wouldn't it? I'm Pollyanna Whittier, Miss Polly Whittier, Miss Polly Harrington's niece, and I've come to live with her. That's why I'm here with the jelly this morning.

MRS. SNOW: Well, I didn't sleep a wink last night – not a wink.

POLLYANNA: You lose such a lot of time just sleeping. Don't you think so?

MRS. SNOW: Lose time sleeping?

POLLYANNA: Yes, when you might be living. It seems such a pity we can't live nights too.

MRS. SNOW: You're a perfect scandal!

POLLYANNA: Am I?

MRS. SNOW: You're the least boring person I've seen in weeks.

POLLYANNA: They didn't tell me you were so pretty.

MRS. SNOW: Me! Pretty?

POLLYANNA: Didn't you know it?

MRS. SNOW: Well no, I didn't.

POLLYANNA: Your eyes are so big and dark and your hair's dark too, and curly. I love black curls. May I fix your hair please?

MRS. SNOW: Well – I suppose – if you really wish to.

POLLYANNA: I should be so glad if I had your hair.

MRS. SNOW: No you wouldn't. Not if you were me. Not for hair or eyes or anything else – if you had to sit here all day as I do.

POLLYANNA: It would be hard to do it then, wouldn't it?

MRS. SNOW: Do what?

POLLYANNA: Be glad about things.

MRS. SNOW: Be glad about things when you're sick all the time.

POLLYANNA: That'll be a hard one won't it? I'll just run home and get my special brush and comb and be right back. I'll have the answer then. Goodbye. (*Runs out.*)

MRS. SNOW: (*Looking after her.*) Pretty? (*Calls.*) Rosalind!?

MRS. SNOW'S MAID enters.

MRS. SNOW'S MAID: Yes'm?

MRS. SNOW: Bring me my glass.

MRS. SNOW'S MAID: Why?

MRS. SNOW: Because there's a possibility I'm pretty and I wish to see.

MRS. SNOW'S MAID: *(Under her breath as she exits.)* Wouldn't get my hopes up.

MRS. SNOW: *(To herself.)* I would like my hair done. Come to think of it. I was pretty once. Could it still be the case?

The lights change. MR. PENDLETON enters on stage level. POLLYANNA enters going the other direction.

POLLYANNA: It's a nice day isn't it?

MR. PENDLETON: *(Turning.)* What say?

POLLYANNA: Not quite so nice as yesterday, I s'pose.

MR. PENDLETON: See here, child, who are you?

POLLYANNA: Pollyanna Whittier, what's your name?

MR. PENDLETON: See here, why don't you find someone your own age to bother.

POLLYANNA: There's none such nearby. But I don't mind, I like old folks. They're much nicer than they look actually.

NANCY enters and sees them talking.

MR. PENDLETON: They are, are they?

POLLYANNA: They just don't know it.

MR. PENDLETON: *(Exiting.)* Well, I'll chew on that young missy. *(Exits past NANCY, tipping his hat.)*

NANCY: Sakes alive, Miss Pollyanna, did that man speak to you?

POLLYANNA: But why shouldn't he?

NANCY: He never speaks to anyone, child – not for years. He's John Pendleton. Lives all by himself in the big house on Pendleton Hill. Both silent and cheap they say in town.

POLLYANNA: Well, you have to look for cheap things when you're poor. We had beans and fish balls generally.

NANCY: Why missy, he ain't poor. He's got cart loads of money. He could eat dollar bills if he wanted to. Some say he's crazy, and some jest cross. Some say he's got a skeleton in his closet.

POLLYANNA: What a dreadful thing to have in your closet.

NANCY: Girl, that's just a sayin' about hiding bad things. Some years he just travels months at a time in heathen countries. Then he comes back an' writes queer, odd books on things he's found.

POLLYANNA: How wonderful. He is a funny sort of man... *(As they exit.)* but that's just the sort I like.

Lights change. NANCY exits. POLLYANNA moves down and looks out over the audience. JIMMY, a boy a couple of years younger than POLLYANNA, enters and sits on the stage floor whittling a stick with an old pocket knife.

