THE DAY THE COW-DREAMER RAN AWAY

And Other Tales of Wonder

by Nikki Harmon

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STORY OF THE PLAYS

Here is a troika of one-act plays that will take you on three very unusual journeys. First stop is a town where the cow-dreamer ran away – and we all know that without someone to dream cows there simply are no cows. And that's a fact. So the town needs to find someone to dream their cows for them.

Then we travel to a farm where the devil comes to call every day at noon. Only the dog knows who he is, and it's up to her to save the farmer and his wife, but they won't listen to her.

And, finally, we visit a marsh and find out what happens when the sun gets so curious about the Earth that she comes down to see what it's like for herself. She gets captured by a Monrath who lives deep in the swamp, and all the light disappears from the world...until, at last, she's saved by the frog who loves her very very much.

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CHARACTERS

(*1 m, 1 w, 3 flexible)*

THE DAY THE COW-DREAMER RAN AWAY

WOMAN: A dairy farmer in the village.
MAN: Her husband.
MAYOR: The mayor of the village.
MERCHANT
WISE WOMAN

THE DOG WHO OUTWITTED THE DEVIL

FARMER: A man who wishes too much.
WIFE: The farmer's wife.
DOG: The farmer's dog.
DEVIL: A demon who lets himself be outwitted.

HOW THE CURIOUS SUN WAS SAVED

THE SUN: A beautiful woman.
THE FROG/HAIRY OLD MAN: An enchanted frog who changes into a hairy old wise man to help save the sun.
THE MONRATH: A mean, nasty marsh creature.
THE MAYOR: The mayor of the village.
THE BAKER: The baker in the village.
IBIS, OWL, FIREFLIES: Offstage voices.

A NOTE ON CASTING

In **Curious Sun**, the sun has to be a woman and the frog has to be a man because the frog is in love with the beautiful sun. In **Dog and Devil**, the farmer and his wife are, of course, man and woman. And in **Cow-Dreamer**, the Man and the Woman are specifically male and female. All the others may be cast at the director's discretion.

SETS/PROPS

The stage should be bare except for the props that cannot be mimed, and any furniture necessary, i.e., table and chairs for the “Devil” play. In the “Cow” play, it would be ideal to have the merchant’s wagon (if possible). In the “Sun” play props include torches for the Baker and the Mayor.

COSTUMES

The costumes can range from full character costumes to a slight hint of who the character is, i.e., a dog collar for the Dog. The Sun needs a cloak as a costume prop.

A NOTE ON ACTING STYLE

The play should be both told and acted, and the telling and the acting done with wonderment and clarity. There needs to be a difference in the delivery between the story dialogue and the straight dialogue (set off in quotes). The story dialogue (underlined here), "You're absolutely right," <u>said the Woman</u>, "there's not a single cow in sight." <u>So the Woman</u> ... should be delivered in the way you'd read a story to a child, with some slight crescendos in the voice. It's more of a descriptive tone than you'll give to the straight dialogue. Also, place very minor pauses between the straight dialogue and the narration to differentiate between the telling of the story and the acting out of the characters. But, never go too broad, and keep the characters sincere. The delivery to the audience (different from the specific asides, which comment on the action), are at the director's discretion, but be careful not to let the actors deliver all descriptive dialogue to the audience because then they'd be ping-ponging back and forth. And, finally, have fun.

THE DAY THE COW-DREAMER RAN AWAY

(A long, long time ago in a small town. An empty stage represents the town, a cow pasture, and the outskirts of another town. AT RISE: A WOMAN and a MAN are sleeping.)

WOMAN: One morning, in a small town that sat between two exceptionally high mountains, a Woman ...
MAN: And a Man ...
WOMAN: Woke up ...

(THEY yawn and stretch.)

WOMAN: And went to the barn to milk their cows.
MAN: But there were no cows. No brown ones, no white ones, no spotted ones. "There are no cows here," said the Man, looking every which way he could.
WOMAN: "You're absolutely right," said the Woman, "there's not a single cow in sight." So the Woman ...
MAN: And the Man ...
WOMAN: Went to the pasture to look for their cows, but they weren't there, either. So, they stayed all day waiting for the cows to come back. "I'm sure they'll come back," said the Woman, as they waited ... and waited ... and waited some more.
MAN: But they didn't come back, observed the Man. "Not one single cow has come back."
WOMAN: "Without our cows we'll have no milk to sell, no money for bread," said the Woman.
MAN: "No cheese to trade for meat without our cows," said the Man.
WOMAN: "Nothing to pay the rent, nothing at all without our cows. A serious thing to consider," considered the Woman. So the Woman ...
MAN: And the Man ...

WOMAN: Went home and went to bed, confident that the next morning the cows would be back. "Good night," said the Woman.

MAN: "Good night," said the Man. And they went to sleep.

WOMAN: The next morning, the Woman ...

MAN: And the Man ...

WOMAN: Went again to the barn and the cow pasture, but there were still no cows. "No cows!" said Woman.

MAN: "No, no cows at all," agreed the Man, and with that they decided to tell the Mayor, who knew everything about everything.

(The MAYOR enters.)

MAYOR: "Hello," said the Mayor.

WOMAN: "Where are our cows?" asked the Woman. "We looked everywhere but our cows are gone. You must tell us where our cows are."

MAYOR: "I don't know," said the Mayor.

MAN: "Impossible," said the Man, with an astonished look. "You're the Mayor, you know everything."

MAYOR: "This is true," said the Mayor, so he consulted his Book of Law. *(Reading.)* "Where cows are concerned, consult an expert." *(Nodding.)* "Well, there it is, then," said the Mayor. "We need to ask the Cow-Dreamer. He'll know where the cows are," and with that, the Mayor ...

WOMAN: The Woman ...

MAN: And the Man went to see the Cow-Dreamer, because, if anyone knows about cows, he does. *(Aside.)* "It's a known fact."

MAYOR: When they got to the home of the Cow-Dreamer, the Mayor knocked. "Knock, knock." But there was no answer. "There's no answer," said the Mayor.

WOMAN: "Maybe he's sleeping," suggested the Woman, "knock harder."

MAYOR: So the Mayor did just that. "KNOCK, KNOCK." But still, no one answered.

MAN: "Maybe he's eating," said the Man, "I'll knock," and he did, but no one answered.

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