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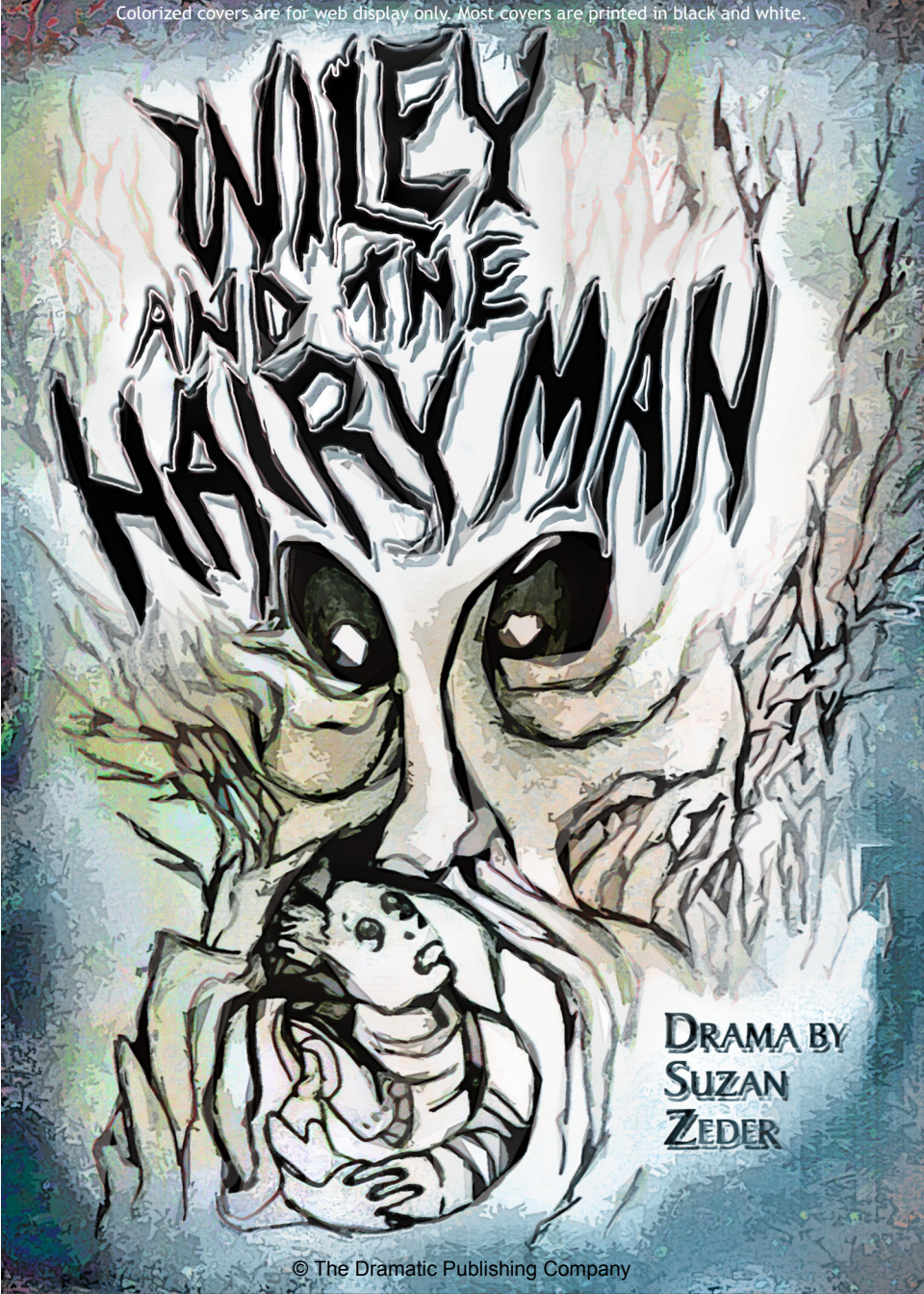
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Dramatic Publishing



WILEY AND THE HARRYMAN

DRAMA BY
SUZAN
ZEDER

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TYA/USA (ASSITEJ/USA)
Outstanding Play Award Winner

Wiley and the Hairy Man

Wiley and the Hairy Man is a spine-tingling tale of a boy and his worst fears in the swamp—eventually overcome by Wiley himself. Premiered at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Also a professional national tour by the Everyman Players.