POLLYANNA: There's nothing like a sunset to drain the trouble of a day right out of a person. *(Turns and starts off but sees JIMMY.)* Hullo.

JIMMY: Hullo yourself.

POLLYANNA: *(Chuckling.)* Now you don't look as if you'd be glad even for calf's foot jelly.

JIMMY doesn't look at her but keeps whittling. POLLYANNA plops herself down.

POLLYANNA: My name's Pollyanna Whittier, what's yours?

JIMMY: *(Not giving an inch.)* Jimmy Bean.

POLLYANNA: *(A brief pause.)* I live at Miss Polly Harrington's house. Where do you live?

JIMMY: Nowhere.

POLLYANNA: Everybody lives somewhere.

JIMMY: Well, I don't. I'm huntin' up a new place.

POLLYANNA: Where'd you live before?

JIMMY: Well, if you ain't the beat 'em for asking questions!

POLLYANNA: If you'd talk more, I wouldn't talk so much.

A pause.

JIMMY: I come last year ter live at the orphans home, but I ain't wanted there, I don't believe. So I've quit. If you got a home you got folks. I ain't had folks since my daddy passed. I'm a good worker. I'd work for a home for sure.

POLLYANNA: Well that's just terrible not have a place at all. I know how you feel too because when my father died I didn't have a place 'til Aunt Polly took me. Shoot! I bet she'd take you! She's not always nice but she's real kind. She's took dogs and cats, so why not you?

JIMMY: You think? Shoot, I'd work, you know? I don't mind time in the fields. I'll work sunlight or moonshine, any time at all.

POLLYANNA: It's an awful big house. You might have to sleep in an attic room, but there's screens now so it won't be so hot, an' the flies can't get in either, to bring in the germs things on their feet. Come on now, Jimmy Bean, you can feel the dark coming on.

Lights change. POLLYANNA and JIMMY move up to level two. MISS POLLY enters.

MISS POLLY: What on earth?

POLLYANNA: Just look-a-here, Aunt Polly. It's a real live boy for you to bring up. He won't mind sleeping in the attic a bit and he says he'll work; but I shall need him most of the time to play with, I reckon.

MISS POLLY: Pollyanna, what have you shook loose in your head? Who is this dirty boy and where did you find him?

POLLYANNA: Did I mention his name was Jimmy Bean? And he is dirty too, isn't he? But now so were the cats an' dogs you took in an' I figure he'll improve with washing just as they did.

MISS POLLY: Well, what is he doing here?

POLLYANNA: Why, Aunt Polly, I just told you! He's for you. I brought him home – so he could live here, you know? He needs a home and folks. I told him how good you were to me and surely would be to him because, of course, he's nicer than cats and dogs.

MISS POLLY: Well I just... this is just... you are the most... Pollyanna, this is the most absurd thing you've done yet. As if tramp cats and mangy dogs weren't bad enough, but you must bring home beggars from the street, who—

JIMMY: I ain't no beggar ma'am an' I don't want nuthin' of you. I was calculatin' to work for my board and keep. I wouldn't come ter your

old house anyhow, if this here girl hadn't made me, a-tellin' me how you was so good and kind that you'd be jest dyin' ter take me in. Good day to ya. (*Exits.*)

POLLYANNA: Oh, Aunt Polly – why I thought you'd be glad to have him here. Being so good as you are I was sure you'd be glad.

MISS POLLY: Pollyanna, will you stop using that everlasting word, "glad"! Glad! Glad! Glad! From morning to night until I think I shall go wild!

POLLYANNA: Why, Aunt Polly, I should think you'd be glad to have me glad and... (*She breaks off and rushes from the room.*)

MISS POLLY: (*Alone.*) Well, I have surely joined the circus and that's straight!

MISS POLLY exits upstage. JIMMY crosses at stage level with POLLYANNA following.

POLLYANNA: Boy! Boy!

JIMMY stops.

POLLYANNA: I am sorry, I am.

JIMMY: I ain't no beggar!

POLLYANNA: Of course you aren't! But you mustn't blame Auntie. I probably didn't explain it right. I thought you'd have a place here, I did. Say, I'll tell you what I will do! The Ladies Aid meets this afternoon. I'll lay your case before them. That's what Father always did as to educating the heathen and new carpets or such.

