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Dramatic Publishing

Welcome To Four Way: The Town That Time Forgot

A Comedy in Two Acts

by

KENT R. BROWN

Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(WELCOME TO FOUR-WAY: The Town That Time Forgot)

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WELCOME TO FOUR WAY: The Town That Time Forgot

A Comedy in Two Acts
For Seven Men and Six Women

CHARACTERS

MAURICE DARCY a man in his later years
CHERYL MAE DOBBINS 19 years of age, an athlete
“VULGAR” VICTOR BOSCO . . . in his 40s, a Vietnam veteran
STANLEY FRANK late 40s, self-appointed town historian
COLLEEN KIMBEL late 30s, divorced
HARRIET MUELLER in her late 40s, runs a small store
JACKSON PURDY in his early 40s,
self-appointed head of Chamber of Commerce
DARYL SWEETWOOD in his early 20s,
works for the highway department
BOBBY JAMES DOBBINS 18 years of age,
Cheryl Mae’s brother
GEORGIA SWEENEY in her upper years
HAROLD SWEENEY her husband
AMY LYNN PURDY in her 30s, Jackson’s wife
LUCINDA HARRIS late 20s, hitchhiking across America

TIME:

The present. Mid-August.

ACT ONE Morning before Noon

ACT TWO Near Sunset

PLACE:

We are in the town of Four Way, a small rural community where two roads met over a century ago. A large tree dominates the setting. A few dead branches suggest the dryness of the environment. An old pay telephone, and a sign proclaiming WELCOME TO FOUR WAY, are attached to the tree. A circular wooden bench has been constructed around the base of the tree. In the vicinity are a dilapidated car seat, several old chairs, a wooden crate or two, and some wood shavings. This is where people meet throughout the day to visit, play cards, whittle and tell stories, some of which are true.

WELCOME TO FOUR WAY: The Town That Time Forgot made its world premiere at Northern Kentucky University's Department of Theatre Y.E.S. Festival on April 15, 1993, with the following cast:

Maurice Darcy *Scott Thrasher*
Cheryl Mae Dobbins *Carlie Schulenberg*
"Vulgar" Victor Bosco. *Neil David Seibel*
Stanley Frank *Fred Caldwell*
Colleen Kimbel *Jami Menkhaus*
Harriet Mueller. *Kim Wade*
Jackson Purdy *Watson Kenneth Brown*
Bobby James Dobbins *Kristian Allen*
Amy Lynn Purdy *Michelle Bardo*
Georgia Sweeney *Michele McLean*
Harold Sweeney *Huey Scott Pergrem*
Daryl Sweetwood. *Marcus Schulte*
Lucinda Harris *Spring Starr Pillow*

Directed by *Sandra Forman*
Scenic Designer. *Ronald A. Shaw*
Costume Designer *Gretchen H. Sears*
Lighting Designer & Technical Director . . . *Jeffrey M. Gress*
Sound Designer *Gary W. Poole*
Stage Manager *Claudia Cartolano*

ADDITIONAL CHARACTER NOTES

MAURICE DARCY: Well dressed, wears spats. Congenial, well spoken, forgiving.

CHERYL MAE DOBBINS: An athlete with feminine grace.

“VULGAR” VICTOR BOSCO: His behavior is often unpredictable but never harmful.

STANLEY FRANK: Nervous, seldom completes a sentence, shy.

COLLEEN KIMBEL: Six months pregnant. Attractive, mysterious.

HARRIET MUELLER: Blunt but sensitive. A former Army nurse who has seen it all, she runs a small store and cares for “Vulgar” Victor.

JACKSON PURDY: A city-bred man who has become the self-appointed head of Four Way’s one-man Chamber of Commerce. Hasn’t yet discovered the town’s rhythms.

BOBBY JAMES DOBBINS: Moody, naive, seeks attention.

AMY LYNN PURDY: High-strung, tries to please. Recently lost her first child to a miscarriage.

GEORGIA SWEENEY: Gracious, polite, former school teacher. Has difficulty seeing.

