

SODOM OF THE PLAINS an hour-long drama

My grandmother had an odd quirk. She would label all of her worldly goods to be dispersed upon her death to my cousins and me. One day she held in her delicate hand a small ladies Derringer pistol and to our wide eyed pre-teen glares, told us that this was the gun she shot Two Gun Dick Herwig in the leg with.

This is the story of Anna and her remarkable, unorthodox friendship and alliance with another disenfranchised, kindred spirit, Etta White, a staggeringly strong and clever black woman in 1920's Texas. The unlikely Jewish immigrant settlers, Anna and Jack Katsh, up and leave their store and livelihood in Kansas City to move with 3 kids in tow to what would come to be known as the SODOM of the PLAINS. Arriving in town just ahead of the rush, Anna and Jack strive to set up the K.C. Store which will become the heart of the town. They are strangers in a strange land and on the very first day they befriend Etta and Solomon White. They form an extraordinary alliance born out of necessity and mutual admiration.

Based on a true story, on March 6, 1926 there were 350 souls in all of the panhandle of Texas. On March 7, 1926, Asa Borger and his partner John Miller put a town on sale and on the map. Within 1 year, Borger, Texas would boast a population of 40,000. Texas crude, "black gold" brought Wildcatters from near and far.



THE SETTING:

Borger, Texas: March 8, 1926 a, rugged, lawless town in the dangerous time of Prohibition. The boomtown literally springs up over night when Asa (Ace) Borger and John R. Miller sell 100 parcels of land to would be oil-men in the course of one, single day. Based on true events during a game-changing time in the American story, the oil boom of the 1920's is still referred to every day in the news, when quoting "West Texas Crude Oil prices."

Limitless opportunity and fast money makes Borger, Texas a magnet for dreamers and unsavory characters alike. It quickly becomes the most dangerous towns in Texas known as The Sodom of the Plains. Con men, crooks, and unscrupulous lawmen all seek to find easy marks. The North End of town is filled with speakeasies and brothels. Main Street is brimming with new businesses. There is an enormous tent city where the oilmen and their kin live. The other side of the tracks is where most of the "negroes" are relegated. It is a dangerous time for anyone who isn't a WASP and a man. Everyone carried a gun.

LOGLINE

Sodom of the Plains...

Is Anna's and Etta's story, unlikely allies, two firecracker women in the dustbowl oil boom of the roaring 20's, who struggle to build a business, raise their families, and fight for what's right in the most dangerous town in Texas.

Too ambitious for a woman of her time, Anna is flawed. Forced to make some unsavory Faustian bargains to protect her family, right and wrong are sometimes difficult to decipher. Etta is even smarter than Anna but at the disadvantage of her skin color. Etta guides Anna to navigate the treacheries of this roughneck world. Together they set a course for a generation of women in a time when it was uncomfortable to be a woman and impossible to be a black woman. The friends are the force of nature in this new enterprise.

OVERVIEW

Sodom of the Plains is a drama about unlikely allies willing to risk everything to build a life, a business, and a community in a dangerous world of oilmen and lawlessness while still maintaining their core faith and values.

Etta is an anomaly in the backward time of prohibition. She is an educated black woman deeply in love with her husband. She has to be doubly smart to get what she wants as she navigates how to manipulate her circumstances through careful gamesmanship and backroom dealings.

Anna and Etta are constantly confronted by challenges and dangers to their families, business, faith and ethics. They are neither fish nor fowl. They don't fit in with either the righteous Protestants or heathen under belly of the place. Anna is spun from the yarn of her Jewish religious tradition, Anna's innate ambition is in constant conflict both inside her family and outside amongst the town powerbrokers and lawless. Etta has similar Christian values and must get what she needs through the subterfuge of her new-found friend.



THE MAIN CHARACTERS:

THE WHITE FAMILY: Etta and Solomon and their son Edgar.

Etta White – An entrepreneur and a realist. Etta is introduced to the Katsh family as a caretaker. She's smart and savvy. She is unwittingly Anna's conscience in how she mother's both her own son and the Katsh children as well. Etta can see what Anna cannot. She is smarter and more clever than Anna and often has to save Anna from herself. Etta's ribs become the most sought after commodity in town. She will eventually become the first black female business owner in Texas.

Solomon White - Etta's husband, works for Asa Borger at the Borger Lumber yard. Keeps his ear to the ground, spy's for Jack. Stalwart and an excellent judge of character. Solomon knows how to play both sides against the middle.

Edgar White - 14 year old son of Etta and Solomon. Befriends Sylvia and Sunny. A big brother to Dean. While formally uneducated, he has an uncanny natural ability with math and figuring things out.