Drama. By Suzan Zeder. Cast: 3m., 1w., 4 either gender with optional extras. Set deep within the mysterious Tombigbee Swamp, *Wiley and the Hairy Man* centers around a young fatherless boy, his conjure-woman mother, his faithful dog, and the Hairy Man who haunts Wiley's days and dreams. Through rhythm and rhyme, a chorus creates the mystery of the swamp. The magic of this play is not fairy dust, it is soil—the magic of survival, the magic of the earth and mud of the swamp. In an exciting duel of wits, Wiley learns to rely upon his own resources and conquers two villains: the Hairy Man and his own fear. *Fragmentary set which may suggest house and swamp. Costumes: "simple swamp." Approximate running time: 70 minutes. Code: WC9.*

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WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

Drama
by
SUZAN ZEDER



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(WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN)

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To Charley

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WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

PREFACE

The original Wiley was born somewhere deep in the swamp near the Tombigbee River. His tale of *WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN* was passed down from generation to generation in the backwaters of Alabama and Mississippi; and his story has taken many forms: a legend set down by Donnell Van de Voot in a manuscript of the Federal Writer's Project of Alabama, an excellent drama-choir by Jack Stokes, and a recent book by Molly Garrett Bang. In this scripted version I have tried to do something a bit different with the story. I have given it a new ending and have written a play about a small boy with a big fear who learns to overcome his own problems himself. I wanted to write a play about the kinds of fears that children face, alone, in the dark. I wanted to write a play about magic — good magic and bad magic — and, most importantly, the magic that all of us have somewhere deep inside us.

I have seen this play produced by a number of different companies. The first production, in 1972 at Southern Methodist University, involved a great deal of improvisation by the company; and I am indebted to them for many of the ideas in this script. I have learned from subsequent productions and have revised the script accordingly. I have seen all white casts, all black casts, and racially mixed casts; and I feel that each approach can work equally well. But each approach has different implications and I would urge potential directors to be aware of these implications and to use them deliberately and carefully. To my mind this is not a play about any particular culture or race. It may be set anywhere where there are swamps, and magic, and small frightened boys. Whether it is set in Alabama or Appalachia, the world of the play is within Wiley's mind. The magical elements are the extensions of the very real fears and foolery of Wiley's world. I would caution you to avoid the 'cute,' the 'tricky,' and the 'superficial.' The magic of this play is not fairy dust. It is soil. This magic is of the earth and mud of the swamp; it is the magic of survival.

I feel that this play is particularly influenced by the director. I offer it to you as a map of an experience, not as a formula. I have given you the words, but it is up to you to find the rhythms, the tones, and the counterpoint. It is a play about fear, but it also a play about fun; the fun of a boy and his dog, the fun of words and how they wind into rhymes, and the fun of how a boy discovers that he is bigger than his fears.

Suzan Zeder
Seattle
1978

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

CHARACTERS

Wiley
Mammy
The Hairy Man
Dog
Chorus
(Four suggested but more may be used)

SETTING

Mammy's House
The Swamp

TIME

Any Time

The premiere production of *WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN* was presented on March 14, 1972, at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, with the following cast:

Wiley	Randolf Pearson
Mammy	Beki Rogers
The Hairy Man	Steve B. Read
Dog	Terry Lacy
Chorus	David Nance
	Deborah Hardee
	Jory Hingson
	Melody Ruhe
	Leslie Evans

The production was directed by Charles Helfert

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

[As the audience enters they find themselves in the gloomy mysterious atmosphere of the swamp. The set suggests a rough lattice-work of boards which reach out at angles forming odd tree-like structures. One section of the set suggests Mammy's house which is merely an extension of the environment. Several sharply raked platforms are covered with vines and moss. The theatre is filled with strange swamp sounds: moans and creaks and rattles and wind sounds are made by the CHORUS. The lights are dim and cast strange shadows.]

