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Dramatic Publishing



A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

The Timid Dragon

by

TIM KELLY



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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(THE TIMID DRAGON)

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THE TIMID DRAGON

A Comedy in One Act

For Four Men, Nine Women, Extras if desired

CHARACTERS

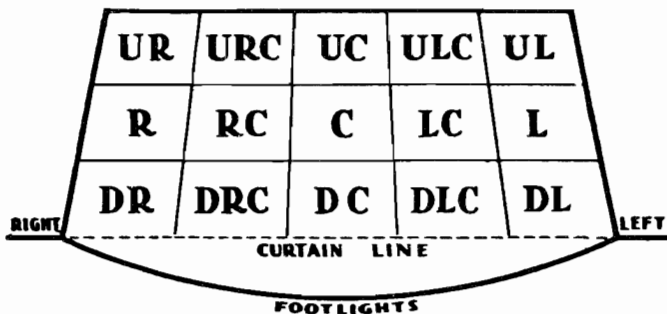
(in order of speaking)

UNA.....	<i>a merchant</i>
AGNES.....	<i>another</i>
GRASPA.....	<i>a seller of charms</i>
JESSICA.....	<i>a romantic young girl</i>
ADELE.....	<i>her friend</i>
MARILYN.....	<i>another friend</i>
SHIFTLESS.....	<i>a lazy woodcutter</i>
DAMSEL.....	<i>an excitable young woman once captured by the dragon</i>
BLUSTER.....	<i>a knight</i>
QUEEN.....	<i>ruler of the kingdom</i>
EGBERT.....	<i>her stupid son</i>
LYDIA.....	<i>Queen's daughter, a lovely girl who can talk to dragons</i>
DRAGON.....	<i>a beast "who likes people"</i>
EXTRAS.....	<i>Townspeople, etc.</i>

PLACE: A Town Square

TIME: Long ago.

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.

Scene 1

SCENE: A Town Square. There is no conventional setting beyond that which a director may wish to improvise. We see three tables or stalls: one is R /UNA/, another D L /AGNES/, another L /GRASPA/. Articles for sale are atop the tables. An ornate chair or throne is U C.)

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: A moment or two before the curtain we hear a babble of voices--the stall keepers--proclaiming their wares. JESSICA, MARILYN and ADELE, three young girls, all romantic and a shade on the silly side, are wandering about, shopping. NOTE: Director may wish to use extras in various scenes. They fit in logically as townspeople and can be employed as shoppers, citizens, attendants to the Queen, etc.)

UNA.

Who'll buy! I've hats and belts,
buckles and felts!

Who'll buy!

AGNES.

Who'll buy! I've baubles and sweets,
ribbons and treats!

Who'll buy!

GRASPA.

Who'll buy! I've charms and lotions,
herbs and potions!

Who'll buy!

(JESSICA and MARILYN are now standing by Una's stall. ADELE is by Agnes' stall.)

UNA (holding out a colorful scarf). Isn't it lovely, young ladies? Let a dragon-slaying knight see this around your neck and he'll write you a love poem on the spot.

JESSICA. Do you think so? Do you really think so?

UNA (anxious to make a sale). I know so. (Delighted, JESSICA takes out some small coins and pays UNA. The merchant begins to show articles to MARILYN as JESSICA puts on the scarf.)

ADELE (to AGNES). The queen is giving another ball--to keep up the sagging spirits of her people. I'll need pretty ribbons for my gown.

AGNES (displaying ribbons). Yes, indeed. Ribbons are very important. (A particular ribbon.) The color suits you. Expensive--but it will cheer you up and make you forget about him.

ADELE. Who?

GRASPA. Who? Him--that's who. The curse of our lives. The dragon!

MARILYN (turning, taking a few steps C). Don't talk about him. Even the thought of him out there, in that shadowy wood, frightens me.

GRASPA (holding up a charm). Genuine dragon repeller. This little charm costs--but it will protect you from the beast.

MARILYN. I bought a dragon repeller from you only last week, Grasper.

GRASPA. The effect wears off in time. I can see the creature now--his hide all pointed and sharp, his breath angry and hot----

MARILYN (terrified, running to the stall). Enough! Give me the repeller. I don't care what it costs. (MARILYN makes her purchase. ADELE buys some ribbons from AGNES.)

(A man, SHIF'TLESS, wanders in from U R.)

UNA (shouting across to AGNES). It's your husband, Agnes. Do you suppose the fellow has found work? Ha, ha. You don't call him Shiftless for nothing, eh?

SHIFTLESS (a step to UNA). How easy it is for you to talk. Safe and snug inside the walls.

AGNES. Well--did you find work?

SHIFTLESS (to all, almost pleading). Do you hear her? Work, she asks me. What can a poor woodcutter do when there's a dragon living in among his trees? I haven't chopped an oak in a decade.

GRASPA. Because you're lazy.

SHIFTLESS. Because I'm sensible. If you had caught a glimpse of the foul thing as I did this morning----(All are excited by this news and crowd around him.)

