



# THE HOT WATER CLUB

Strong Women from History Who Believed They Could

## Study Guide

### DEAR TEACHER:

What better way to make history come alive than through the theatre? And what better way to learn about strong women in history? This study guide has been created to help your students get the most they can out of this unique production. We have provided suggested questions and discussion topics for both before and after the performance and hope that you come up with your own as well.

My company is called Theater for Learning because I combine education and entertainment into all my theatrical productions, as well as my teaching and training workshops. Even when working with the most conservative corporations, I always include music, song, and audience interaction. *The Hot Water Club* is no exception to this philosophy. Through this play, students will be exposed to aspects of common core curriculum including social studies, history, language and vocabulary, and the arts.

Although this play is about strong women, it's important for young men to learn about women in history and the woman's point of view. This too, can make for interesting class discussions about women's roles in history.

We hope that you and your students enjoy the show!

### THE PLAY:

*The Hot Water Club* affirms that, as Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "A woman is a lot like a teabag—you never know how strong she is until she gets into hot water." It includes six strong adventurous women from history, from the beginning of humankind to 7<sup>th</sup> century China, from the high seas of the Caribbean to the high courts of our fledgling nation, from the star-studded hills of Hollywood all the way to the stately halls of the White House.

In *The Hot Water Club*, the character of Dorothy strives to find her place in the world. She is torn between her adored trouble-making older sister Gloria and her very proper Mother. With a little help from two first ladies, a spirited pirate, a Chinese emperor, a daring freedom fighter, and a pioneering movie star, Dorothy finally resolves these personal conflicts.



Photo by Lois Greenfield

In *The Hot Water Club*, your students will meet several strong women who believe in themselves and fight the stereotypical roles of women during their point in history. Students will learn about the difficulties they encountered and how they conquered fear, peer pressure, and negativity to become the strong and remarkable women they were. From these women, your students will gain inspiration and motivation and learn self acceptance—perhaps the hardest lesson of all.

They will also learn that no one is all good or all bad, and the reasons for getting into hot water may change with the times. You can't make judgments about a person's behavior without knowing the cultural and historical context within which the behavior occurred. In other words, what causes trouble today may be perfectly acceptable tomorrow and vice versa—what was perfectly acceptable yesterday may get you into hot water today.

Some of your students may never have seen a one-person play before and may need to be introduced to the form. One-person plays are generally extremely interactive, as the performer often speaks directly to the audience, which then becomes part of the action. In this play, for instance, the audience (in addition to being themselves) becomes a jury, an emperor's subjects, and a slave's grandchildren. Students may also need to be introduced to the concept of one actor playing multiple roles. This could be an opportunity for a fun and interesting project, having students perform their own mini-dramas, with each student playing at least two different characters.

This study guide includes a description of each of the characters in the play, as well as information about the period of history in which they lived, all of which can make for interesting and lively discussions with your class.



Photo by Lois Greenfield

### About Dorothy Leeds

Performing artist **Dorothy Leeds** is a former NYC High School Teacher and has a master's degree in Education from Columbia Teacher's College. Her company, Theater for Learning, combines education and entertainment. Wearing many hats, Leeds is an educator, performer, and author. She is a member of Actors' Equity, SAG/AFTRA, and The Dramatists Guild, and is on the Board of the League of Professional Theatre Women. Her Broadway tour credits include *Stop the World I Want to Get Off*. Her one person play, *Good Lessons from Bad Women*, premiered at the University of Wisconsin; she has since performed it at such prestigious venues as The Smoot Theatre, Ruth Eckerdt Hall, The Keystone Theatre, and Bentley University. Leeds, the author of *The 7 Powers of Questions*, *PowerSpeak*, and *Marketing Yourself*, has been featured on *The Tonight Show*, *The Today Show*, and *Good Morning America*.