JIMMY: Well I ain't a heathen or a new carpet and just what is a Ladies Aid?

POLLYANNA: Well, they sew an' give suppers and raise money and... well, well, cook.

JIMMY: Not much, you will. I'm not goin' ter stan' round and be picked over by such as they.

POLLYANNA: You don't have to be there. I'll let you know tomorrow.

JIMMY: Where?

POLLYANNA: By the road – where I found you.

JIMMY: All right. I'll see to bein' there. I'll go back to the home for the night – I hain't no other place to go. They don't keep much track of me. They just plain don't care.

POLLYANNA: Well, when I see you tomorrow, there'll be folks that do care.

POLLYANNA exits. JIMMY turns and exits in the other direction. Four wooden chairs are set on the stage floor level. MRS. FORD, MRS. CANTWELL, MRS. DONOVAN, and MRS. BEAN from the Ladies Aid enter and sit. POLLYANNA enters and stands before them.

POLLYANNA: How do you do, Ladies Aiders? I'm Pollyanna Whittier... I reckon some of you know me. I... I've come to... to lay a case before you... ummm.

MRS. FORD: Did your aunt send you, dear?

POLLYANNA: No ma'am, I came on my own. It's Jimmy Bean. He hasn't any home except the orphan one and they're full and don't want him anyway. So he's wanting a home of the common kind... folks, you know, that'll care. So, I thought some of you might like him... to live with you, you know.

MRS. CANTWELL: Well, did you ever!

MRS. DONOVAN: I never heard the like.

POLLYANNA: Oh, I forgot to say: he will work.

MRS. FORD: Well Pollyanna, that's not quite... well, you know... in the Ladies Aid line.

MRS. CANTWELL: We provide clothes and... well...

MRS. DONOVAN: Medical type supplies to missions abroad.

MRS. BEAN: In foreign climes such as Bolivia and such.

MRS. CANTWELL: We don't... well, you know.

POLLYANNA: But Jimmy Beam, he's right here and needs help bad.

Silence and then.

MRS. BEAN: Well, I don't rightly know. Perhaps as a society we might help the boy instead of sending so much money to the little boys in India.

MRS. DONOVAN: Now Letitia, that would have to be passed by the National Office down in Baltimore.

MRS. CANTWELL: We should have to contrive a very specific report...

MRS. FORD: Which would take some months, Pollyanna. But goodness, we surely do thank you for coming by.

MRS. BEAN: It was real nice.

MRS. FORD, MRS. CANTWELL, MRS. DONOVAN, and MRS. BEAN pick up their chairs and exit. POLLYANNA is alone.

POLLYANNA: *(To herself.)* Well, it's good to send clothes to the heathen, I'm not saying it's not but they acted like boys such as Jimmy Bean right here weren't of any account – only boys way off. I can't see how that's the right thing. I don't have to get home 'til half past five anyway – it'll be so much nicer to go around by the way of the woods, even if it is a climb.

SFX: a dog barking. Lights up on the top level. MR. PENDLETON lies motionless. POLLYANNA moves up.

POLLYANNA: Oh my goodness! Who? *(She kneels by the man.)* Mr. Pendleton, are you hurt?

MR. PENDLETON: *(Irritably.)* Hurt? Oh no! I'm just taking a siesta in the sunshine! Do you have the sense you were born with?

POLLYANNA: *(Hurt and confused.)* Well, I don't know as to that. I hope I do.

MR. PENDLETON: There, there child. I'm sorry. It's just this confounded leg of mine. Now listen. I've had a little fall here. Take these keys. Straight through the path there, about five minutes walk is my house. The big key will get you into the side door. You'll see a desk with a telephone on it. Do you know how to use a telephone?

POLLYANNA: Yes, sir.

MR. PENDLETON: Tell Dr. Chilton that John Pendleton is at the foot of Little Eagle Lodge in Pendleton Woods with a broken leg. He'll know what to do.

POLLYANNA: A broken leg? Oh, Mr. Pendleton, that must hurt awful! Can't I do something?