AGNES. You actually saw him?

SHIFTLESS. The sight was so horrible it'll be a miracle if I ever work again.

JESSICA. Did he whisper fire?

SHIFTLESS. Whisper? He belched a volcano! (The listeners all react to Shiftless' story--gasping and moaning.)

MARILYN. What was his voice like?

SHIFTLESS. The tremor of an earthquake.

GRASPA. What color were his eyes?

SHIFTLESS. One was yellow, one was green, one was red, one was purple, one spotted and one was striped, one was----(JESSICA, MARILYN and ADELE scream. The merchants run back to their stalls.)

UNA. Buy something pretty and the dragon will forget you!

GRASPA. Buy a charm and a knight will protect you!

AGNES. Buy a bauble and the fire will neglect you!
(The girls scamper to the stalls and begin to make more purchases. JESSICA is at stall D L,

MARILYN L, ADELE R.)

SHIFTLESS. I'm exhausted. My emotions are drained. I need a nap.

(SHIFTLESS starts out L and meets DAMSEL running in. She's a foolish thing who has had one great adventure in her life--the dragon once captured her!)

DAMSEL. You saw him? You saw him?

SHIFTLESS. Who?

DAMSEL. The dragon. The fiend who once captured me. (All turn to SHIFTLESS and DAMSEL.)

UNA. We don't want to hear about it.

AGNES. We know the story by heart.

GRASPA. One would think your capture was the only thing that ever happened in your life.

DAMSEL. Did he actually take you prisoner, Shiftless?

SHIFTLESS. Certainly not. I observed him at a distance.

DAMSEL. Then my distinction remains. (Dramatically, she goes into her recollection. The girls crowd around her--vicariously living the experience. The stallkeepers lean forward, bored. SHIFTLESS moves D L.) Oh, I remember it well. I was gathering berries and suddenly there he was--tall as a castle tower, strong as ten thousand wild horses. His one beady eye staring down at me.

AGNES. One eye! (Hitting SHIFTLESS on the head with some object.) Liar!

DAMSEL. His octopus arms around me----

JESSICA. Sir Bluster saved you?

DAMSEL. That nincompoop? Don't be silly.

(SIR BLUSTER, a knight, enters from D R, a sword in his hand.)

BLUSTER. See here, Damsel, who are you calling a nincompoop?

DAMSEL. You. Have you been able to slay the creature yet?

BLUSTER. Slaying dragons is a military matter. Women don't understand such things. Takes planning and new uniforms. (JESSICA, MARILYN and ADELE crowd around SIR BLUSTER, admiringly.)

MARILYN. You're so strong.

JESSICA. Fearless.

ADELE. Brave. There's something about a dragon slayer.

DAMSEL (annoyed that her story has been interrupted). Anyway, I sang the monster to sleep and when he was lost in his snores----

BLUSTER (looking off L). Make way for Her Majesty the Queen and her son, Prince Egbert the Simple.

(A comic musical effect may be introduced to herald the royal approach. GRASPA, UNA and AGNES remain in their stalls. The others move R in semi-circle fashion. The QUEEN appears, and behind her is PRINCE EGBERT, who's none too bright. The populace bows on the royal entrance.)

QUEEN (to EGBERT). Take the throne, Egbert.

EGBERT. Where shall I take it? (QUEEN gives him a censoring look. He gulps and jumps into the chair with a stupid smile on his face. The QUEEN is a wise and knowing ruler who understands far more about her people than they do themselves.)

QUEEN. Dear friends, we live in trying times. (General murmur of agreement.) As my son, Egbert the Simple, was saying only this morning----

EGBERT. I think I'm going to sneeze.

QUEEN. No, not that.

EGBERT. Oh, you mean the taxes. (Rising, addressing the crowd.) I'm going to raise the taxes.

ADELE. Again?

EGBERT. There is nothing a prince likes better than raising taxes. All day I think of nothing else but raising tax money. But, of course, it's because of the dragon.

ALL. Of course.

QUEEN (like a teacher instructing a backward student). No, no, my prince. You were thinking of inviting the entire populace to my ball this evening.

EGBERT. I was?

QUEEN. You were.

EGBERT. And what did I decide?

QUEEN. Oh, sit down.

EGBERT (sitting). That's not much of a decision.

QUEEN. With that dragon outside the walls, our people must think of other things, else they'll surely go mad. It is my desire that such an occurrence never transpire. Now do you understand why you were extending the invitation?

EGBERT. I understand very little if it doesn't have to do with raising taxes. Besides, they'll eat all the pastry. (The QUEEN sighs at her son's attitude, then forces a smile and a gay tone.)

QUEEN. Agnes, I want the prettiest decorations you can make.

AGNES (delighted). I'll get started at once.

EGBERT. Sir Bluster, what news of this dragon chap?

BLUSTER. I shall patrol night and day--as soon as my wardrobe is ready. I assure Your Majesty that the monster will not enter this realm unless it's over my dead uniform--uh, I mean body.