WILEY lies sleeping in a single shaft of light. Around him the CHORUS lie in various positions on the set. They are formless creatures, part of the swamp made up of moss, vines, and odd bits of swamp grass.

The swamp sounds grow louder and the CHORUS begins to move in an eerie, rhythmic nightmare. WILEY tosses and turns, caught in his dream. The sounds, strange and abstract at first slowly form themselves into words.]

CHORUS I: Wiiiiiiiley Wiiiiiiiley

CHORUS II: Haaaaaaairy Man! Haaaaaaairy Man!

CHORUS III: Look out Wiley! Wake up Wiley!

CHORUS IV: He done got your Pappy and he's gonna get you!

CHORUS III: He done got your Pappy

CHORUS I: . . . And he's gonna get you!

CHORUS II: Haaaaaaairy Man! Haaaaaaairy Man!

CHORUS IV: He done got your Pappy and he's gonna get you!

CHORUS I: Wiiiiiiiley Wiiiiiiiley

CHORUS IV: He done got your Pappy

CHORUS I: . . . And he's gonna get you!

[A shrouded FIGURE with a candle enters and slowly walks toward WILEY.]

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

CHORUS III: Look out, Wiley. Wake up, Wiley.

CHORUS II: Haaaaairy Man! Haaaaairy Man!

CHORUS IV: He done got your Pappy and he's gonna get you!

CHORUS I: He done got you Pappy . . .

CHORUS III: . . . And he's gonna get you!

[*FIGURE reaches out toward WILEY.*]

FIGURE: Wiley!

CHORUS I [*Echo*]: Wiiiiiley

CHORUS IV: He done got your Pappy and he's gonna get you!

CHORUS II: He done got your Pappy . . .

ALL CHORUS: . . . AND HE'S GONNA GET . . .

FIGURE: WILEY! Wake up, Wiley!

[*WILEY wakes up with a bolt, sees the FIGURE and dives beneath the covers with his bottom in the air.*]

WILEY: Go 'way Hairy Man. Leave me alone Hairy Man. Don't touch me Hairy Man!

MAMMY [*Taking off the hood*]: I ain't no Hairy Man. I is your Mammy!

[*MAMMY punctuates her sentence with a swat on WILEY'S rear.*]

WILEY [*Up and rubbing his bottom*]: Owweeeeee. That sure is my Mammy. No Hairy Man kin hit that hard.

MAMMY: Wiley, you was just havin' a bad dream.

WILEY: I saw him. I saw the Hairy Man and he was comin' for me. I was trying to run but I couldn't, and there I was starin' right into the Hairy Man's hairy eye ball.

MAMMY: You ain't got no cause to fear. There ain't no Hairy Man not nowheres near.

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

WILEY: But I saw Him! I saw his hairy hands, and his hairy teeth and his horrible hairy breath.

MAMMY: You know your Mammy's got more magic than any old Hairy Man.

WILEY: But he done got my Pappy and . . .

MAMMY: Looks like I gots to do a magic spell to get that Hairy Man outta your head.

[MAMMY assumes the conjure position and holds WILEY'S head between her hands. CHORUS makes "conjure sounds."']

MAMMY [*Conjuring*]: Hairy Man, Hairy Man, git outta his head. Go scare yourself a tree toad instead. Hairy Man, Hairy Man, git outta his eyes. Listen to me while I conjurize. Hairy Man, Hairy Man, git outta his mouth. Git away from here. Go way down south!

[Pause]

MAMMY: Well, is he gone?

[CHORUS IV waves his arms]

WILEY: What's that?

MAMMY: Just a shadow on the wall. Sun's comin up that's all.

WILEY: It's the Hairy Man.

