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Dramatic Publishing

GOONEY BIRD GREENE

And Her True Life Adventures

Adapted by
KENT R. BROWN

From the book by
LOIS LOWRY



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KENT R. BROWN

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For Alexandra, Jared, Jordan, Walter and Dorothy,
and the irrepressible Bini.

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I wish to thank Judy Matetzschk for the thoughtful, perceptive and detailed support she provided me while writing this play. Her enthusiasm is unbounded.

GOONEY BIRD GREENE

And Her True Life Adventures

CHARACTERS

24 CHARACTERS TOTAL (7m, 9w – 8 either)

GOONEY BIRD’S CLASSROOM

11 CHARACTERS (4m, 7w)

Mrs. Pidgeon
Gooney Bird Greene.
Felicia Ann
Chelsea
Beanie
Tricia
Keiko*
Malcolm
Barry
Nicholas
Ben

* NOTE: Directors are encouraged to cast the most representative nationality in the region.

GOONEY BIRD’S “TRUE” ADVENTURES

13 CHARACTERS (3m, 2w – 8 either)

Scene #1 “Gooney Bird Green Arrives!”

Mr. Greene, Mrs. Greene

Scene #2 “How Gooney Bird Came from China on a Flying Carpet”

Mr. Greene, Mrs. Greene, Catman (a cat with lines—could be a puppet or an actor), Moving-Van Driver, Police Officer, TV Reporter, Camera Operator

Scene #3 “Mr. Prince, the Palace and the Diamond Earrings”

Mr. Prince, Napoleon (a dog with no lines—could be a puppet or an actor), Gumball Machine (no lines—could be a puppet/prop or an actor)

Scene #4 “Why Gooney Bird Was Late for School Because She Was Directing a Symphony Orchestra.”

Conductor

Scene #5 “Beloved Catman is Consumed by a Cow”

Catman, Cow, Mr. or Mrs. Schinhofen

NOTE: Mr. Greene, Mrs. Greene, Police Officer, TV Reporter and the Camera Operator enter briefly to reprise action and dialogue from Scene #3.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWNS FOR CASTS OF 18-20, 6 and 5 ACTORS APPEAR ON PAGES 65-66.

DIALOGUE DISTRIBUTION

Since the play may be produced by casts of varying sizes, the dialogue has been assigned to the generic category of CLASS ADLIBS as well as to specific characters. This allows the director to distribute the dialogue depending on the actual composition of the cast.

SETTING

A schoolroom in Watertower Elementary/Middle School: desks, chairs, chalkboard, a bookcase and a general acting area for Gooney Bird's "true" adventures.

VISUAL STYLE

The production will benefit from a sense of gaiety. A painterly, almost "cartoonish" approach to sets, costumes and props would underscore Gooney Bird's zany and spontaneous personality. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that although the visual dimension of the piece is stylized, the acting is firmly grounded in a sense of reality and probability. A melodramatic acting style would be inconsistent with the genuine vitality Gooney Bird brings to the classroom.

COSTUMES

Gooney Bird's costumes are decidedly flamboyant, bordering on the wonderfully outrageous. The costume palette for the students at the beginning of the play should be somewhat flat, even a bit on the drab side. In contrast, as the show progresses the students and Mrs. Pidgeon begin to spiff-up their clothing. Color accents might appear in the presence of a scarf, a set of suspenders, a vest, hair ribbons, a bow tie—all reflecting Gooney Bird's enlivening influence in their lives.

BANNERS/SIGNS/SLIDE SCREENS

A series of banners/signs/slide screens may be dropped into view, or a painter's easel/tripod could display placards announcing the titles of the scenes.

PROPS

Props may be as numerous or as few as the size of the cast and the production budget dictate. For example, a simple dolly on wheels with various fronts and attachments would serve well as the “station wagon” and the “school bus.” Special props/effects should be integrated into the script only if they will enrich the texture of the piece at no loss to the tempo and pace of the show.

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS

Each scene ends with a distinctive musical tag/dance—a Viennese waltz, a tango, and so on. Entrance fanfares might be employed to announce Gooney Bird’s arrival in various scenes. Transition music would enrich the theatricality of the piece, as well.