MR. PENDLETON: Yes, you can girl – but evidently you won't! Do what I ask and stop talking.

Lights change. POLLYANNA kneels by MR. PENDLETON.

MR. PENDLETON: Well, what's the trouble? Couldn't you get in?

POLLYANNA: I wouldn't be here if I hadn't gotten in. That doctor is on his way, but I wanted to be with you.

MR. PENDLETON: Well, I can't say I admire your taste. You might find a pleasant companion.

POLLYANNA: You mean because you're so cross?

MR. PENDLETON: Well, thank you for your frankness!

POLLYANNA: But you're only cross outside – you aren't cross inside a bit.

MR. PENDLETON: And how precisely do you know that?

POLLYANNA: Lots of ways. The way your dogs act with you. They know the inside of folks better than other folks do. Say, I'm going to hold your head it's rocky here.

She sits and puts his head in her lap.

MR. PENDLETON: Well, that is better.

POLLYANNA: We can have a nice talk or there's a fine lot of hymns I know.

MR. PENDLETON: I believe I'll choose the talk.

Lights dim, then brighten.

POLLYANNA: *(The end of a story.)* So, I just herded that wild bull back into the pasture he belonged in by clappin' my hands in the light of that harvest moon.

DR. CHILTON enters and moves onto level three. TWO MEN wait back a bit.

DR. CHILTON: Well, my little lady, playing nurse?

POLLYANNA: No, sir. I was only holding his head 'cause of rocky ground – didn't have a mite of medicine. But I'm glad I was here.

DR. CHILTON: So am I. I assume he's been mean as a snake as usual?

POLLYANNA: Well, some at the start, but he's got fair to middling pleasant.

DR. CHILTON: That's unusual. Good evening, John.

MR. PENDLETON: What's good about it?

DR. CHILTON: Let's start with the fact the girl found you.

Lights change. The TWO MEN help MR. PENDLETON down and offstage. Lights up on level two. NANCY enters. POLLYANNA moves down to her.

NANCY: Well, if I ain't glad ter be settin' my two eyes on you. It's half past six, my lady.

POLLYANNA: I'm not to blame, Nancy, truly I'm not. I don't think even Aunt Polly will say I am either.

NANCY: She won't have the chance. She's gone.

POLLYANNA: Gone! Did I drive her away?

NANCY: As if it was possible! No, her cousin died in Boston. She'll be gone three days. And don't you tell me you're glad!

POLLYANNA: Nancy! There are some things that tisen't right to play the game on – and I'm sure funerals is one. There's nothing in a funeral to be glad about.

NANCY: *(A chuckle.)* We can be glad tain't ours.

POLLYANNA: Well, that is true.

Lights change. NANCY exits and JIMMY enters on stage level. POLLYANNA moves down.

JIMMY: I guess it makes some sense to those Lady Aiders but wouldn't it be great now if somebody over in India wanted me?

POLLYANNA: Why Jimmy, that's it! I tried the Lady Aiders here but not where I came from out west. I figure that's near to as far off as India, don't you think? That might just do it. I'll write to Mrs. White 'cause she's got the most money. Say! Do you suppose I was Aunt Polly's "little girl from India"?

JIMMY: Girl, you are stranger than dirt an' twice as peculiar.

Lights change. JIMMY exits. MISS POLLY enters on level two. POLLYANNA moves to her.

MISS POLLY: An' top of that, they laid her to rest in a casket painted gold. Now that's no way to meet your maker if you ask me.

POLLYANNA: Well the lord might be glad to see somethin' different.

MISS POLLY: (*Warningly.*) Pollyanna!

POLLYANNA: Just slipped out. Aunt Polly, could I take one of your spare calf's foot jellies to this man who broke his leg?

MISS POLLY: What are you talking about, Pollyanna?

POLLYANNA: It happened while you were gone. He fell in the woods down a ravine and broke that leg good. I had to unlock his house and send for the doctor. I haven't seen him since but I thought he might appreciate a jelly if I took it over.

MISS POLLY: I suppose. Who did you say he was?

POLLYANNA: Mr. John Pendleton.

NANCY: (*Startled.*) John Pendleton? You know John Pendleton?