MAMMY: I better hurry up the day and get some light in here.

[MAMMY assumes the conjure position and throws a quick spell.]

MAMMY: Rumble, Bumble, Snider, Rup. Sun, sun hurry it up!

[CHORUS I hoists a colored sun up one of the structures and CHORUS II crows like a rooster.]

WILEY: What's that?

MAMMY: Jest some old rooster.

WILEY: It's the Hairy Man!

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

MAMMY [*Conjuring*]: Beetle, tweedle, sneedle, sneak. Rooster, rooster shut your beak!

[*CHORUS II stops mid-crow.*]

WILEY: I'm gonna get my dog and bring him right here in bed with me!

MAMMY: You are gonna do no such thing.

WILEY: But the Hairy Man cain't stand no dogs, everybody knows that.

MAMMY: Wiley, I am the best conjure woman in the whole southwest county. I kin make the sun come up and the moon go down. I kin do spells an' conjures, an' charms, an' chants; I kin cure a cold or heal a wart fifty miles away. But there are two things I cannot do; I cannot get that fear outta your head, and I cannot stand that Dog slobbering up my house!

WILEY: Mammy, how did the Hairy Man git my Pappy?

MAMMY: He just did Wiley.

WILEY: People say my Pappy was a bad man and a no count.

MAMMY: People say.

WILEY: People say he slept while the weeds grew higher than the cotton, that he used to git himself hog drunk and chicken wild, and that he never even spit lessen someone else did it for him.

MAMMY: People say.

WILEY: Was my Pappy a bad man?

MAMMY [*With respect*]: Wiley, he was your Pappy!

WILEY: But people say he'd never cross the Jordan, cause when he died the Hairy Man'd be there waitin' for him. When he fell into the river near Tombigbee they never did find him. They jest heard a big man laughin across the river.

MAMMY: He done got your Pappy.

CHORUS I and II: Said Mammy, said she . . .

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

MAMMY: And you better be keerful.

WILEY: Or he's gonna get me.

MAMMY: Now git yourself up and dressed, it is time for breakfast.

WILEY: Do I gotta go to the swamp today?

MAMMY: You have got to build a hound house for that dog of yours.

WILEY: I'm jest gonna sit here and do nothin' jest like my Pappy.

MAMMY [*Angry*]: Wiley, don't you ever say that! Now get yourself up and wash.

[*MAMMY crosses into the kitchen area. WILEY dives back under the covers.*]

WILEY: I'm tired. That Hairy Man scared all the restin' outta me.

MAMMY: Breakfast . . .

[*She conjures a quick off-handed spell.*]

MAMMY: Ashes, embers, soot on my face. Make me right there a fireplace.

[*CHORUS form a fireplace with a cauldron.*]

MAMMY: Wiley, I want to hear feet on that floor and washin' in those ears right now!

WILEY [*In a gruff voice*]: There ain't no Wiley here. He's been ete all up by the Hairy Man.

MAMMY: I ain't foolin'.

WILEY [*Lumping about*]: I tol' you Mammy there ain't no Wiley here. Jest an old ugly Hairy Man with fourteen toes and a bone in his nose.

MAMMY: You get up and put on your clothes!

WILEY: Hairy Man, Hairy Man, comin' through the trees; stampin' and a-squishin' everything he sees.

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

[Realizing what he has just said.]

WILEY: Hairy Man?

[WILEY dives under the covers.]

MAMMY: What are you doing?

WILEY *[In a small voice]*: I jest skeered myself all over again.

MAMMY: There is only one way to get you outta that bed, and boy you asked for it!

[MAMMY storms into WILEY'S room and douses him with a wash basin full of water.]

MAMMY: Now git up!

WILEY: I am up, I'm up, I'm up!!!

[MAMMY scrubs him with the cloth.]

MAMMY: I swear you are the dirtiest boy I ever laid eyes on. Open up them ears. Hold still. Now come eat!

[MAMMY returns to the kitchen.]

MAMMY: Now where was I? Breakfast.

