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Dramatic Publishing

TWO HORNS AND A TALE

A Fantasy
by
MARY W. SCHALLER



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(TWO HORNS AND A TALE)

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TWO HORNS AND A TALE

A Devilish Tale
for Large, Flexible Cast

CHARACTERS

CELLASOUL	Junior Devil
STITCO and WHORTLEBERRY	Junior Devils
WILL O'WISP	Our hero, the Devil who wasn't
BIGDRIP	Secretary to the Great Belladonna
BELLADONNA	Principal of the College of Demonology
SLEEZIE and SNAFU	Devil Guards
ZIPPY	A United States Postal Mailbox
LISA and STEVE	Mortal Children (around 12 yrs. old)
SOCRATES and PLATO	Bronze Lions
MICHELLE	Our blind Heroine, too good to be true
MESSENGER	Hell's answer to Western Union
PROSECUTOR	The devilish D.A. in a cast
SAINT PETER	Heaven's Gateman
GABRIEL	The Archangel

TIME: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow

PLACE: Heaven, Hell & In Between

This play is dedicated in memory of
DIANE KOPERDAK,
Assistant Stage Manager, The Strawhatters

"The Devil that proud spirit cannot endure to be mocked."

THOMAS MORE

"The devil is an angel too."

MIGUEL de UNAMUNO, "Two Mothers"

PRODUCTION NOTES

Although *TWO HORNS AND A TALE* was not written as a seasonal play, it is easiest to mount during the fall as the costumes and props are of a Halloween nature.

Staging should be simple, with the suggestion of Heaven, Hell, and Earth rather than large box sets. The play is written with directions for curtain and lighting, but neither of these are necessary. The play has been performed on the average public school cafeteria/stage with the minimum of lighting effects.

Costumes should be kept simple. Reds and blacks for the Devils; ordinary clothes for the Mortals and whites and reds for the Angels. Horns can be made out of bright red cloth and attached to headbands. Tails are made from the same material and pinned on to belt loops. Boy Devils can wear old jeans and red and black flannel shirts. Girl Devils can wear red tights and leotards, black felt skirts and red and black tops. Belladonna can be either a stylish Devil in a red or black jumpsuit or she can appear in a long black gown trimmed in gold. Bigdrip can wear "dress for success" business clothing in red, black and white. The Lions' costumes can be made from patterns that are available especially around Halloween - a golden tawny color material with brown yarn mane and tail bobs. Zippy, the mailbox, can wear a postman's uniform with hat over

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which he (she) wears a blue felt "sandwich board" with the typical mailbox markings on it in felt. Saint Peter, Gabriel, and later Will O'Wisp can be in conventional gowns or they can also look modern: Saint Peter looking like a Cap Cod fisherman; Gabriel in a silver jumpsuit and Will O'Wisp reappearing as a Guardian Angel in a white version of his Devil's costume or in an all white suit and tie.

Makeup should be kept simple for several reasons. Children's skin is more sensitive to the heavy grease makeups and creams and, more importantly, Will O'Wisp does not have a lot of time to change from Devil to Angel. The less he has to take off his face, the better. For the Devils, eyebrow pencil and liner to accent the eyes and brows is all that is necessary, rather than trying to stain the skin red. Blond Devils may want to spray red hair color in their hair. The Lions can use either a full-faced makeup or the more simple black nose and whiskers. Lots of blue eyeshadow on Zippy is enough and the Angel Gabriel needs only to look bright.

The only sound effect in the play is the bell to strike six and a gong is best for this.

The part of the Prosecutor was written for someone in a wheelchair because the original actor who played the role did, in fact, have

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a broken leg. The audience reacted so well to the wheelchair that it has been retained in the play.

SCENES TWO, FOUR, SIX. These scenes may be played in front of the curtain, to allow for scene changes, or they may be played to one side of the stage in followspot lighting.

PROPERTIES

6 Pitchforks

A long scroll

Little black book

2 Bottles of colored water

Pouch

Red passport

Walkie-talkie

Handcuffs

Feathered pen

Large roll book

Ball and chain

Library books

Confetti

Wristwatch

Cape

Set of horns, tail and pitchfork for ZIPPY

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Will O'Wisps has come a long way since he first appeared onstage on April 26, 1961 in a production by the Twilight Zone Players at Stone Ridge School, Bethesda, Md. Enroute, characters have made their debut, changed, or dropped out entirely. Place names have switched and the plot has undergone several revisions. TWO HORNS AND A TALE was filmed for WHRO-TV, Norfolk, Va. on July 24, 1975 by the Strawhatters of Virginia Beach, Va. and this version of the play was performed Nov.-Dec. 1984 by the Followspot Children's Theatre, Fairfax, Va. Listed below are the cast members who originated the roles as they appear in this playbook. Numbers in the parenthesis indicate to which year group the cast member belonged:

