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Dramatic Publishing

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

by
Jack Stokes

adapted for the stage by

Alice Molter



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(WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN)

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WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

A Play in One Act

For 2 Men, 1 Woman and 3 Chorus Members (Flexible)

CHARACTERS

WILEY

MAMMY

HAIRY MAN

CHORUS MEMBERS

TIME: Last week.

PLACE: A woods.

As Reader's Theatre, *Wiley and the Hairy Man* adapts well to competition. A performance of *Wiley and the Hairy Man* won first place in 1982 at the state finals of the Illinois High School Association Group Interpretation (readers theatre) contest; another by a different school, second place in 1985.

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

SCENE: *The ACTORS, less the HAIRY MAN, can mingle and talk with AUDIENCE. Suddenly without warning one of them makes a swamp creature sound; and he can't stop. At first, the OTHERS try to ignore him. But as he continues, the OTHERS begin to join him in making such sounds. This sets the atmosphere and moves them into place, at which time 1ST begins the story.*

1ST. Now this here the story of the Hairy Man,
How Wiley and his mammy made the Hairy Man
Stomp
And rage
And *guh-nash* his teeth.

CHORUS. *Guh-nash* his teeth.

1ST. Poor Wiley's pappy had a-fallen in the hands of the
Hairy Man.

2ND. A dancer and a dreamer Wiley's pappy was he,
And he fell in the hands of the Hairy Man.

CHORUS (*terrified whisper*). Hairy Mannnn.

1ST (*building on his previous line*).

In the hairy, scary hands of the Hairy Mannnn.

CHORUS (*building on their previous speech*). Hairy Mannnn.

1ST. And Wiley's mammy said to Wiley, "Wiley, Wiley!"
said she.

MAMMY. Wiley.

WILEY. Yasm.

MAMMY. Wiley!

WILEY. Yasm.

MAMMY. He done got yo pappy,

2ND. Said Mammy said she,

MAMMY. You better be keerful—

WILEY. Or he gonna git me... Yasm.

(Wiley's DOGS, played by two CHORUS MEMBERS, bound about WILEY, who pets them.)

1ST. So Wiley, wherever he went, took his dogs,

2ND. Cause the Hairy Man sho cain't stand no dogs.

(DOGS growl fiercely, but wag their tails as WILEY pets them.)

CHORUS *(exuberantly)*. Everbody knows that.

(Hushed; shrinking together, frightened.)

Everbody knows that.

(WILEY shoulders his axe and walks toward the woods.)

MAMMY. But one day Wiley, his axe in hand,

Went down to the trees in the old swampland

WILEY *(explaining to AUDIENCE)*. To cut down a tree

For a hen roost, see,

MAMMY. And his hound dogs, they went too.

2ND. Cause the Hairy Man sho cain't stand no dogs.

(DOGS growl fiercely, but wag their tails as WILEY pets them.)

CHORUS *(exuberantly)*. Everbody knows that.

(Hushed; shrinking, together, frightened.)

Everbody knows that.

MAMMY. But Wiley no more than started to swing

Than his hounds lit out a-chasin a rabbit—

1ST. It looked like a rabbit—

3RD. A-chasin a thing

That looked like a rabbit,

MAMMY. But it warn't a rabbit,

Cause rabbits don't have much tail as a habit.

4TH (*even more rustic than the OTHERS*).

Anyone knows all that, dagnabit!

1ST. And they run so fur that round about dark

You couldn't even hear them hound dogs bark.

3RD (*mysteriously, almost singing it, as CHORUS squeeze together for protection*).

Don't like the looks, like the looks of this,

Cause the Hairy Man comes at times like this.

WILEY. Oh me, oh my,

2ND. Said Wiley with a sigh,

WILEY. Ah sho do hope, oh me, oh my,

The Hairy Man ain't nowhere nearby.

2ND (*whispering*). Cause they warn't no sound,

No sound aytall,

Cept Wiley's breathin

And a cricket call.

1ST. So he picked up the axe.

CHORUS. Be keerful, Wiley.

2ND. And he started his whacks.

CHORUS (*pointing toward AUDIENCE*).

Oh, lookee there, Wiley.

1ST. And then he looked up—

(*As heads snap up, and eyes and mouths make three great "O"s as they stare in horror out over AUDIENCE.*)

And what did he see a-comin through the trees

CHORUS. A-comin through the trees, a-comin through the trees.

1ST. What did he see a-comin through the trees?

CHORUS. He saw the Hairy Man,

3RD (*well above CHORUS, and keeping up the build*).

The Hairy Man,

CHORUS (*reaching the first climax*).

He saw the scary face of the Hairy Man!

(*Suddenly soft, then building to "face."*)

He saw the scary, stary, very hairy and unmerry, most
unordinary face (*Coming down*.)

Of the Hairy Man, the Hairy Man.

(*HAIRY MAN bursts onto the scene.*)

3RD (*almost singing it as CHORUS squeeze together in terror*). Hair, hair, everywhere.

4TH (*in sharp contrast to 3RD—rather dumb and matter-of-fact*). He was just plumb hairy all over.

CHORUS. Hairy, hairy,

Everywhere he

Wuz.

3RD (*topping CHORUS*). Eyes that burn

Like fire

Does.

2ND (*topping 3RD*). Teeth that gleam

Like teeth in a dream

Does.

WILEY. Hairy Man,

2ND. Said Wiley, scrunchin up behind a tree,

WILEY. You go on and git away from me!

CHORUS (*as HAIRY MAN approaches WILEY, suiting his movement to the rhythm*).

But the Hairy Man, the Hairy Man,

He just kep a-comin with a scary kind of hummin,

A-grinnin and a-spinnin and a-comin and a-hummin

Through the trees.

MAMMY. Fling that axe away, Wiley,