HAROLD SWEENEY: Crusty, complaining. Former sales manager, has difficulty hearing.

DARYL SWEETWOOD: Of Native American heritage. Pleasant demeanor.

KENT R. BROWN holds a Ph.D.
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He is on the drama faculty at the
University of Arkansas in Fayetteville
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playwriting, acting, and directing.

We are proud to publish these other fine
plays by Kent Brown:

VALENTINES AND KILLER CHILI
REDUCED FOR QUICK SALE
TWO BEERS AND A HOOK SHOT
ANSWERS FROM THE CENTER OF THE
UNIVERSE ABOUT THINGS UNKNOWN
DANCING THE BOX STEP

ACT ONE

AT THE CURTAIN: MAURICE DARCY stands looking out over the audience. He is well dressed in a dark suit and white spats. He carries an umbrella as well as a thermos and small cooler. After surveying the “landscape,” he moves to the tree bench where he takes out a large red handkerchief, places it on the bench, and seats himself upon it. He pours a cup of coffee, smiles, extends his arm in a toast to no one we can see.

MAURICE. Good morning, Margaret. Did you sleep well? Do you sleep at all, I wonder. *(Beat.)* Going to be a scorcher. *(He takes a sip of coffee then closes his eyes. A basketball rolls through the setting and into the wings. MAURICE glances at the ball and then closes his eyes once again. The effect is almost surreal.)*

(A moment later CHERYL MAE DOBBINS enters, sees MAURICE with his eyes closed, and quietly begins to cross the stage.)

MAURICE. Good morning, Cheryl Mae.

CHERYL MAE. Good morning, Mr. Darcy. Didn't mean to disturb you.

MAURICE. You weren't.

CHERYL MAE. Looked like you were praying.

MAURICE. Your basketball went that way, I think. Rolled right by.

CHERYL MAE. Yes, sir. Hit off my foot.

MAURICE. You're supposed to dribble basketballs, aren't you?

CHERYL MAE. Didn't sleep much last night.

MAURICE. When we played the game we'd take it to the center of the court after we made a basket and jump it up and do it all again.

CHERYL MAE. Yes, sir.

MAURICE. Game's changed a lot since then, hasn't it? Fast break, slam dunk, High Five, lots of "x's" and "o's." In my day the tall kid was in the center. Everybody else stood around on the outside.

CHERYL MAE. Yes, sir.

MAURICE. Scored nine points ... you'd get the keys to the city.

CHERYL MAE. Yes, sir.

MAURICE. You and Bobby James safe enough?

CHERYL MAE. We're doing fine. Thank you.

MAURICE. It's going to be a hot one.

CHERYL MAE. Yesterday it was 97 degrees at 9:00 a.m.

MAURICE. Is that right?

CHERYL MAE. Radio said so.

MAURICE. Must be true then. (*CHERYL MAE exits after the basketball.*) Well, Margaret, it's going to be another wonderful day in Four Way. (*Beat.*) Hope you slept well.

(*VICTOR BOSCO enters. VICTOR is a slightly disoriented Vietnam veteran who wears combat pants and a sleeveless fatigue shirt. He is dribbling CHERYL MAE's basketball. CHERYL MAE is in close pursuit.*)

VICTOR (*dribbling around the tree*). Only eight seconds to go. Game's all tied up. And "Vulgar" Victor moves it down the

court for the Harrison Mustangs. Doesn't look good for the Four Way Bulldogs. But wait...out of nowhere comes Cheryl Mae Dobbins. (*CHERYL MAE begins to defend against VICTOR. They both play out the action.*) A contest of titanic tension, folks. The crowd's cheering. Maurice! (*MAURICE makes cheering sounds.*) Cheryl Mae steals the ball. There she goes! Down the court! Three... two...one! And it's up...up... (*VICTOR makes a circle by extending his arms as CHERYL MAE shoots the ball through the "hoop."*) The Bulldogs win!

