

# UNSUNG

## By Christian Kiley

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## CHARACTERS

The parts are numbered 1 through 11 and they change roles from scene to scene. The director and actors may elect to have this change include accents and even costume pieces.

One	Seven
Two	Eight
Three	Nine
Four	Ten
Five	Eleven
Six	

## CHARACTERS BY SCENE

Scene 1	“Bundle of Joy”	Parents, Parent without baby (1)
Scene 2	“Show and Tell”	Young Students, Student with String (2)
Scene 3	“The Batter”	Fans, Umpire (2), Batter (3), Catcher (4)
Scene 4	“Spelling Sting”	Spelling Bee Competitors, Nervous Competitor (4), Moderator (5)
Scene 5	“Job Interrogation”	Job Hunters interviewing for jobs, Unsuccessful Candidate (5), Boss (6)
Scene 6	“Friendship Request”	People on a Social Network, Person who wants Cyber Friends (6)
Scene 7	“Joy Jump”	Skydivers, Person who does not jump (7)
Scene 8	“Lost and Found”	People looking for their lost dogs, Person who can't find his dog (8)
Scene 9	“Happily Ever After”	Poets, Poet with no Poetry (9)

Scene 10 “Grand Accomplishment” Inventors and Award Recipients,  
Person with no Invention

Scene 11 “Goodbye” People in a Hurry, Wanting to be  
heard (11)

## PROPS

Leashes/dog toys (Part VIII)

Blanket/bundles (Part I)

Slips of paper with Poetry on  
them (Part IX)

Piece of String (Part II)

You may elect to mime some or  
all of the props.

Toy bat and glove (Part III)

## PRODUCTION NOTES

“Unsung” can be costumed with eleven numbered shirts. You may elect to use iron-on decals or craft paint. The actors may even enjoy creating the shirts themselves and this might bring uniqueness to each character.

At the end of each scene one of the characters has a moment where he/she tries to release sound and nothing comes out. This can simply and effectively be staged by having the actor step forward with her/his left foot, then the right foot, and moving both arms out as if singing a long and powerful note. The actor’s mouth should remain open for a moment with no sound coming out, until after a moment or two, the disappointment registers and the actor’s body language sags. The other actors move onto to the next scene, leaving the actor in a moment of solitary disappointment.

Props can certainly be used (see Prop List at the end of the play) or you may elect to mime the items and rely solely on the actors/audiences imagination.

Numbered diagrams have been provided for each of the scenes as suggested starting positions for the scene. The actors can simply move from their positions in Scene 1 to Scene 2 (and so on). This can be an efficient way to avoid too many entrances and exits and help simplify the staging.

**Part I**



At the end of Part I, Two moves stage right and takes a piece of string out of her/his pocket for "Show and Tell."

**Part II**



At the end of Part II, Two, Three, and Four move into their positions as umpire, batter, and catcher.

**Part III**



Everyone moves into a straight line except for Five, who is the moderator of the Spelling Bee and stands off to the side.

**Part IV**



Each number can step forward for her/his line. Five and Six are stage left for Part V.

**Part V**

4 3 2 1 11 10 9 8 7

6 5

On each character's line, they can move toward Five and Six and then when their line and interaction is completed, they can move to the back of the line. Another option is to simply have each character cross downstage and then back to her/his original position after the line and interaction is completed. Five can simply cross over and join the rest of the ensemble to start Part VI.

**Part VI**

4 3 2 1 11 10 9 8 7 5

6

The characters should spread out and give themselves space for Part VII.

**Part VII**

4

3

1

11

10

7

6

5

2

9

8

The transition into Part VIII can simply involve a slight shift from Part VII or the actors can remain where they were in Part VII.

**Part VIII**

4

3

11

10

7

5

2

1

6

9

8

As the transition between Part VIII and Part IX takes place, Nine can move downstage left and the other characters can move away, isolating Nine.

**Part IX**

4    3    11    10    7    5  
2    1    8    6

9

Ten can shift downstage right, as the rest of the ensemble moves left, celebrating their accomplishments.