## Cast of Characters

### **Eve,**

our curious "first lady" who started it all

*Study Guide page 3*

### **Emperor Wu,**

the ultimate opportunist who proves that knowledge and preparation will open many doors

*Study Guide pages 3-5*

### **Elizabeth Freeman,**

who took her fight for freedom to the court of law  
—and won

*Study Guide pages 5-6*

### **Mae West,**

who refused to allow guilt to rule her life  
and was able to Do It All

*Study Guide pages 6-8*

### **Anne Bonney,**

the lusty gutsy life-loving pirate

*Study Guide pages 8-9*

### **Eleanor Roosevelt,**

the shy wallflower who became one of the most  
influential people in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

*Study Guide pages 10-12*

# ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

## EVE

Obviously, nobody really knows what Eve was like. The story from the Bible tells us basically what happened, but it doesn't tell us anything about what Eve was like as a person. What we can gather from the story is that Eve was an explorer. It was she (and not Adam, who was seemingly content to let things be) who took a risk and ate from the tree of knowledge. Eve initiated change. She was curious. Curiosity, as we know, is both good and bad. Had Eve not taken a bite, humankind might not know much of the pain that life inevitably brings—but we wouldn't know the bountiful joys of life either.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK PRIOR TO SEEING THE PLAY

Is it good or bad to be curious?

Have you ever given in to temptation? What happened?

### QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER SEEING THE PLAY

What do you think might have happened if Eve had not tasted the apple? Be specific.

In the play, Eve gives in to peer pressure from the sneaky snake. List two situations where you have dealt with peer pressure, one in which you gave in to it and one where you resisted it.

### CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

With a partner, write a short scene where Adam and Eve first meet, have their first argument, or first leave the garden. Write a description of what you think Eden might have looked like. Be specific; cover the flora and fauna as well as descriptions of Adam and Eve.

### ADDITIONAL READING

- The Bible, The Koran, The Book of Mormon, etc.
- Twain, Mark (2002). *The Diaries of Adam and Eve*. San Francisco: Fair Oaks Press.



## The Wonder of Emperor Wu (c.625 – 705)

*“Will the Hen Crow at Daybreak?”*

Who would have thought a mere slip of a girl from a remote Chinese province would become one of the most written about, talked about, and in her time, feared and respected leaders in China? How did it happen? You can be sure that very little of it happened by accident. Of course, as in any success story, there was *some* luck involved. It is her consistent belief in being prepared for a “lucky” opportunity that exemplifies the life of the remarkable Emperor Wu.

Confucianism divided the Chinese people into strict hierarchies, both in public life and in the home. In the public realm, the emperor had absolute, unquestioned power over the fate of the empire, and his decisions were thought to be supported by the will of God. In the home, it was the “man of the house,” the father and husband, who had ultimate, unquestioned authority. A woman’s blatantly inferior position can be seen in a common idiom of the time, the “*three obediences*”: “When young, a woman obeys her father; when married, she obeys her husband; when her husband dies, she obeys her son.”

However, in Shanxi, where Wu grew up as a tomboy who often dressed in her brother’s clothes, women were more educated and active in society than in other areas of China. When Wu was just thirteen, Emperor Tai Tsung, having heard of her great beauty and intellect, invited her to the Palace City to become his 147<sup>th</sup> concubine—Wu’s first significant opportunity. Concubines—women who were not legally wives but lived with a man and had a recognized position in his household—were completely isolated from normal life and had no freedom. They were frequently engaged in cut-throat competition to become the emperor’s favorite, spreading damning rumors about each other in order to sabotage the other concubines’ chances of becoming pregnant and giving birth to an heir to the throne.

Wu soon realized that she would do better by turning her energies toward the emperor’s son, Kao Tsung. She went so far as to seduce him just outside the room where his father lay on his death bed. However, as was required by Buddhist tradition, when the old emperor finally died in 649, Wu and the rest of the widowed concubines were moved to a Buddhist convent where they had their heads shaved and were to live the rest of their lives. But when Kao Tsung came to visit the convent, Wu seduced him again and was subsequently invited back to the palace. This time, he installed her as a concubine of a very high rank, with the honorable title, “Luminous Demeanor.”

