

Each in His Own Place

From the book, "Children's Classics in Dramatic Form" by Augusta Stevenson
Suggested by Grimm's The Mouse, The Bird and the Sausage

TIME: Yesterday

PLACE: In a tiny house

CHARACTERS:

The Straw who brings in the wood
The Coal who makes the fire
The Snowflake who draws the water
The Sugar Loaf who lays the table
The Sausage who cooks the meals.
Dog

(Scene: The tiny kitchen is seen. The Sausage is stirring the pot. The Coal is tending the fire. The Sugar Loaf is laying the table. Enter Straw with a load of wood.)

STRAW: *(Throwing down wood.)* Think you'll need more wood for the dinner, Sausage?

(Sausage does not answer. She gets into the pot to flavor the vegetables.)

COAL: *(Whispers to Straw.)* Sausage is quite put out.

STRAW: What's the trouble?

COAL: No one knows.

(Enter Snowflake with a pail of water.)

SNOWFLAKE: *(Looking about.)* Where's Sausage?

STRAW: She is flavoring the vegetables.

(Sausage comes out of the pot.)

SNOWFLAKE: Here is the water, Sausage.

(Sausage does not answer.)

SNOWFLAKE: *(Speaking louder.)* Will you come for the water, Sausage?

SAUSAGE: (*Sharply.*) No, madam, I will not!

THE OTHERS: (*With surprise.*) Sausage!

SAUSAGE: I've been slave here long enough!

THE OTHERS: (*As before.*) Sister Sausage!

SAUSAGE: I mean just what I say!

SNOWFLAKE: Have I not done my share of the work?

COAL: Have I not done my share?

STRAW: Have I not done my share?

SUGAR LOAF: And have I not done my share?

SAUSAGE: Please do tell me what you do.

STRAW: I bring in wood that Coal may make the fire.

COAL: I make the fire that the pot may boil.

SNOWFLAKE: I draw the water and bring it from the brook.

SUGAR LOAF: I lay the table nicely.

SAUSAGE: What do I do? Eh? What do I do? I must stand over the fire. I must not only stir the dinner, I must flavor it with myself. For each of you there is one duty. For me there are plainly three.

STRAW: But, sister—

SAUSAGE: (*Interrupting.*) Don't "sister" me!

SNOWFLAKE: Sausage, dear, would you break up our pretty home?

SUGAR LOAF: And we all so happy here!

SAUSAGE: There must be a change! Someone else can stand over the fire—can stir the pot—can flavor the vegetables.

COAL: If I flavored them, they could not be eaten.

SAUSAGE: That's what you're always saying, but I'm not so sure of it.

SNOWFLAKE: If I stirred the pot, 't would be the end of me.

SAUSAGE: Yes, you say that often enough, but I'm not so sure that it is true.

STRAW: Should I stand over the fire, I'd be no more.

SAUSAGE: *(Scornfully.)* Excuses! Excuses!

SUGAR LOAF: 'T is plain that I should not get into the pot.

SAUSAGE: And why not, Miss? Why not?

SUGAR LOAF: 'T would be goodbye for me, if I should!

SAUSAGE: Excuses! Excuses! I say there must be a change! 'T is I who will bring the wood or draw the water.

COAL: But, Sausage, you should stay within.

SAUSAGE: Not I, sir! I'll out of the pot and out of the house, I will! I'll see a bit of the world, I will!

SUGAR LOAF: *(Sighing.)* Well, if she will, she will!

SAUSAGE: *(Getting slips.)* Come, now, and draw for it. *(She holds the slips for the others to draw.)*

STRAW: *(Drawing; reading from slip.)* "Who gets this must make the fire."

SUGAR LOAF: *(Drawing; reading from slip.)* "Who gets this must draw the water."

SNOWFLAKE: *(Drawing; reading from slip.)* "Who gets this must stir the pot and flavor it with herself."

COAL: *(Drawing; reading from slip.)* "Who gets this must lay the table nicely."

SAUSAGE: *(Reading from last slip.)* "Who gets this must bring the wood." Well, that pleases me! Straw, see if the fire needs wood.

(Straw hesitates.)

SAUSAGE: Come, come, do your duty!

(Straw crosses to the hearth and looks into the fire. He is very careful, but the fire reaches him and he is gone in a puff!)

SNOWFLAKE: Poor Straw! Well, 't is my duty to stir the pot and to flavor it with myself. *(She crosses to the hearth, but just as she reaches it, she disappears without so much as a cry.)*

SUGAR LOAF: Poor Snowflake! Well, 't is my duty to draw the water. *(She forgets that the pail is full, falls into it, and is seen no more.)*

COAL: Poor Sugar Loaf! Well, 't is my duty to lay the table nicely. *(He forgets that he is still burning from having lately tended the fire. As he places the plates, the tablecloth catches fire and wraps itself around him. From inside the burning cloth she exclaims:)* This is the end of me!

SAUSAGE: *(Weeping.)* Dear me! Dear me! Who would have thought 't would turn out so badly! Well, 't is my duty to bring in wood. *(She opens the door and is face to face with a hungry dog who is sniffing about.)*

DOG: Ah, I thought you'd be coming out soon!

SAUSAGE: *(Pleased.)* Do you want to see me, sir?

DOG: Why, yes, I've been waiting for you.

SAUSAGE: How good to be out in the world! They always said my place was within.

DOG: They did, eh? Well, just to please them, I'll put you there. *(He swallows her quickly, which ends both Sister Sausage and our story.)*