**Part X**

4    2    3    1    11    8    10    6    7    5  
10

As in Part IV, a step forward for each character on her/his line is an option here. The transition into Part XI involves everyone moving in different directions, trying to exit, except Eleven.

**Part XI**

11  
1    8  
9    4    2    10    6  
4    3    7    5

When the characters have started toward their potential exit points, Eleven says "Wait!" Eleven can move to each of the characters, trying to get each one to uncover their ears and make a connection. The question to consider at the end of the play is whether Eleven has broken through to the others or if Eleven's efforts are futile.

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

“Unsung” was produced by Etiwanda High School’s Theatre Arts Department (Etiwanda, California) on November 15, 2010. The production was performed by members of the fourth period Drama I class and was directed by Christian Kiley. The playwright would like to thank the dedicated students of the Theatre Arts program, Bill and Ellen Kiley, and leadership at Etiwanda High School and Chaffey Joint Union High School District for the opportunity to produce original work.

One – Sarrah Twineham

Two – Summer Givens

Three – Jonathan Salim

Four – Sarah Doublet

Five – Zoi Gray

Six – Amber Knudson

Seven – Chloe Littleton

Eight – Jamar Gresham

Nine – Jessica Taukeiaho

Ten – Deajah Marshall

Eleven – Jill Daker

*Dedicated to all those people who feel like their  
voices can not be heard.*

## **UNsung**

by  
Christian Kiley

### **PART I. BUNDLE OF JOY**

***(TEN PEOPLE hold bundles. THEY each talk to their babies in sugary sweet baby-talk. One additional person, ONE, stands alone and off to the side. HIS/HER arms are empty. A blanket can be rolled up in a bundle for each ACTOR to represent a baby or the baby can be mimed. If ALL of the ACTORS other than ONE are miming holding a bundle, ONE can stand with arms down to HER/HIS sides.)***

TWO: You brought color into my life.

THREE: Sweetie-weetie gives me cavity-wavities.

FOUR: The apple pie of my eye.

FIVE: Big ball of meaningful thump-thump-thump in my heart.

SIX: You are the baby lottery, baby!

SEVEN: Even your dirty stinky poopy-woopies are like chocolate-covered flowers to me.

EIGHT: You give each breath meaning.

NINE: Coo-coo-choo-choo-moo-moo-mama-dada-baby!

TEN: Twinkle, twinkle little star. . . I am in the dark when you are far.

ELEVEN: I love you, lovey-dovey-kissy-wissy-miss-you, even when I blink.

ONE: Alone.

TEN: Where is your baby?

ONE: Gone.

TEN: For a check-up or for a bath?

ONE: No.

TEN: Oh.

ONE: Yes. Oh. *(Slumps over)* Oh. *(Slumps further)* Oh.

***(ONE slumps over onto number TEN, who awkwardly exits, leaving ONE as a slumped mess. EVERYONE but ONE moves into their positions for Part II, repeating their lines to their babies. ONE slowly gets up and moves as if SHE/HE is going to sing a great and wonderful note. No sound comes out.)***

**PART II. SHOW AND TELL**

***(EVERYONE except ONE and TWO stands in a semi-circle. ONE stands upstage, a teacher. TWO enters clutching something.)***

ONE: And what did you bring to share with us?

TWO: Can I wait?

ONE: Can you what?

TWO: Wait. Can I?

ONE: It is *Show and Tell*, not *Hide and Quake*.

THREE: I brought a remote controlled weather blimp.

FOUR: I brought the cure for acne.

FIVE: My mother made us all ice cream sundaes that will never melt.

SIX: I made a razor scooter from scratch that can reach the speed of light.

SEVEN: I bred a squirrel with an eagle. I call it a squirrgle.

EIGHT: I taught my hamster to speak Latin. *Musculus Rex!*

NINE: I cut off my pinkie toe and thought I would sew it back on in front of the class.

TEN: My cousin is here from Mars, I thought you might like to meet him.