Wu sent gifts to the many enemies of Tsung’s wife, Empress Wang. She befriended people in important positions and learned as much as she could from them about the affairs of the empire (as well as the always-useful palace gossip). It was not long before Wu had many more allies than the empress. She started an ugly rumor about the empress and eventually got her jailed for the murder of Wu’s infant daughter (although some say that Wu herself was the murderer!). Soon she not only managed to gather the support of the old guard statesmen, she also managed to marry Kao Tsung and become empress.

When Kao Tsung suddenly became ill with a stroke in 660, he temporarily assigned his duties to his more than capable wife. Empress Wu eagerly took advantage of every responsibility she was given, participating in important meetings and sacred ancient rituals, many of which had never before been attended by a woman. By 664 Empress Wu regularly carried out all of the emperor’s responsibilities.

Empress Wu refused to appoint people to court positions just because they were family or otherwise well-connected. Instead, she used a standardized examination system to test applicants’ knowledge of civics, history, literature and art. Soon the court was filled with intelligent and cultured people who were actually qualified to do their jobs—a novel idea.

In 683, Kao Tsung, who had never quite recovered from his stroke, died. With the support of the President of the Chancellery, the military, and a host of advisors and bodyguards, Wu entered the palace and physically removed the new emperor—her own son—from the throne. He was deposed and imprisoned with hardly a peep from the rest of the empire, a testament to Wu’s widespread support.

In 690, Wu's second son, Ruizong, the nominal emperor, agreed to support Wu as the empire's official emperor. She was 58 years old. The young precocious girl from the Northern Province had made history. Emperor Wu ruled competently under her own name for another fifteen years before she died in 705. Over time, she earned the respect of many of those who had doubted her, and became known for her many significant achievements. It is only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Emperor Wu has been given due credit for her amazing journey to become emperor of China and for being an early populist, feminist, and patron of Chinese literature and art. Emperor Wu is finally seen as a brilliant politician and a natural leader, ruthless and cruel, sexy and beautiful, unforgiving and the ultimate opportunist.

#### QUESTIONS TO ASK PRIOR TO SEEING THE PLAY

What are dynasties?

What qualities are essential for a woman to succeed in a male dominated society or field?

Describe a time when an opportunity presented itself and you took advantage of it.

#### QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER SEEING THE PLAY

If you had the choice of jewels and luxuries or books and study, which would you select and why?

Why is the right preparation important in achieving success?

#### CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Imagine that you are ruler of a vast empire. What kinds of laws would you make to rule the land?

#### ADDITIONAL READING

- Rothschild, Harry N. and Peter Stearns (2007). *Wu Zhao: China's Only Female Emperor*. New York: Pearson.
- Cawthorne, Nigel (2007). *Daughter of Heaven: The True Story of The Only Woman to Become Emperor of China*. London: Oneworld Books.



### ELIZABETH FREEMAN (1742 – 1829)

*“Free, Equal, and Independent”*: Accomplishing the Impossible

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” Of course, as an American slave in the 18<sup>th</sup> century—a time when African Americans were robbed of their right to choose or consent to anything—it would certainly be difficult *not* to feel inferior. This is why the story of how Elizabeth Freeman—a woman born into slavery on a New York farm and sold to Colonel Ashley in Massachusetts—became the first African American woman to be set free in the United States, is so inspiring. Of course, Elizabeth Freeman is not considered bad by today's standards, but in 1780, to the thousands of slave-owners across the state of Massachusetts, an African American woman who fought for and actually realized her own freedom was considered anything but good.

