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Dramatic Publishing



A PLAY IN ONE ACT

MARK TWAIN'S

The Diary of Adam and Eve

adapted for the stage

by

MARK BUCCI



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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(THE DIARY OF ADAM AND EVE)

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for Lionel Newman

THE DIARY OF ADAM AND EVE

This play may be performed by the following different sized casts:

- (a) by as large a cast as you wish; wherein, besides **ADAM** (male), **EVE** (female), and the **SNAKE** (male or female), more **ANIMALS** (male and/or female) than those mentioned in the script may be added as they are required (starting with page 11).
- (b) by a cast of five; namely, **ADAM**, **EVE**, the **SNAKE**, the **LAMB** (male or female), and the **TIGER** (male or female).
- (c) by a cast of three; **ADAM**, **EVE**, and the **SNAKE**, thereby eliminating all stage directions which refer to the presence of other animals on stage.

No particular set is required; just a playing area with some boards (and possibly a piece of canvas) to one side, with which a small lean-to or dwelling can be quickly put together. The only other props used are a stepladder and an apple.

ADAM and **EVE** may be costumed any number of ways: (1) simple leotards, (2) jeans or levis and sweat shirts, (3) any currently popular mode of dress, etc. -- provided that the over-all effect is simple and timeless.

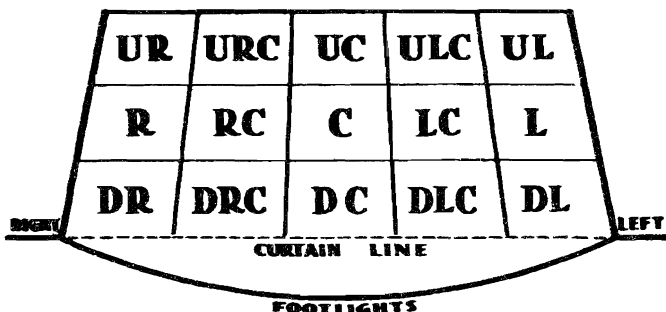
The SNAKE'S costume should match whatever aforementioned style is chosen, with this one major difference. One of his (or her) arms is to be considered the actual snake, which may, or need not, be gloved (arm length) to resemble snake-skin, with a snake's head where his hand is (i. e. , like a hand puppet). The performer visibly speaks the lines while his hand "mouths" the words (with or without the snake's head attachment).

All the other ANIMALS could wear basic, unobtrusive garments featuring partial masks (and addenda such as tails, feathers, horns, etc.) to indicate their identity.

The staging should be somewhat stylized, yet natural, and fluidly pantomimic, making sure to observe those directions which call for speaking lines directly to the audience. No set and, in the main, no props are used because the play's style, and your performance, will evoke these in your audience.

If desired, music may appropriately underscore some of the scenes, particularly those involving the ANIMALS, should they be included in the cast.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

The Diary of Adam and Eve

The curtain may be already open at the start, in which case the play's beginning is indicated by the lights coming up on a stage which is empty save for some boards /and possibly a piece of canvas/ somewhat UL.)

ADAM enters hastily L, toting a stepladder which he sets C. He then climbs to its top and sits facing the audience, chin cupped in one hand, brooding. EVE enters UR, slowly, somewhat contemplatively, to DR area.)

(NOTE: They do not look at each other, or relate or talk to one another, until so designated.)

EVE (to herself and audience). I am almost a whole day old now. I arrived yesterday - or was it day-before-yesterday? It could be that it was day-before-yesterday and I wasn't noticing. Very well, it will be best to start right and not let the record get confused, for some instinct tells me that these details are going to be important to historians some day. For I feel exactly like -- (Thinks.) -- an -- experiment. Yes, experiment! My, that's a good word. No one could feel more like an experiment than I do. I'm convinced that is what I am: an experiment! (Sits on the floor.) So then, if I'm an experiment, am I the whole of it? (Cups chin in hand, thinking.)

ADAM (to himself and audience, none too happy).

This new creature with the long hair is a good deal in the way.

EVE. No, I think not. Though I am the main part of the experiment, the rest of it has its share in the matter.

ADAM. It is always hanging around and following me about. I don't like this; I am not used to company.

EVE. Is my position assured or do I have to watch it and take care of it?

ADAM. I wish it would stay with the other animals.

EVE. I will have to be watchful, for some instinct tells me that eternal vigilance is the price of supremacy. Not a bad phrase for one so young.

ADAM. Perhaps if I keep a chronicle of my thoughts, it will take my mind off that creature. (One hand is the writing tablet; with the other he "writes" pantomimically.) Cloudy today, wind in the east; think we shall have rain. "We"? Where did I get that word?

EVE. And since vigilance is nourished by observation, I will write down everything I've observed. Now, let's see -- I've observed that -- (Begins "writing.") -- there are too many stars in some places and not enough in others. Oh, and last night the moon got loose and slid down and fell out of the sky. A very great loss. (Stops writing.) It breaks my heart to think of it, for there isn't another ornament like it for beauty and finish. It should have been fastened better. Oh, I do love moons, they are so pretty and so romantic. I wish there were five or six. I would never tire of looking at them. Stars are good, too.

ADAM. I wish it would not talk.