ELEVEN: Greetings earthlings.

TWO: *(Revealing it)* It is a string, alright. It is an insignificant piece of string that my Mom gave me to help me go to sleep at night. She said it had magical powers. It doesn't. It is a germ-infested piece of garbage.

***(EVERYONE except TWO moves to the positions for Part III laughing and repeating the word "string" as THEY do. TWO steps forward and attempts to sing a note. No sound comes out.)***

**PART III. THE BATTER**

***(THREE comes on stage and stands at the ready at the plate. The OTHER NUMBERS gather around the stage as fans. TWO is the umpire. FOUR is the catcher.)***

ONE: Can you try to hit the ball number three?

***(THREE swings and misses.)***

TWO: Strike one.

FIVE: If I had a dollar for every time you swung and missed, I'd be rich!

SIX: Sun get in your eyes?

SEVEN: Or maybe you just can't hit.

EIGHT: I wish I could suck for a living and get paid for it.

*(THREE swings and misses again.)*

TWO: Strike two.

NINE: Maybe you are ball-phobic.

TEN: Or maybe you just can't play.

*(THREE swings again and misses again.)*

TWO: Strike three.

ELEVEN: Hey, number three. . .that's three strikes. At least you got something right.

*(THREE stands alone as the OTHERS boo and say "loser" as THEY move into position for Part IV. THREE tries to move downstage and sing a note. No sound comes out.)*

#### **PART IV. SPELLING STING**

***(EVERYONE assembles in a straight line facing the audience.)***

FIVE: The word is: aphasia.

SIX: Can you repeat it please?

FIVE: Aphasia.

SEVEN: What is the origin?

FIVE: Greek.

EIGHT: First known use?

FIVE: In a small gyro stand in Athens in 1867.

NINE: What is the definition?

FIVE: The inability to use or comprehend words.

TEN: Part of speech?

FIVE: Noun.

ELEVEN: This is a hard word to spell.

FIVE: Yes it is. Number Four, please spell aphasia.

*(FOUR stares blankly out at the fourth wall. Tries to speak. No sound comes out. The OTHERS spell it correctly staring straight out.)*

OTHERS: A-P-H-A-S-I-A.

*(The OTHERS move into position for Part V.)*

### PART V. JOB INTERROGATION

***(SIX, a boss, stands on one side of the stage while the OTHERS wait nervously on the other side of the stage to be called in for an interview. EACH NUMBER can simply step forward when THEY speak.)***

SIX: Next.

*(FIVE steps forward awkwardly.)*

SIX: Why should *Bigshot, Pompous, and Grandiose* hire you?

FIVE: I'm not sure.

SIX: Maybe you should decide. We have a plethora of impressive candidates.

*(The IMPRESSIVE CANDIDATES now move around confidently, anxiously awaiting their turn.)*

SEVEN: I have an MBA from Know-It-All University. I majored in . . . everything!

EIGHT: I speak every language ever spoken.

NINE: I have never lost at Monopoly.

TEN: My IQ increases one point every time I breathe.

ELEVEN: I invented the air but refuse to breathe too much.

ONE: I once caught a bullet with my teeth in my dentist's office. I have never had a cavity.

TWO: I discovered water.

THREE: I was intentionally abducted by aliens to learn about their economy. I want to share it with you.

FOUR: I recently learned everything.

SIX: So why should we hire you?

*(FIVE opens her/his mouth and no sound comes out. The OTHERS move into their new positions for Part VI.)*

**PART VI. FRIENDSHIP REQUEST**

***(SIX is isolated from the rest of the group. When EACH NUMBER speaks THEY can step forward.)***

SIX: Friendship request?

SEVEN: Declined. Wrong hair color.

SIX: Friendship request?

EIGHT: Declined. Wrong eye color.

SIX: Friendship request?

NINE: Declined. Wrong favorite song.

SIX: Friendship request?

TEN: Declined. Wrong birthday.

SIX: Friendship request?

ELEVEN: Declined. Wrong pet.