MAURICE. Bravo, bravo. Well done, Cheryl Mae!

VICTOR. Cheryl Mae Dobbins does it again. (*Beat.*) Shoulda made All Conference, Cheryl Mae. They screwed ya over.

CHERYL MAE. Maybe next year, Victor.

VICTOR. You keep shootin' now.

CHERYL MAE. I am. An hour a day.

VICTOR. It's all in the wrist, you hear me? Follow through.

CHERYL MAE. Thanks. I'll remember.

VICTOR (*fixating on MAURICE's spats*). Hey, Maurice! What are you wearing on your feet? Cheryl Mae, get a load of those.

MAURICE. They're called spats.

VICTOR. Oh, yeah. Spats. My granddaddy used to wear those. Even wore 'em in the box when they put him under.

MAURICE. No need to be offensive.

VICTOR. I liked my granddaddy, Maurice. Heck of a lot.

MAURICE. I feel better already. Thank you, Victor.

VICTOR (*a bit erratic*). You bet! My pleasure. It's gonna be hot today. Better hide and rest. (*VICTOR sits down in the shade and holds the basketball tightly to his chest as if holding a fallen comrade. MAURICE and CHERYL MAE are unsurprised by VICTOR's behavior.*) Bam! Bam! Bam! You're here...

MAURICE (*to VICTOR*). Have you had your breakfast this morning?

VICTOR. Then you're gone. Just like that! Up! Then down.

MAURICE. Victor?

VICTOR. I hear ya.

MAURICE. Give the ball back to Cheryl Mae.

CHERYL MAE. That's all right, Mr. Darcy.

MAURICE. You're not in the jungle anymore, Victor. You can relax. You're part of civilization now.

VICTOR. Right here in Four Way?

MAURICE. That's correct. Right here in Four Way. (*VICTOR rolls the basketball toward CHERYL MAE.*)

CHERYL MAE. Thank you, Victor. I brought this for the garage sale.

VICTOR. You're up...then you're down.

MAURICE. Cheryl Mae, do me a favor and drop in at the Oasis for me, will you?

VICTOR (*energized*). It's donut time! Front and center!

MAURICE. We'll need...

VICTOR. Ten glazed, five sugar, three strawberry, three lemon, a dozen chocolate with those little sprinkle things on top, and a bran muffin for old Maurice here. State of the art breakfast chow for our elderly comrade.

MAURICE. How considerate.

VICTOR. Gotta take care of your roughage, Maurice.

MAURICE. I'll take care of my own roughage, but thank you for the thought.

CHERYL MAE. I can help, Mr. Darcy. I've got money.

MAURICE (*reaching into his wallet*). That's okay, Cheryl Mae, but my social security check arrived yesterday.

VICTOR. Don't let him work you like that, Cheryl Mae. He's rollin' in shit.

MAURICE. Your descriptive powers overwhelm me, Victor.

(STANLEY FRANK enters quickly, carrying a variety of journals, papers, and old photographs. He is distinguished by an intriguing blend of shyness and unbounded enthusiasm.)

STANLEY. I set the...alarm. I know I did. Slept right through it. What was I thinking!! Couldn't decide about what to bring today. Are they here yet? *(STANLEY hands his items to CHERYL MAE.)* Please hold these. I thought they would give a fascinating...account of...when it's opened the next time. How the town began...I mean. Who we were...and where we've been...*(Looking offstage.)* Oh, dear...is that the machine there? Lovely morning isn't it. Hello, everyone...happy birthday...big day...important day! *(STANLEY exits in a flurry.)*

MAURICE. Stanley seems in good spirits.

VICTOR. He's wacky, ever notice that, Maurice? Kinda strange.
Not like you and me.

MAURICE. We're all distinctive, Victor.

CHERYL MAE *(looking offstage)*. They've arrived. I think they're here.

MAURICE. Add in a few extra donuts for the workers, Cheryl Mae.

VICTOR *(coaxing MAURICE)*. It's gonna be a scorcher, Maurice.