POLLYANNA: Yes, ma'am. I'll go fetch a jelly from Nancy.

MISS POLLY: (*Sternly.*) Pollyanna!

POLLYANNA: Yes, ma'am?

MISS POLLY: I've changed my mind. I do not care to be sending jelly to John Pendleton.

POLLYANNA: Well, I know he's cross an' dislikable on the outside, but I wouldn't say t'was you that's sent it. I'd say t'was me.

MISS POLLY: Does he know who you are, Pollyanna?

POLLYANNA: Only my name.

MISS POLLY: Then he doesn't know you're my niece or where you live?

POLLYANNA: No, ma'am.

MISS POLLY: (*Pause.*) Very well, Pollyanna. You may take it to the man as your own gift. But understand I do not send it. Be very sure he does not think I do.

POLLYANNA: Yes'm... no'm... thank you, Aunt Polly! (*Exits.*)

MISS POLLY: (*Looking after POLLYANNA.*) John Pendleton, indeed.

MISS POLLY exits. Lights change. MR. PENDLETON is brought on by NURSE HUNT. He is in a rolling chair of some sort at stage level.

POLLYANNA: I've brought you some calf's foot jelly.

MR. PENDLETON: Never ate it.

POLLYANNA: Then you can't know you don't like it.

MR. PENDLETON: What I know is, I'm trapped in this spine defying chair 'til doomsday.

POLLYANNA: Well, broken legs don't last 'til doomsday, I don't think. And you didn't break but one. You can be glad it wasn't two.

MR. PENDLETON: I suppose I might be glad I wasn't a centipede and didn't break fifty.

POLLYANNA chuckles.

MR. PENDLETON: Plus I've got nurses and subnurses and night nurses and I'm to pay for them all.

POLLYANNA: That part is too bad. About the money – with you denying yourself and saving it for the heathen. Nancy told me about that.

MR. PENDLETON: May I inquire who Nancy is?

POLLYANNA: Our Nancy. She works for Aunt Polly.

MR. PENDLETON: Aunt Polly who?

POLLYANNA: Miss Polly Harrington, I live with her.

MR. PENDLETON: Polly Harrington, you live with her?

POLLYANNA: I'm her niece. After Father went up to heaven to be with Mother, I didn't have a single person, so she took me in.

MR. PENDLETON: And she sent the jelly?

POLLYANNA: She said I must be very sure not to let you think she did send it.

MR. PENDLETON: I thought as much. I've heard of this jelly from Mrs. Snow. She speaks well of you.

DR. CHILTON: (*Entering.*) Well, I heard someone was in here bothering my patient.

Lights change. MR. PENDLETON is rolled off and a short bench to represent a carriage is placed. DR. CHILTON and POLLYANNA sit on it at stage level.

POLLYANNA: You have a really pretty gig, Dr. Chilton. I do love to ride.

DR. CHILTON: You love a good many things I believe.

POLLYANNA: Oh, I like to do most anything that's living. Sewing and reading aloud and all that. They're not living.

DR. CHILTON: What are they then?

POLLYANNA: Aunt Polly says they are learning to live. But I don't see that.

DR. CHILTON: I'm afraid some of us do have to.

POLLYANNA: I should think being a doctor would be the very gladdest kind of business there is.

DR. CHILTON: When I see so much suffering wherever I go?

POLLYANNA: But you get to help it. And that makes you the gladdest of any of us all the time.

DR. CHILTON: God bless you, girl. I believe we've got you home now.

Lights change. DR. CHILTON exits. Bench taken off. Two chairs are set. MISS POLLY and POLLYANNA sit on level two.

MISS POLLY: Who was the person who drove you into the yard, Pollyanna?

POLLYANNA: Why Aunt Polly, that was Dr. Chilton. Don't you know him?

MISS POLLY: I know Dr. Chilton, yes.

POLLYANNA: I said he should come in but he said you wouldn't want that.

MISS POLLY: That's right.

POLLYANNA: Why not, Aunt Polly?

MISS POLLY: Mind your business.

POLLYANNA: He seems right nice.

