The True Story of Hey Diddle Diddle

By Bradley Walton

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DEDICATION

In memory of William Reves

STORY OF THE PLAY

We all know the nursery rhyme "Hey Diddle Diddle," but when you stop to think about it...how can a cow jump over the moon? If a cat could play the fiddle, wouldn't it be all over the internet? Why is a dish running away with a spoon? What's the little dog actually laughing at? And how do they all connect with each other? This family comedy offers seven different outlandish tales speculating about what might be "The True Story of Hey Diddle Diddle."

It has a completely gender-flexible cast of 9-46 actors and runs about 55 minutes in length. Its target audience is all ages, with various levels of humor aimed at children, teens, and adults.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

THE TRUE STORY OF HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE premiered April 22 and 23, 2016 at Harrisonburg High School in Harrisonburg, VA. It was produced by Stanley Swartz, directed by the author, and stage managed by Marissa Plummer. Crew members were Glorious Njoroge, Aerious Kubin, Genevieve Kennedy, and Ehrica Orbera-Ortiz. The following performers comprised the ensemble: Deja Gentry, Winston Jeffries, Lauren McKenzie, Abbie Menard, Marissa Plummer, Angelee Rios, Sandra Saad, Kyle Showalter, and Rachel Walton.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(9-46 performers possible)

ACTOR 1
ACTOR 2: narrates The Cat's Tale.
ACTOR 3: narrates The Fiddle's Tale.
ACTOR 4: narrates The Cow's Tale.
ACTOR 5: narrates The Moon's Tale.
ACTOR 6: narrates The Little Dog's Tale.
ACTOR 7: narrates The Spoon's Tale.
ACTOR 8: narrates The Dish's Tale.
ACTOR 9
ACTOR 10
STAGE MANAGER

The Cow's Tale
- COW
- CAT
- DOG
- DISH
- SPOON
- DR. DIDDLE DIDDLE

The Cat's Tale
- CAT
- FIDDLE
- H. DIDDLE DIDDLE
- COW
- DISH
- SPOON

The Fiddle's Tale
- CAT
- FIDDLE
- DISH
- SPOON
- POMERANIAN DOG
- COW

The Little Dog's Tale
- DOG
- COW
- MOON
- CAT
- DISH
- SPOON

The Moon's Tale
- MOON
- COW

The Dish's Tale
- DISH
- SPOON
- CAT
- DOG

The Spoon's Tale
- PRESIDENT
- SPEAKER
- DISH
- SPOON
- DOG

NOTES ON CASTING

All of the roles in the various tales can be played by Actors 1-10. To accommodate larger groups, additional performers can appear exclusively in the tales, or they can be added to the core group of actors as extras for the opening, closing, and transition scenes. Insofar as cast size allows, the same roles should be played by different actors in different tales. For example, the cow should be played by a different actor in each tale. Actors 1 and 10, 8 and 9 can be doubled. The stage manager role can be the actual stage manager. In addition to the cast, a stage crew of 2-3 people may interact with the performers in full view of the audience.

STAGING

A bare stage. A stool, a small table, two chairs, and a mini trampoline are carried on and off. Stage crew members come onstage and hand props and costume items to the actors as needed. Or there could be a box onstage from which the actors retrieve their props and costume pieces, or a curtain from behind which they retrieve those items.

SCENES

The scene divisions are for the purpose of managing rehearsals. They do not indicate breaks in the action; each scene should flow seamlessly into the next.

Scene 1: Opening
Scene 2: The Cow's Tale
Scene 3: Transition
Scene 4: The Cat's Tale
Scene 5: Transition
Scene 6: The Fiddle's Tale
Scene 7: Transition
Scene 8: The Little Dog's Tale
Scene 9: Transition
Scene 10: The Moon's Tale
Scene 11: Transition
Scene 12: The Dish's Tale
Scene 13: Transition
Scene 14: The Spoon's Tale
Scene 15: Conclusion

Scene 1: Opening

(AT RISE: A bare stage. The ACTORS enter from L, R, and UC, giving an energetic and choreographed recitation of "Hey Diddle Diddle.")

ACTOR 1: Hey Diddle Diddle!
ACTOR 2: The cat
ACTOR 3: And the fiddle.
ACTOR 4: The cow jumped
ACTOR 5: Over the moon.
ACTOR 6: The little dog laughed
ACTOR 7: To see such sport.
ACTOR 8: And the dish
ACTOR 9: Ran away
ACTOR 10: With the spoon!

(The ACTORS form a line, join hands, and bow. The CURTAIN closes and the LIGHTS black out. The LIGHTS come back up on an empty stage with closed curtains. Pause. ACTOR 1 peeks out from behind the middle of the curtains, looks at the audience, then disappears back behind the curtains.)

ACTOR 1: *(Behind curtain.)* They're still here.
ACTOR 2: *(Behind curtain.)* What?
ACTOR 3: *(Behind curtain.)* Are you sure?

(ACTOR 1 peeks out from behind the middle of the curtains again. Then ACTOR 2 peeks out beneath Actor 1. Then ACTOR 3 peeks out beneath Actor 2. The three of them disappear back behind the curtains.)

ACTOR 2: *(Behind curtain.)* They *are* still here!
ACTOR 3: *(Behind curtain.)* Why are they still here?
ACTOR 4: *(Behind curtain.)* Maybe they want an encore!

(There is a sound of stomping and shuffling feet from behind the curtains. A second later, the CURTAINS open. The

ACTORS enter and recite the rhyme with even more energy than the first time.)

ACTOR 1: Hey Diddle Diddle!
ACTOR 2: The cat
ACTOR 3: And the fiddle.
ACTOR 4: The cow jumped
ACTOR 5: Over the moon.
ACTOR 6: The little dog laughed
ACTOR 7: To see such sport.
ACTOR 8: And the dish
ACTOR 9: Ran away
ACTOR 10: With the spoon!

(The ACTORS form a line, join hands, and bow. THEY all look out into the audience uncomfortably.)

ACTOR 1: *(Waving to audience.)* Thanks for coming!

(Pause.)

ACTOR 5: They're not leaving.
ACTOR 6: Why aren't they leaving?

(STAGE MANAGER enters.)

STAGE MANAGER: I told you all the play wasn't long enough, but no one ever listens to the stage manager.
ACTOR 9: It's a classic!
STAGE MANAGER: Just because something's a classic doesn't mean it's more than 30 seconds long.
ACTOR 1: Should we do it again?
ACTOR 2: We already did it twice!
ACTOR 3: We need to do something. These people came here to watch us perform. We need to make it worth their time.
ACTOR 4: Is there a longer version of *Hey Diddle Diddle*?
ACTOR 5: Not that I know of.
ACTOR 6: Me neither.

End of Freeview

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