As a slave in the distinguished colonel's household, Elizabeth Freeman (who was also known as Mum Bett) overheard a great many conversations. One of those, in 1780, was an important discussion between the colonel and a local attorney, Theodore Sedgewick, about the details of the Massachusetts State Constitution, which, just like the U.S. Constitution adopted nine years later, guarantees that all men are *free, equal, and independent*. Upon hearing those words, Elizabeth Freeman realized that the law was already on her side. One day, when an especially cruel incident brought her to her

breaking point, she marched right out of the colonel's home, located Mr. Sedgewick, and used all her resources to get herself legally freed. This case set a precedent for future cases, and ultimately led to slavery being abolished in Massachusetts.

Elizabeth Freeman's story encourages us to live our lives by Eleanor Roosevelt's words. No matter how insurmountable the circumstances, we must *never* consent to inferiority. If you believe in yourself you can accomplish the impossible.

### History of the Times

#### Timeline:

1742	Elizabeth Freeman born
1773	Boston Tea Party
1775-83	American Revolution
1776	13 colonies sign the Declaration of Independence
1783	Massachusetts becomes the first state in the Union to abolish slavery
1789	George Washington becomes president of the United States
1804	Slavery is made illegal in the northern states of the US

**Freedom Suits:** Elizabeth Freeman wasn't the only slave to sue for her freedom. There were many such suits, in both the north and the south. Most cases were brought because the slave owner had violated a specific law (e.g., breaking a promise he made to set a slave free). The case of Mum Bett (who brought the suit along with a male slave named Brom) was different because there was no claim that Mr. Ashley had broken a law. Instead it was brought on the assumption that slavery itself was illegal. The court decided that Bett and Brom were not Mr. Ashley's property, set them free, and awarded them 30 shillings apiece.

#### QUESTIONS TO ASK PRIOR TO SEEING THE PLAY

What parts of our country had slaves prior to the Civil War?  
How would you describe the life of a slave?  
How was slavery tied into the economy of the U.S. at the time?

#### QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER SEEING THE PLAY

What were Elizabeth's advantages being in Massachusetts rather than in South Carolina?  
Imagine you were Elizabeth Freeman. What do you think your life would be like as a free person?  
If you were a slave, how would you go about trying to get your freedom?

#### CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Arrange a debate about the pros and cons of slavery.

#### ADDITIONAL READING

- Felton, Harold W. and Donn Albright (1970). *Mumbet: The Story of Elizabeth Freeman*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company.
- Laiz, Jane and Ann-Elizabeth Barnes (2009). *A Free Woman on God's Earth: The True Story of Elizabeth Mumbet Freeman, The Slave Who Won Her Freedom*. South Egremont, MA: Crow Flies Press.



## MAE WEST (1893 – 1980)

*"Come See Me Sometime . . ." Goin' To Town Guilt-Free with Mae West*



Leeds as  
Mae West

Photo by Lois Greenfield

The actor George Raft, who starred with Mae West in her first movie, once said of her, "She stole everything but the cameras." Born in Brooklyn, NY on August 17, 1893, to show-business parents, Mae West worked on the stage and in vaudeville from the time she was five years old. Brought up by her no-nonsense Bavarian mother, Mae West was taught that she should never feel guilty about her feelings and that she could do anything she set her mind to. She developed an unflappable confidence that led to successes as a vaudeville performer and playwright. When she realized that parts weren't being written for women like her, she wrote, produced, directed, and starred in her own original material—which was quite unusual for a woman of her time. Her play, "Sex," landed her in jail for ten days in 1926 for "corrupting the morals of youth." Even so, her next play "Diamond Lil," produced two years later, became a huge success on Broadway. Soon she was off to Hollywood, where she became a record-breaking box-office smash. West was a woman full of apparent contradictions—clever *and* attractive, sexy *and* strong, feminine *and* powerful—in a time when no one thought women could be both. She knew how to make the most of what she had. Though she wasn't really beautiful, Mae West *felt* beautiful and that was all that mattered.