KC STORE



THE KATSH FAMILY: Anna and Jack Katsh their 3 kids and Jack's brother "I"(Israel)

Anna Katsh – A woman far ahead of her time. A bathing beauty who's as scrappy as she's pretty. Anna is the brains behind the KC Store operation. Ambitious and driven, she is frustrated by her powerlessness in a man's world which she butts up against constantly. As the town pharmacist, she becomes as valuable to the town as the doctor and is often consulted first. While she loves her children, she is conflicted between her ambition and her family. She is a suffragette and a staunch believer in right and wrong, equality and the Jewish value of Tikkun Olam... repair the world and she hates herself for loving the fight. She is a fish out of water.

Jack Katsh – Entrepreneur and clever businessman, still thick with a Russian accent from the old country but dapper and modern in the new world fashion. The upright citizen and patriarch, Jack has an iron-strong moral compass. He teaches his kids to do the right thing. He's funny and generous but has never been able to become "one of the boys" because of his thick accent. He struggles with Anna's ambition and has to be more of both mother and father than he thinks is right. He's the salt while she's the pepper.

Isaac Katsh – "I" is Jack's brother, partner and confidante. The two are a team. "I" has worked

hard to lose his accent. He's a smooth talker and a ladies man. As clever as his older brother, "I" understands the world they live in. He's the fun Uncle and a bit of a bon vivant. There are often conflicts between Jack's loyalty to him and to Anna. He and Anna don't always see eye to "I". "I" sees Anna much more clearly than his older brother and tries to protect him.

Dean Katsh – 8 years old, fiery and curious. Thinks he can do anything. He has a limp that makes him a target for bullies.

Sonya (Sunny) Katsh – 10 years old. Funny. The go-between. The jokester. Always pranking on someone. Sunny is Tatum O'Neil in Paper Moon. She and Anna are kindred spirits.

Sylvia Katsh – 13 years old, beautiful, sassy and full of piss and vinegar. A handful. Second in command, (or that's how she sees it.) She is her Daddy's girl.

THE SUPPORTING CHARACTERS:



The Power Brokers: Asa Borger, John Miller, “Two-Gun-Dick”-Herwig and those that do their bidding.

Asa (Ace) Borger - The man with the dream. Caught between his desire for wealth and notoriety and his strict protestant upbringing. He doesn't suffer fools. Shrewd and sophisticated, at his core, he's a bully.

Mary Borger – Socialite, entitled. Born with a silver spoon in her mouth, Mary Borger's parents are the ones who had the money to start Asa out. They have two kids, Lucille who is a spoiled brat and Herman, a bully who eats everything in sight.

John R. Miller - Asa's partner. An Attorney. The pragmatist. Knows what has to be done and doesn't mind selling a bit of his soul to do it. Becomes the Mayor of Borger. He's the one to be reckoned with. Anna's ultimate nemesis. He hates her and worse, dismisses her. He is secretly in love with Mattie Castleberry. In cahoots with...

“Two Gun Dick” Herwig - The LAW. A convicted murderer from Oklahoma, he is the city's chief law enforcement officer. He takes bribes, and serves as a procurer of customers for the hundreds of prostitutes who pay him so they can work in Borger. Herwig controls all the liquor distribution and required payments for the product and for “protection.” Those who won't pay are beaten, murdered or otherwise made to leave town. Business owners--legitimate and illegitimate--have to pay him and his thugs to leave them alone. He answers to Borger and Miller.

THE UNDESIREABLES: Dance Hall/ Speakeasy/ Casino/Tent City, Stills: Mattie Castleberry and her Dance Hall Darlings and those from “the other side of the track.”



Mattie Castleberry –Dance Hall owner. The only one who can get through to Miller and Herwig. John R. Miller financed her place. She owes him. Looks to Anna for medical advice for some chronic female problems, she secretly becomes Anna’s best friend and closest ally while never letting on to John Miller.

JoJo: - Plays the piano at the Dance Hall. Looks out for the girls.

Amy Mae - Rough around the edges, she is a rubenesque call girl who listens more than she talks. That is to her advantage.

Gofer - Solomon’s cousin. The Barkeep. Keeps the bar stocked and cleaned. He knows exactly who’s who.

Dottie Sullivan – exquisite and no nonsense. She’ll come to be friends with Anna.



Dust storm blowing into town



Early 1926



Oil well in town Center



Horses in the Borger mud



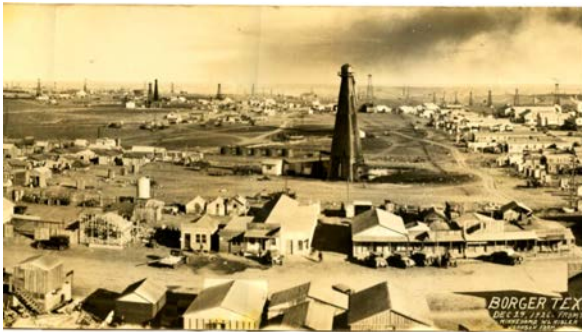
Mail delivery



Early days.



Borger as the Boom rolled in.



December 1926



One year later



The Oil Patch