MAURICE. And some cold pop.

VICTOR. My man!

MAURICE *(softly to CHERYL MAE)*. And some orange juice for Victor. And tell Harriet to come when she can.

CHERYL MAE. Yes, sir. I'll be right back. *(CHERYL MAE exits. Sounds of heavy machinery digging up concrete and changing gears can be heard intermittently. MAURICE pours himself another cup of coffee from his thermos, and*

then inserts a cigarette into his cigarette holder. He lights his cigarette and crosses his legs. All of this is a ritual he's performed thousands of times before. VICTOR withdraws a pocket knife and begins to whittle on a piece of wood.)

VICTOR. It's gettin' hotter every year, Maurice. One of these days the sky will burn away and the planets will fall...and great demons from beneath the earth will rise above us all.

MAURICE. It's not the prettiest of options, but you're not alone in your predictions, Victor.

VICTOR. Used to drive a dozer in the other world so I know what it's like to see planets fall from the sky. Ever tell you about the other world, Maurice?

MAURICE. Numerous times. But you go ahead.

VICTOR. It wasn't like real life.

MAURICE. So you've said.

VICTOR. We shouldn't be allowed to do those things.

MAURICE. I agree.

VICTOR (*with energy*). I think I'm getting better, Maurice. Get up every morning and say to myself, "Get better, damn it!" Makes me feel better anyway. (*Beat.*) Do you think I'm getting any better?

MAURICE. You're doing quite well, Victor.

VICTOR. I think about killing myself sometimes.

MAURICE. Most of us have given it a thought now and then. Nothing unusual. Don't let it get you down.

VICTOR (*quickly changing tempo*). I didn't know what to bring for the next century, did you? "A piece of my life," Stanley said. Hell, who'd know what to do with it? I don't. Damn progress'll kill you every time. (*Beat.*) What's it like when nothin's the same anymore?

MAURICE. You ask hard questions, Victor. Those are the best kind. I've always liked that about you. The ones no one can answer.

(COLLEEN KIMBEL enters. She is six months pregnant.)

COLLEEN. Hello, Maurice.

MAURICE. Good morning, Colleen. Are you all set? Anything I can do?

COLLEEN. I don't know if I'm all set, Maurice. But today's the day.

VICTOR. Colleen!

COLLEEN. Hello, Victor.

VICTOR. My heart! My heart!

COLLEEN *(has heard VICTOR's sentiments frequently)*. Thank you, Victor. That's generous of you.

VICTOR *(referring to COLLEEN's pregnancy)*. Whose is it, Colleen?

COLLEEN. Not now, Victor.

VICTOR. You can tell me. Whisper in my ear. I won't tell a soul.

COLLEEN. You're being vulgar, Victor.

VICTOR. You say the nicest things, Colleen.

COLLEEN *(to MAURICE)*. The house closes at two o'clock this afternoon. Should be able to get a few hundred miles behind me... get a room... watch CNN... have a good cry. I'll do fine.

VICTOR. Take me with you.

COLLEEN. Not this time, Victor.

MAURICE. We'll miss you, Colleen.

COLLEEN *(kisses MAURICE on the forehead)*. You're sweet, Maurice. Margaret was a very lucky woman.

VICTOR. My forehead's over this way, Colleen. *(COLLEEN pauses a moment and then kisses VICTOR on the forehead.)* Did you see that Maurice? She kissed me! *(To COL-*

LEEN.) I got other places on my body if you're really interested.

(CHERYL MAE enters with several sacks of donuts, coffee, and cokes.)

CHERYL MAE. Ten glazed, five sugar, three strawberry, three lemon and a dozen chocolate with those little ...

VICTOR. Sprinkle things!

CHERYL MAE. Two muffins for you, Mr. Darcy, and six glazed for the highway workers. Orange juice and pop cans in this bag.

VICTOR *(finds the orange juice and gulps it down quickly)*.

I'm kind of a problem at times. I'm sorry.

CHERYL MAE. That's okay.