West had many boyfriends throughout her life, including boxing champion "Gorilla" Jones. When the management at her apartment building would not let the African-American boxer enter the premises, West solved the problem by buying the building.

Over time, she became the most powerful woman in the film industry. By 1934, Mae was the fifth most popular movie star in the country and earned the highest salary of any woman in America. Mae West shows us how much we can accomplish if we decide to live life free of guilt. Driven and determined, she was frequently in hot water, especially with the Hollywood censors. But she wasn't going to let anyone stand in her way. West herself said: "I like movies about strong women. I was the first liberated woman, y'know. No guy was gonna get the best of me."

### A Brief History of Early Film

- 1891 Thomas Alva Edison patented the Kinetoscope, the first movie machine.
- 1903 Movies became entertainment for the masses with American filmmaker Edwin S. Porter's eight-minute silent film *The Great Train Robbery*.
- 1915 D.W. Griffith, a famous early movie maker, presented *The Birth of a Nation*, the first motion picture to be shown at the White House. The film was a commercially successful but highly controversial.
- 1927 *The Jazz Singer*, the first feature film presented as a talkie, was a global phenomenon. Talkies helped secure Hollywood's position as one of the world's most powerful cultural and commercial systems.
- 1932 First cartoon, *Flowers and Trees*, was produced by Walt Disney/United Artists.

## CENSORSHIP

From their very beginning, movies have been subjected to censorship, although the most famous era of censorship was during the 1920s and 30s, when the major Hollywood studios and distributors formed an association called The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA). Former U.S. Postmaster General Will H. Hayes became the organization's first president.

In 1968, the MPPDA code was officially replaced by the Association's voluntary movie classification system, which assigns films a rating of G, PG, R, or NC-17 based on the movie's content and the way that content is handled.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK PRIOR TO SEEING THE PLAY

What do you know about early films?

How does guilt affect us and our confidence?

### QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER SEEING THE PLAY

How can a person's appearance affect what he or she becomes in life?

Is it possible to overcome being "different" in today's world?

### CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Create a debate on the pros and cons of movie censorship.

Write a short essay to celebrate something that is different about you or someone you know.

### ADDITIONAL READING

- Chandler, Charlotte (2009). *She Always Knew How: Mae West, a Personal Biography*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Louvish, Simon (2007). *Mae West: It Ain't No Sin*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.



## ANNE BONNEY (1690s – 1700s)

*Sword Play on the High Seas: The Bully Beater of the Caribbean*

Aboard the vessel of the famed Caribbean pirate Captain Jack Rackham, Anne Bonney dueled enemies, pillaged treasure, and, in 1720, almost single-handedly defended her ship against dozens of Governor Woods Roger's men. When the ship was finally overtaken and Rackham captured, Bonney had no sympathy for those who had been too lazy or drunk to fight, telling Rackham just before he was hanged at the hands of the governor: "If you had fought like a man, you need not be hanged like a dog!"

In Anne Bonney's colorful story, we see the courage it takes to live life to its absolute fullest, to fill the cup of life to the brim and thirstily guzzle it down. We don't have to be a pirate to fight back against bullies, to gorge ourselves on the nectar of our own lives, but we could all learn a thing or two from the gusto of Anne Bonney.

Anne was born in Ireland, but travelled to the new world early in her life. Unfortunately, her mother died soon after and her father failed in his attempt to pursue a career as an attorney. Eventually, however, he built up a profitable merchant business and accumulated a substantial fortune.



Sometime in the early 1700s, she met and married a small-time pirate named James Bonney, and they moved to Nassau on New Providence Island in the Bahamas, a place that was known as a sanctuary for pirates. There she met John “Calico Jack” Rackham, captain of the pirate ship *Revenge*. She soon dumped Bonney and married Rackham. The newlywed couple, plus another woman pirate named Mary Read, stole the *Revenge* and put out to sea.