EVE. Stars would look nice in my hair. But I

don't suppose I ever can get them. Though they don't look it, they are very far off. (Writes again.) This is a fact I proved last night when I tried to knock some down with a pole. I also tried throwing clods at them till I was all tired out, but I never got even one star. (Stops writing.) Perhaps it was because I am left-handed -- (Gets up and loosely mimes some of the following.) -- and cannot throw good. I even tried to gather some of them up at the extreme rim of the circle, but it was too far and turning cold. But, I found some tigers and I nestled in among them, which was comfortable; and their breath was sweet and pleasant because they live on strawberries. I had never seen a tiger before, but I knew them in a minute by their stripes.

ADAM. It is always talking.

EVE (writing again). Today I'm getting better ideas of distance. Because I reached for a beautiful flower which was but six inches away but seemed a foot -- alas, with thorns between! I learned a lesson; also, I made up an axiom, my very first, all out of my own head. (Clears her throat.) The scratched Experiment shuns the thorn. Rather good for one so young.

ADAM (writing). Been examining the great waterfall. It is the finest thing on the estate, I think. Someday soon, I'd like to dive off it.

EVE. I followed the other Experiment around yesterday afternoon, at a distance, to see what it might be for. I was not able to make out. It has frowsy hair and (whatever color) eyes; it has no hips and tapers like a carrot. When it stands, it spreads itself apart like a derrick. I think it may be architecture. Anyway, though I thought it was going to chase me, I found it was

only trying to get away. I've got it up the tree again.

ADAM. Privacy and silence are all I ask for.

EVE (trying to make conversation, talks directly to ADAM for the first time). - Uh -- They returned the moon last night and I was so happy. I think it is very honest of them. It slid down and fell off again, but there's no need to worry when one has that kind of neighbors; they will fetch it back. I wish I could do something to show my appreciation. I'd like to send them some stars, for we have more than we can use. (ADAM doesn't answer.) But perhaps you care nothing for such things. (To audience.) It has low tastes and is not kind. (They both gradually mime the following.) Yesterday at twilight -- (ADAM comes down from the ladder.) -- it had crept down and was trying to catch the little speckled fishes that play in the pool. (Now in the incident, talking to ADAM.) Have you no heart? No compassion for those little creatures? Can it be that you're designed and manufactured for such ungentle work? (To audience.) I had to clod it, to make it go up the tree again and let them alone. (Both mime.) One of the clods took it back of the ear, and it used language.

ADAM (back up the ladder, shrieking an unintelligible sound of pain and anger). Aaaaaarrrrrgggghhhh!

EVE (to audience). It was the first time I'd ever heard speech, except my own.

ADAM (another sound as above, less loud). Aarrgghh. . .

EVE. I didn't understand the words, but they seemed expressive. (To ADAM, delighted.) You can talk! Oh, I love to talk; I talk all day, and in my sleep, too, and I am very interesting. But if I had another to talk to, I could be twice as

interesting, and would never stop, if desired. (ADAM looks up with a "why me?" expression. A new beat, EVE to audience.) Try as I may, I cannot fathom what the other experiment is. It's not a carrot, or a derrick, and certainly isn't put together securely enough to be architecture. (Thinks.) It must be -- a "he." (At this, ADAM does a slight take. To ADAM.) Then you're not an "it," that wouldn't be grammatical. You are a he! (Includes audience.) In that case, one would parse it thus: nominative, he; dative, him; possessive, his'n.

ADAM (to himself as he descends the ladder). I think I'll go dive off the great waterfall.

EVE (to ADAM). You mean, Niagara Falls.

ADAM (to EVE). Why Niagara Falls!

EVE (simply). Because it looks like Niagara Falls.

ADAM. That's no reason, it is mere waywardness and imbecility! (To audience.) The new creature names everything that comes along before I can get in a protest. And always the same pretext is offered----

EVE (to audience). - It looks like the thing.

ADAM. There is the dodo, for instance.

(NOTE: If a large cast is used, the DODO BIRD should be personified. During this section he enters from one side, walks between ADAM and EVE, eventually retiring to the upstage area where he sits.)

EVE. When the dodo came along, he thought it was a wildcat - I saw it in his eye. But I saved him. And I was careful not to do it in a way that would hurt his pride. I said, casually -- (To ADAM.) "Well, I do declare, if there isn't

the dodo!" (To audience.) --without seeming to be explaining.

ADAM (to EVE). How do you know it's a dodo?

EVE (as he silently mouths the words with her).

Because it looks like a dodo.

ADAM (to himself and audience). The "dodo" will have to keep that name, no doubt. It wearies me to fret about it, and it does no good anyway.

EVE (to audience). Though I thought maybe he was a little piqued that I knew the creature when he didn't, it was quite evident that he admired me.

ADAM (going to one side, where he will notice the boards and canvas; grumbling). Dodo. It no more looks like a dodo than I do!

(NOTE: With large cast, DODO reacts briefly.)

EVE (a subtle look in Adam's direction, then to audience). During the last few days, I've taken all the work of naming things off his hands, and this has been a great relief to him, for he can't think of a rational name to save him. But I don't let him see that I'm aware of his defect. Whenever a new creature comes along, I name it before he can expose himself by an awkward silence.

(NOTE: With large cast all and/or more of the following animals appear; medium-sized cast, only the TIGER and LAMB appear. In both cases they would characteristically move about, then unobtrusively go to upstage area. With small cast, EVE mimes seeing the various animals, pointing at different parts of the stage.)