Announcer	DREW HARTEVELD ('84)
Cellasoul	JULIE BIGELOW ('75)
Stitco	CHERYL WATTS ('75)
Whortleberry	THERESA GREEN ('75)
Will O'Wisp	PRISCILLA VALENTINO('61), STEVE BENSON ('75) & MARK LANE ('84)
Bigdrip	CARLA DION ('75)
Belladonna	DORTHEE DIDDEN ('61)
Sleezie	ANNA MARIE WALSH ('84)
Snafu	MICHELLE MILLS ('84)
Zippy	MICHELLE SAARI ('84)
Lisa	JANET JACKSON ('75)
Steve	BOBBY HARRY ('75)
Socrates	HEATHER BIDLAKE ('84)

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Plato	TONI LUXENBERG ('84)
Little Girl	VICTORIA SCHALLER ('75)
Michelle	BARBARA O'NEIL ('61)
Prosecutor	TAPIO CHRISTIANSEN ('84)
Saint Peter	DONALD BYRD ('75)
Messenger	PHILIP SCHALLER ('75)
Gabriel	MORGAN KELLEY ('84)
Belladonna's Hound	TOBY ('75)
Stagemanagers:	DEBBIE SULLIVAN ('61), JOHNATHON BIGELOW ('75) & ANNIE WIGGINTON ('84)

TWO HORNS AND A TALE

SCENE: The Main Lobby of Hell, Inc.

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: Three Junior Devils, STITCO, CELLASOUL & WHORTLEBERRY, are whispering fiendish plots together at C as WILL O'WISP enters L wearing a red graduation gown and cap with gold tassels.

CELLASOUL. Congratulations, Willie! I heard you passed your exams. When are you going up to Earth?

WILL O'WISP. Well, I . . .

STITCO. Yeah, and where do you think they'll send you? New York, maybe?

WILL O'WISP. Gee, I . . .

WHORTLEBERRY (disgustedly). Will O'Wisp shouldn't be sent up to do *our* dirty work. He's not ready.

WILL O'WISP. I'll try to be as mean as my wonderful Aunt Belladonna here in Hell. I'll have a lot of fun doing bad deeds, and . . .

BELLADONNA. *Silence!* (She rises.) Now then, I *hope* you manage to remember what we have taught you. Hell expects and demands you to be evil. You *know* what awaits you if you fail. (The other DEVILS laugh wickedly. She gets out a black notebook.) Ah! Here it is! For your first assignment, you will be sent to the small and saintly town of Bloomingsburg, Kansas. That's in the United States, Will O'Wisp. Don't get lost. Congratulations, my boy, and *don't blow it!* (She comes down to C.) I shall be in my office, Bigdrip, *waiting* for my breakfast. (She exits. BIGDRIP remains, rolling up the scroll.)

BIGDRIP. Y . . . y . . . yes, Ma'am!

STITCO. Bloomingsburg, Kansas! Whoever heard of Bloomingsburg, Kansas? No! I thought - with Belladonna being your aunt and all - you would be sent to some place really exciting. You know, like Washington, D.C. That place is just crawling with some really lost souls to tempt.

WHORTLEBERRY. I still think it's a mistake to send Will O'Wisp *anywhere!*

BIGDRIP. Don't forget, Willie, you must be back by six o'clock Earth time tonight. You don't want to get overexposed to the enemy on the first try, you know.

BELLADONNA (offstage, menacingly). Bigdrip!
I am still *waiting* for my *breakfast*!

BIGDRIP (quaking). Y . . y . . yes, Ma'am! (She hurriedly exits.)

WILL O'WISP (calling after BIGDRIP). I'll remember. (To the OTHERS.) Well, wish me luck, everybody.

WHORTLEBERRY. Yeah, you're going to need it, *lots* of it. (WILL O'WISP exits.)

CELLASOUL (calling after WILL O'WISP). Don't let Charon tip you in the Styx River when he rows you over to the other side. (He giggles to the OTHERS.) He does it every time. (ALL exit laughing as the curtain closes.)

SCENE: The Back Gate of Hell, Inc., moments later.

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: Two Devil Guards, SLEEZIE and SNAFU, are asleep under a sign that says "Servants' Entrance - No Exit." WILL O'WISP enters, dressed in his regular clothes, wringing out his tail. He has some small bottles of colored water in his pouch.

WILL O'WISP. One of these days, just one of these days, Charon is going to dump somebody really important into that river and that will be the end of *his* boating days. Brr! That water's cold! (He holds up a bottle.) I hope Aunty Belladonna won't mind if I

borrow some of her secret form-changing potions. Hope this stuff works. (He drinks one.) Yuck! Tastes rotten! (He looks at his hands.) Well, no change. I'm still here. Anyway, at least, I'm not a snake or something. Let's try the other. (He drinks from another bottle.) I wonder what she puts in this junk anyway? (He looks at his hand again.) Oh, great! I'm materialized! Now, how am I going to explain these horns and tail to those human beings up there? I hope the College was right when they said humans will believe anything. Oh well, look out, World, here I come anyway! (He walks over to SLEEZIE and gives him a kick. Both GUARDS wake up.) Okay, you can let me out now. I have my papers and they're signed. (He takes out his papers.)

SLEEZIE (standing up). Not so fast! Let's see them. (He looks at the papers while WILL O'WISP starts to go past.) Hey, just a minute! Grab him, Snafu!