VICTOR. Tastes good. Thanks.

COLLEEN *(helping CHERYL MAE with the sacks)*. Here, let me help you with these.

CHERYL MAE *(to MAURICE)*. Here's the change.

MAURICE. You keep it. Put it in your piggy bank. It's a special day.

CHERYL MAE *(giving all the change to MAURICE)*. Bobby's got the route, Mr. Darcy, and the second shift at the plant. And I've got a new job at Babcock's. But thank you just the same.

VICTOR. Doin' what?

CHERYL MAE. The books and some typing.

VICTOR. You be sure the door's open, you here?

COLLEEN. Victor, people have to learn about people for themselves.

VICTOR *(to CHERYL MAE)*. You hear me? Tell him to keep his hands on the table and his sausage in the freezer.

MAURICE. I think Cheryl Mae gets the general idea.

CHERYL MAE. I'll be okay. Thanks, Victor.

VICTOR. Your father woulda told ya the same thing. The moment Babcock's hands start rising up off the table top... just let me know...and I'll waste him.

COLLEEN. Nice offer, Victor.

VICTOR. It's just the kinda guy I am, Colleen.

COLLEEN. You're a hell of a friend, Victor, I'll say that for you.

(STANLEY enters carrying a rather large stone. It has been uncovered during the "off stage" digging. He displays it with enthusiasm.)

STANLEY. Look...see? Look! I found it. Just looked down and there it was. They stopped digging so I could get it out. See?

VICTOR. Where? See what?

STANLEY. Right here! Don't you see?

VICTOR *(looking closely at the rock)*. It's a rock. So what? I've seen lots of rocks, Stanley. I've been around.

STANLEY. Tracks...history...right here!

VICTOR. Oh, yeah! Looks like a bug or a fish-something or other. A rib cage maybe. Hey, this is something.

STANLEY *(showing it to EVERYONE)*. Bones, I think. Absolutely amazing. Under the ocean...right where we are now...for thousands of years. With all that...pressure...and all that...decay...deep in the mud...and the pressure forming around it year after year after year...until...

VICTOR. Yeah, I got it! Right! He's just mindin' his own business...out for a swim maybe or sittin' underneath a tree...and all that pressure just squeezed down around that poor sucker and zap! Instant fossil. Just like that! Musta really surprised him.

MAURICE. I think it takes a little longer than that, Victor.

VICTOR. Not in my story it doesn't.

COLLEEN (*sincerely*). I didn't know Four Way was under the ocean a long time ago.

STANLEY (*captivated by COLLEEN*). Yes, we were. I mean... the earth... the land was.

COLLEEN. It's all very fascinating, Stanley. I'll miss you.

STANLEY. Thank you. (*Beat.*) You look... ah... very...

VICTOR (*beat*). Sweet. Tell her she looks sweet.

STANLEY (*beat*). Nice. You look very nice today. I'm sorry you're leaving.

COLLEEN. Thank you, Stanley.

VICTOR. Ask her for a kiss on your forehead.

STANLEY. I have to go. (*STANLEY suddenly exits, carrying the rock with him.*)

VICTOR. I'm doing better than Stanley is, Maurice, don't you think?

MAURICE. He's busy today, Victor. Has his mind on several things.

VICTOR (*begins to move in an agitated manner*). It's the heat.

Why's all the bad stuff happen in the heat? All that pressure.

CHERYL MAE. Mr. Darcy?

VICTOR. Tall kid... six foot, four inches...

COLLEEN. Victor?

VICTOR. Jimmy Loon... from Louisiana.

MAURICE. Victor?

COLLEEN. How 'bout one of these chocolate donuts you like so much with the sprinkle things...

VICTOR. Two teeth missing right in front. Looked like a crooked fence without a gate. You hearin' me, troopers?

MAURICE. We hear you, Victor.

VICTOR. Supposed to be a short run. In and out. Back in time for Johnny Carson. Still had his hair up. Jimmy used to roll his hair up. In a bun. And prance around the NCO club on