When a British ship attacked the pirates, they all seemed to be either too sleepy or too drunk to put up a fight—all but Anne Bonney, Mary Read, and one unknown male. Even so, the pirates were captured and sentenced to execution. Bonney and Read were granted mercy; unfortunately Mary Read died in prison. No one knows for sure what happened to Anne Bonney. It has been reported that her father secured her release from jail; that she lived out her life in the south of England, where she owned a tavern and regaled her patrons with tales of her exploits; that she resumed a life of piracy under a new identity; that she returned to South Carolina, married a local man named James Burleigh, and had 10 children with him; and that she died a respectable woman at the age of 80.

### Some Famous Pirates of the Caribbean

**Jean Fleury:** He roamed the seas in the 1500s, and was famous for capturing two of the three galleons that contained Montezuma’s Aztec treasures, which had been stolen by the Spanish explorer Hernan Cortes. Fleury himself was captured in 1527 and executed by order of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

**Henry Morgan:** A ruthless and daring Welshman, Morgan became famous in 1670, when he and 1700 buccaneers burned Panama City to the ground, killing the inhabitants or forcing them to flee. This was a great blow to Spanish pride and power, and Morgan became a hero back in England—he was even made a titled nobleman by the English crown. He lived to a ripe old age on an enormous plantation in Jamaica and died peacefully in his bed.

**Blackbeard:** Edward Teach, *aka* Blackbeard, became famous as much for his looks as for his piracy (he never harmed or murdered anyone he held captive). He had a thick black beard and was said to have tied lit fuses under his hat so that his face would be wreathed in fire and smoke and his enemies too frightened to fight. He plied his trade around the West Indies and the eastern coast of the American colonies. Rather than relying on force and might, he often relied on his image and reputation to get the response he wanted from those he robbed. He captured a French merchant vessel and renamed her Queen Anne’s Revenge. In 1718, Blackbeard and his ship were captured by a British fleet off the coast of North Carolina and died after suffering five bullet wounds and twenty slashes with a cutlass.

#### QUESTIONS PRIOR TO SEEING THE PLAY

Other than Jack Sparrow, what do you know about pirates?  
What were some of the punishments of pirates who were caught?  
What do you know about modern day pirates?

#### QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER SEEING THE PLAY

Why do you think a woman might want to be a pirate?  
What lessons can you learn from Anne Bonney and how she dealt with the bully pirate?

#### CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Imagine you are a TV talk show host interviewing Anne Bonney. What are three questions you would ask her?  
Write and perform a 150 word monologue describing your experiences with bullying and how they were resolved.

#### ADDITIONAL READING

- Carlova, John (1964). *Mistress of the Seas*. Citadel Press.
- Lorimer, Sara; Synarski, Susan (2002). *Booty : Girl Pirates on the High Seas*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.



## **ELEANOR ROOSEVELT (1884 – 1962)**

### *The Eye of the Beholder: Embracing the Bad (and Good) in Yourself*

As Eleanor Roosevelt realizes, “Eventually, we learn who we really are—good and bad—and then we live with that knowledge.” Self-acceptance is indeed a lesson to be celebrated!

First lady, writer, and humanitarian Eleanor Roosevelt, niece of President Theodore Roosevelt, was born on October 11, 1884, in New York City. A timid ugly duckling in a family of beauties, Eleanor Roosevelt felt from the way she was treated by her family that she was plain and inferior. She was raised by her maternal grandmother after the premature deaths of her parents. She sorely missed her father whom she adored. In 1905, she married her cousin Franklin Delano Roosevelt who became president in 1933; they had six children, one of whom died in infancy. Although extremely shy, she became active in politics and other social issues. She did indeed get into plenty of hot water. Our country was not used to such an outspoken and active First Lady. Today, we appreciate her great contributions to women’s rights, to civil rights, to the United Nations, and so much more. During her time, however, she was severely criticized.