SNAFU (grabbing WILL O'WISP by the scruff of the neck.) Gotcha!

SLEEZIE (speaking into a walkie-talkie). Calling the Great Belladonna; Calling the Great Belladonna. Come in, Your Vileness.

BELLADONNA (offstage). Now, what is it? It had better be *important*!

SLEEZIE. We've got Will O'Wisp down here at the back gate. He's trying to sneak by with a phony passport. Someone forged your name on it.

SNAFU. Ask her if we can boil him in oil!

WILL O'WISP. Hey, those papers are legal!

BELLADONNA (offstage, sarcastically). My dear nephew is correct; so turn him loose, you clods! (SNAFU drops WILL O'WISP.)
Over and out to lunch!

SLEEZIE. You mean they are actually sending *you* up to Earth!

WILL O'WISP. Sure, I graduated from College!

SNAFU. I've heard of long shots, but this is ridiculous!

WILL O'WISP (snatching back his passport). If you don't mind, I've got to go! I haven't got much time up there. (He exits.)

SNAFU. Hey, come to think of it, what was he doing looking like a Devil? He's not supposed to go up that way!

SLEEZIE. Knowing Willie, he probably messed up. (Blackout, curtain closes.)

SCENE: A park in front of the library in Bloomingsburg, Kansas. It is the day before Halloween.

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: ZIPPY is DR, his back to the audience. The library steps are UC with the LIONS on risers on either side. DL there is a park bench, under a tree. WILL O'WISP enters L, looking around in awe.

WILL O'WISP. So this is it! This is what the Earth is like. Wow! They never told us

down there what it is really like. (He looks at the ground as he speaks.) I never knew there were so many colors mixed together - red and gold and green leaves, blue sky, white clouds! Look at this stuff! (He bumps into ZIPPY.) Oh, sorry, I didn't see you. Hey, what kind of thing are you? (He looks very carefully at ZIPPY.) It's got a mouth and feet. What a weird animal! (He peers inside the mail slot.) Hello, in there! Can you hear me? (Pause.) Dumbest thing I ever saw. (Louder.) Hey! Can you wake up long enough to tell me if I'm in Bloomingsburg, Kansas? (Pause.) Rude thing! (He kicks ZIPPY.) Ouch! It's got tough skin! Hey, maybe some magic will wake it up. (He clears his throat.) "Unusual Creature, standing so still;/ I command you to wake and do what you will!" (He throws some confetti from his pouch over ZIPPY.)

ZIPPY (coming to life and facing front). Hey, kid! What did you do that for? I get enough paper stuffed in me without some crackpot dropping more on top! Oh, my poor feet! Oh, oh, I think I've got corns.

WILL O'WISP. Can you tell me if I'm in Bloomingsburg, Kansas? And, by the way, what are you, exactly?

ZIPPY. Oh, brother! What nuthouse did you pop out of? Never mind! I don't really want

to know. For your information, you are smack in the middle of beautiful downtown Bloomingsburg, population seven hundred and thirty-five. And I'm Zippy, a United States Postal Service Mailbox, in good standing. Only right now, I wish I were sitting. Oh, my poor feet:

WILL O'WISP. My name's Will O'Wisp. I'm a Devil.

ZIPPY (unimpressed). You don't say? Well, so's everyone else at this time of year.

(LISA enters followed by STEVE.)

STEVE. Come on, Lisa, say you'll go with me to the Barn Dance tomorrow. How 'bout it?

LISA (cooly). Wellllll, I don't know. I still have to think about it. (Suddenly, she notices WILL O'WISP.) Hey, look at that kid over there. He's already dressed for Halloween. Say, kid, don't you know you're a day early?

STEVE (pretending to be afraid). Oh, oh, I am so scared of him. We had better run away before he stabs us with his stick or something. Oh, oh! (LISA giggles. ZIPPY speaks to her.)

ZIPPY. I wouldn't laugh, if I were you, Lisa Crawford. I know all about you and all those mushy letters you write to the guys you see on television.

LISA (taken aback). That sounded like it was

the mailbox talking. (To WILL O'WISP.)
How did you do that?

STEVE. Maybe the kid's a ventriloquist.

ZIPPY. *Ventriloquist!* No way! This is *me* talking!

LISA (uncertainly). I know. You're just playing a trick on us to show off.

WILL O'WISP. Trick, huh? If you want a trick, I'll show you one! Just watch! (He mounts the library steps and chants over the LIONS.)
"Lion to my left,/ Lion to my right,/ Open your eyes and see the light! (He sprinkles more confetti over the LIONS, who stand up and stretch.)

SOCRATES. Oh, my dear Plato, I haven't felt this good since I was last polished.

PLATO (roaring). Rather!

SOCRATES (climbing down off the riser and examining LISA and STEVE, who are too afraid to move). You know, I have an extremely odd sensation. Do you think that it could be hunger? I'm not sure. (He grabs LISA.)

PLATO. Rather. (He grabs STEVE.)

LISA. Put me down!

SOCRATES. Come to think of it, how does one *eat* one?

PLATO. Rather difficult. (He wrestles with STEVE.)

LISA. Well, don't just stand there, Steve. *Do* something!