MISS POLLY: I said, mind your business! *(There's a pause.)* I assume you gave the jelly to Mr. Pendleton?

POLLYANNA: Yes, ma'am.

MISS POLLY: But he did not think I sent it?

POLLYANNA: Oh no, Aunt Polly, I told him you didn't.

MISS POLLY: Well, I hope he asked before you told him! Did it come up you live here?

POLLYANNA: Well...

MISS POLLY: I told you to be very sure he did not think I sent it – which is a very different thing from telling him outright that I did not send it.

POLLYANNA: Well, I don't see where the difference is.

MISS POLLY: Lord child, you bring trouble like the winter brings snow.

MISS POLLY exits. POLLYANNA moves to stage level. MR. PENDLETON'S MAID enters. A chair is set.

MR. PENDLETON'S MAID: You have come to see Mr. Pendleton?

POLLYANNA: Dr. Chilton told me that he had prescribed me for Mr. Pendleton and brought me here.

MR. PENDLETON'S MAID: Well, I surely don't know what Mr. Pendleton will say to that.

MR. PENDLETON rolls on.

MR. PENDLETON: Mr. Pendleton would say he's glad to see the young lady.

MR. PENDLETON'S MAID: But...

MR. PENDLETON: (*Kindly.*) It's all right, Mary, I'll see to her.

MR. PENDLETON'S MAID: Yes, Mr. Pendleton. (*Exits.*)

MR. PENDLETON: Sit yourself, Pollyanna. (*POLLYANNA sits.*) Now I was pretty cross with you, both about the jelly and that time you found me with the broken leg. I'm asking your pardon.

POLLYANNA: But you don't have to...

MR. PENDLETON: Yes, I do. There isn't, by the way, anymore of that jelly that Aunt Polly didn't send is there?

POLLYANNA: No, sir.

MR. PENDLETON: Well, I'll get over that. I want you to come, Pollyanna. I'm lonesome and I need you. When I found out who you were the other day, I wanted to be shut of you because you reminded me of... of something I have tried for long years to forget. But after a time I wanted you to come so much that the fact I wasn't seeing you was making me remember all the more vividly the thing I was so wanting to forget. Will you come?

POLLYANNA: Well, goodness... I'd love to come!

MR. PENDLETON: That is just... excellent. Excellent. I look forward to it. Now you come with me and I'll show you a beautifully carved box filled with wonders and mysteries from my travels.

MR. PENDLETON wheels off. Lights change. POLLYANNA moves up to level two where NANCY sits in a chair snapping beans.

NANCY: (*Fascinated.*) He said you reminded him of something he wanted to forget?

POLLYANNA: Yes, but afterwards...

NANCY: What was it? It was after he found out you was Miss Polly's niece, wa'nt it?

POLLYANNA: Well yes, but...

NANCY: I thought as much. And Miss Polly wouldn't send the jelly herself, would she?

POLLYANNA: No.

NANCY: (*Excited.*) And all that's because Mr. John Pendleton was Miss Polly Harrington's lover!

POLLYANNA: But she doesn't like him.

NANCY: Of course she don't! That's the quarrel!

POLLYANNA: But...

NANCY: Before you come, Mrs. Thomas told me Miss Polly had a lover and he was livin' right here in this town!

POLLYANNA: No!

NANCY: Yes! John Pendleton for sure.

POLLYANNA: Holy tamoley!

NANCY: Don't he shut himself up in that grand house alone and never hardly speak to no one? And then her sayin' she wouldn't send the man jelly? Plain as the nose on your face!

POLLYANNA: But... but... wouldn't they make up sometime? Both of them all alone as rocks in a corn field?

NANCY: Girl, you don't know didleysquat about lovers. When they get cross, they stay cross and hate each other like poison. (*Takes both of POLLYANNA'S hands.*) But my land! Wouldn't folks stare some if they took up.

NANCY and POLLYANNA do a wild little dance as the lights go down.

END OF ACT ONE

***Thank you for reading this free excerpt from
POLLYANNA by Jon Jory. For performance rights and/or a
complete copy of the script, please contact us at:***

Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 1-888-473-8521 • Fax (319) 368-8011

www.brookpub.com