After her husband suffered a polio attack in 1921, Eleanor stepped forward to help Franklin with his political career. When he became president, Eleanor dramatically changed the role of the first lady, although this definitely got her into more hot water. Not content to stay in the background and handle domestic matters, she showed the world that the first lady was an important part of American politics. With her husband's strong support, despite criticism of them both, she continued with the active business and speaking agenda she had begun before becoming First Lady, in an era when few women had careers. She was the first to hold weekly press conferences and wrote a widely syndicated newspaper column, “My Day.” She also focused on helping the country's poor, stood against racial discrimination and, during World War II, traveled abroad to visit U.S. troops, showing her support for the war effort.

Eleanor died on November 7, 1962. A revolutionary first lady, Eleanor Roosevelt was one of the most outspoken women to live in the White House. While she had her share of criticism, most agree that she was a great humanitarian who dedicated much of her life to fighting for political and social change.

### **Some Important Contributions and Accomplishments**

She was a role model for many of the women of America, only 25% of whom worked outside the home at the time of her husband’s presidency. She directed many of her efforts towards her female followers through her newspaper column, her press conferences, and her magazine articles.

She was an outspoken supporter of civil rights. In 1939, the African-American singer Marian Anderson was denied the use of Constitution Hall for a concert. Roosevelt was instrumental getting Anderson to perform on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. She also supported the Tuskegee Airmen in their effort to become the first African American combat pilots, even flying with the Chief Flight Instructor when she visited the Tuskegee Air Corps Advanced Flying School in Alabama.

She was appointed a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly in 1946, was the first chair-person of the UN Human Rights Commission, and played an instrumental role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1968, she was posthumously awarded the UN Human Rights Prize.

## History of the Times

1884	Eleanor Roosevelt is born on October 11 <sup>th</sup> in New York City.
1901	President McKinley is assassinated during his second term; Eleanor's uncle, Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt, assumes the presidency.
1905	Eleanor marries Franklin Delano Roosevelt, her fifth cousin once removed.
1917	The United States enters World War I.
1920	Nineteenth Amendment passes, giving women the right to vote.
1928	FDR is elected as governor of New York.
1932	FDR is elected president of the United States.
1933	Eleanor becomes the first First Lady to hold all-female press conferences.
1939	Eleanor defies segregation laws when she sits between Caucasian and African American attendees at the Southern Conference for Human Welfare in Birmingham, Alabama; she arranges for Marian Anderson to sing at the Lincoln Memorial on Easter Sunday.
1940	Eleanor makes an impromptu speech at the Democratic National Convention which helps FDR to win an unprecedented third term in office.
1941	Japan bombs Pearl Harbor and the U.S. enters World War II.
1945	FDR dies; World War II ends.
1946	Eleanor becomes head of United Nation's Human Rights Commission.
1954	The Supreme Court outlaws segregation in public schools.
1961	President Kennedy re-appoints Eleanor to the United Nations and appoints her as chair of the President's Commission on the Status of Women.
1962	Eleanor Roosevelt dies of tuberculosis at the age of 78.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK PRIOR TO SEEING THE PLAY

What First Ladies do you know of?

Have you heard of Teddy Roosevelt? Franklin Delano Roosevelt? What were they famous for?

What is a humanitarian?

### QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER SEEING THE PLAY

How might Eleanor's life have been different if FDR had not contracted polio?

In what ways does society's love of beauty affect young girls and impact their confidence?

### CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Imagine you are Eleanor Roosevelt as head of UN's Human Rights Commission and write a short speech about why we should all be concerned about human rights around the world.

### ADDITIONAL READING

- Wiesen Cook, Blanche (1993). *Eleanor Roosevelt, Vol. 1: 1884-1933*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Wiesen Cook, Blanche (1993). *Eleanor Roosevelt, Vol. 2: The Defining Years, 1933-1938*. New York: Penguin Books.