[She conjures.]

MAMMY: Tables and chairs . . . Right over theres . . .

[CHORUS become table and chairs]

MAMMY *[Conjuring]*: Pot, pot, get yourself hot!

[CHORUS with cauldron make bubbling sounds, WILEY enters kitchen.]

MAMMY: What do you want to eat this morning?

WILEY: Not much. Jest some flap jacks an' lasses, and taters an' lasses, and biscuits an' lasses, and eggs an' lasses, and catfish an' grits, an' lasses.

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

[As he says each one MAMMY scoops some out of the cauldron into a bowl.]

MAMMY [*Concerned*]: What's the matter Wiley? Ain't you hongry? I never knew you to eat so skimpy.

WILEY: The Hairy Man musta skeered the hongries outta me.

[*WILEY gobbles his food.*]

MAMMY: Don't forget to drink your milk.

WILEY [*Turning the glass upside down*]: There ain't no milk in here.

MAMMY: I forgot.

[*MAMMY wordlessly snaps her fingers and points to WILEY'S glass.*]

WILEY: There still ain't ooops.

[*WILEY turns the glass again this time there is milk which spills.*]*

MAMMY: Dumbhead! When I say there's milk, theres milk!

WILEY: Yasum.

[*Pause.*]

WILEY: Mammy, I think tomorrow's a better day for goin' to the swamp for wood for my hound house

MAMMY: No! Today is the day. I told you that. But maybe I ought to teach you a conjure or two to keep you safe from the Hairy Man.

**A trick glass is used for this; one with a wide lip inside one half of the glass. When you pour this glass on one side nothing comes out, when you pour it from the other the contents spill out. These are available at Magic stores.*

WILEY: You know I ain't no good at conjurin' no way no how.

MAMMY: Wiley, you hesh and come here now.

[*WILEY crosses to MAMMY.*]

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

MAMMY: Wiley, you knows I's the best, the best conjure woman in the whole southwest county.

CHORUS II: The best conjure woman in the whole southwest.

[MAMMY shoots a look at WILEY.]

WILEY: I didn't say nothin'.

MAMMY: You are my son and my only child and you are gonna learn. This here's a spell for changin' stickers and prickers and bonkers and briars into rubber so's they cain't hurt you.

WILEY: I cain't learn it.

MAMMY: Yes you can. It jest goes . . . "Chip chop, chum, blubber. Turn this tree trunk into rubber."

WILEY [*Carelessly*]: Chip, champ, chomp, grubber. Blubber, drubber scrubber, flubber . . .

MAMMY [*Furious*]: Wiley! You gotta listen to the conjure words, cause when they are outta your mouth there is no takin' them back!

WILEY: But I cain't keep it all in my head. Powders, 'n potions, 'n magic, 'n charms. An' raising' the spirits, 'n wavin' my arms. An' screechin' an' stampin', an' mutterin' low! I jest cain't do it, the answer is no!

MAMMY: Well someday you gotta learn.

WILEY: Well someday ain't today!

MAMMY: You better get yourself goin' ya hear? If'n you take your hound Dog you got nothin' to fear.

WILEY: Cause the Hairy Man sure cain't stand no Dogs . . .

MAMMY: Everybody knows that.

[WILEY turns to go and MAMMY stops him.]

MAMMY: Take this here bag. It's got some magic on it. It'll catch up the wind and hold it for you till you let it go.

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

WILEY [*Taking the bag*]: Thanks. Mammy.

[*WILEY turns to go.*]

MAMMY: And Wiley, take some of this here powder. Jest a pinch will make every livin' creature your friend . . . except the Hairy Man.

WILEY [*Taking the powder*]: Thanks Mammy.

[*WILEY turns to go.*]

MAMMY: And Wiley? You be sure to take your hound Dog.

WILEY: Yasum . . . YASUM!

[*WILEY crosses out of the house and MAMMY watches.*]

MAMMY [*Muttering to herself*]: He done got his Pappy.