SIX: Friendship request?

ONE: Declined. Wrong favorite color.

SIX: Friendship request?

TWO: Declined. Wrong height.

SIX: Friendship request?

THREE: Declined. Wrong favorite food.

SIX: Friendship request?

FOUR: Declined. Wrong age.

SIX: Friendship request?

FIVE: No.

SIX: That is better than declined.

FIVE: Declined then.

SIX: Why?

FIVE: No reason.

SIX: Well, that is hopeful.

FIVE: Why?

SIX: You didn't pick something specific about me that you don't like.

FIVE: You are too analytical.

*(SIX opens his/her mouth and no sound comes out. The OTHERS move into position for Part VII.)*

**PART VII. JOY JUMP**

***(EVERYONE spreads out as if THEY are about to jump out of an airplane.)***

EIGHT: Ladies and gentlemen, this is the moment you have long, long been waiting for. You have trained and prepared and, well, none of that matters now, because you are going to jump and it is up to Lady Luck and Gentleman Gravity and maybe the air currents and perhaps the barometric pressure, and maybe the flight patterns of large gawky birds that might hit you on the way down. One, two, three. . .juuuuuuuuuuuuuump!

***(EVERYONE jumps except SEVEN. As THEY jump THEY act as if THEY are going through the air in slow motion. The movements can be exaggerated. THEY ALL let out sounds of joy as THEY fall. Seven or eight seconds of flight and then. . .)***

Prepare for landing. Please bend your knees and smile for the cameras on impact. Three, two, one. . .

***(On “one” EVERYONE except SEVEN lands in a variety of poses that indicate this has been a life-changing experience that ended with the perfect landing).***

NINE: Lovely.

TEN: The best thing I have ever done.

ELEVEN: Amazing.

ONE: Incredible.

TWO: Jubilation.

THREE: Like all the world's roller coasters in one without the long lines.

FOUR: Nirvana.

FIVE: Glorious.

SIX: Joy, joy, joy, joy.

***(SEVEN opens mouth as if to sing, nothing comes out. The OTHERS begin calling out for “Muffin” as THEY move around the stage.)***

**PART VIII. LOST AND FOUND**

***(EVERYONE is calling for “Muffin” and moving around the stage searching at the same time except for EIGHT, who stands perfectly still.)***

NINE: Muffin, where are you?

TEN: Muffin. . .come here muffin.

ELEVEN: Muffin I miss you.

ONE: Muffin.

TWO: Come home, Muffin.

THREE: Muffin, we made your favorite dinner.

FOUR: Muffin.

FIVE: Muffin.

SIX: Please come home, Muffin.

SEVEN: Muffin. . .

*(EVERYONE except for EIGHT sees Muffin on the horizon.)*

ALL: *(except EIGHT)* Muffin!

*(THEY move toward Muffin and mime picking her up.)*

SEVEN: Where is your dog?

EIGHT: Lost.

SEVEN: What's its name?

EIGHT: Roll.

SEVEN: Roll? That's a strange name. Roll.

ALL: *(except EIGHT point and laugh at the strange name of EIGHT's dog.)* Roll.

*(EIGHT opens mouth as if to sing, no sound comes out. The OTHERS move to their positions for Part IX.)*

**PART IX. HAPPILY EVER AFTER**

***(EVERYONE except NINE takes a small slip of paper out of their pockets. THEY read from it in a heightened and romantic fashion.)***

TEN: When I look at you. . .

ELEVEN: I see the stars. . .

ONE: In the universe. . .

TWO: Of your soul. . .

THREE: And I am small there.

FOUR: But you invite me. . .

FIVE: To be a part of. . .

SIX: Your great constellation.

SEVEN: And I am happy there.

EIGHT: Happily, so very happily. . .

*(THEY ALL look at NINE. SOME of the NUMBERS might use body language to indicate that it is NINE's line.)*

TEN: It is your turn.

EIGHT: Yes, you are supposed to finish the poem.

NINE: But I. . .but. . .

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