CHORUS I and II: Said Mammy, said she . . .

MAMMY: . . . And he better be keerful . . .

WILEY: Or he's gonna get me.

[*As WILEY crosses down the house disappears. MAMMY exits and CHORUS comes to life.*]

CHORUS IV: So Wiley . . .

CHORUS II and III: Wherever he goes . . .

CHORUS I: Takes his Dog.

WILEY [*Calling*]: Dog!

CHORUS IV: Cause the Hairy Man sure cain't stand no dogs . . .

CHORUS I: Everybody knows that. Everybody knows that.

[*WILEY whistles and DOG enters in a bound. He is extremely fierce looking but he moves with the lumbering playfulness of an overgrown puppy. He looks about ready to spring and then flops over asleep. WILEY laughs.*]

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

WILEY: Hey there, Dog, what'cha doing there sleeping in the sun? Come on boy, let's have some fun.

[DOG opens one eye and rolls over.]

WILEY: I know what'll get you.

[WILEY creeps up beside DOG and meows, DOG leaps up wide awake and growls, then he licks WILEY'S face.]

WILEY: Good Dog, O.K. Boy, fetch . . .

[WILEY throws a stick, DOG watches it go and sprawls out asleep.]

WILEY: DOG? Hey, Boy, I know what let's do. I gotta game for you. Now, I'm going to hold my breath for a full minute and hold real, real still; and you gotta come over here and try to make me move. You gotta make me flinch, or move, or blink, or somethin'. If you do I'll give you something to eat.

[At this promise DOG is interested. WILEY takes a deep breath and strikes a pose. DOG sniffs him, tugs at his pants, barks at him, and finally climbs up and stands balancing his paws on WILEY'S shoulders and slobbers in his face. WILEY surpresses a smile and finally exhales. They laugh and play.]

WILEY: I won! You didn't make me flinch, or move, or blink, or nothin'. Now, Dog, Mammy says we gotta go to the swamp and cut down a tree. 'Cause I'm gonna make you a hound house. But we gotta be careful of the Hairy Man, see! 'Cause he done got my pappy and he's tryin' to get me! Come on you old hound DOG!

[DOG barks twice and they set off.]

CHORUS IV: So Wiley . . .

CHORUS ALL: He takes up his axe. And he goes to the swamp, but he don't leave tracks. 'Cause the Hairy Man's hiding somewhere you see. And he done got his pappy . . .

WILEY: . . . and he's tryin' to get me.

CHORUS: But the Hairy Man sure cain't stand no Dogs . . .
Everybody knows that. Everybody knows that. Everybody knows that.

WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN

[On this line the CHORUS become the swamp, WILEY and DOG make their way cautiously. CHORUS make swamp sounds.]

WILEY: Here we are, Dog, the deepest part of the swamp. Now this here's a mighty dangerous place cause the Hairy Man lives somewhere's near and everything's magic . . . Hairy Man magic. You stay close . . . Come on Boy . . .

[Swamp sounds are louder and become words]

CHORUS I: Oh the sun never shines . . .

CHORUS II: . . . And the wind never blows,

CHORUS III: And the mud turns to slime,

CHORUS IV: The deeper you goes.

[CHORUS becomes mud which oozes around WILEY'S feet and makes a slurping sound as he moves through it.]

WILEY: Gulp.

DOG: Gulp.

CHORUS I and III: And the branches reach, And the vines twine around

[CHORUS become reaching branches and vines.]

CHORUS IV: And the stumps and the stickers stick up through the ground.

[CHORUS becomes a huge sticker bush.]

WILEY: Lookee there DOG! I never seen that sticker bush there before. It must be Hairy Man magic. Maybe it's a trap! We gotta be keerful and jest kinda wiggle in and squiggle out. Now look here Dog and I'll show you, cause I am the best at wigglin' and squigglin' in the whole southwest county.

[DOG zips right through the bush.]

WILEY: Hey that's not the right way! You gotta kinda squinch yourself down and . . .