Sound effects, such as the sound of an approaching moving van, the “ca-ching” of coins dropping into a gumball machine, and the exaggerated ticking of a clock, should be provided by the actors whenever possible.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Although directors should feel free to solve production challenges in any creative way they see fit to match their production resources, several suggestions about possible staging choices can be found at the end of the script.

GOONEY BIRD GREENE

And Her True Life Adventures

SCENE #1

Gooney Bird Greene Arrives!

(PRESHOW MUSIC OUT. LIGHTS UP on the STUDENTS who are experiencing the post-summer blahs. Disinterest permeates the air. MALCOLM is hiding under his desk. BARRY is poking TRICIA who is trying to hit him back. CHELSEA is writing a note that she attempts to pass to NICHOLAS. MRS. PIDGEON is trying valiantly to motivate her students.)

MRS. PIDGEON. All right, everybody. I know it's hard to come back after summer vacation, but— *(A variety of groans and moans greets MRS. PIDGEON's observation.)* Malcolm, come out from underneath your desk. Barry, can you spell parachute? I'm sure you can, and stop poking Tricia, Barry!

BARRY. Uh... P-a-r-a-s-h-o-o-t?

MRS. PIDGEON. That's close, Barry, but I don't think—
Chelsea, you can bring that note up to me right now!

BEN. I don't want to be here, Mrs. Pidgeon.

MRS. PIDGEON. Sure you do.

MALCOLM. I don't either!

CLASS ADLIBS (*overlapping*). I want to be swimming. Or playing in the park. Or back in bed! I want my summer back!

EVERYONE. Me, too!

MRS. PIDGEON (*with exasperation*). Class, please! What am I going to do with you?

(MUSIC: A FANFARE/DRUM ROLL is heard as a BANNER/SIGN appears, announcing “Gooney Bird Greene Arrives!” Suddenly the “classroom door” opens revealing GOONEY BIRD GREENE. She is wearing pajamas and cowboy boots and carries a dictionary and a snazzy lunch box. For a moment, everyone is stunned, surprised by what they see. And then...giggles and laughter, the pointing of fingers and ADLIBS of wonderment mixed with those of appreciation. They’ve never seen anyone like GOONEY BIRD before.)

CLASS ADLIBS (*overlapping*). Oh, man! Look at that? Don’t point, it isn’t polite. She looks neat. She just got out of bed. I want to wear pajamas to school!

GOONEY BIRD. Hello, everyone! Sorry I’m late!

MRS. PIDGEON. Hello to you, too.

GOONEY BIRD. I’m looking for Mrs. Pidgeon. She’s going to be my teacher.

MRS. PIDGEON. I’m Mrs. Pidgeon. Who are you?

GOONEY BIRD (*shaking hands with MRS. PIDGEON*).

My name is Gooney Bird Greene—that’s like the color with a silent “e” on the end.

CLASS ADLIBS (*overlapping*). Gooney Bird Greene? What a funny name! I bet she’s kinda gooney. I think she’s nice.

BARRY. Did you just get out of bed?

MRS. PIDGEON. Welcome to Watertower Elementary/Middle School, Gooney Bird. Class?

CLASS ADLIBS. Yeah, hi there! Hello, Gooney Bird. Welcome. Sure, why not?

GOONEY BIRD. I hope I haven't missed much school. I brought my dictionary. I would have enrolled on time, but I just moved here from China.

CLASS ADLIBS (*overlapping*). China? No way! Really? I've never been to China. She's fibbin', Mrs. Pidgeon.

MRS. PIDGEON. Well, then, you've come a long way.

GOONEY BIRD. Indeed, I have. Can I have a desk right smack in the middle of the room? I like to be right smack in the middle of everything. (*Amused by GOONEY BIRD's vitality and confidence, MRS. PIDGEON points to an empty desk in the center of the room.*)

MRS. PIDGEON. How about this one?

GOONEY BIRD. This will be great! Thanks! (*Moving to the desk and introducing herself to her fellow STUDENTS.*) Pleased to meet you. My name's Gooney Bird. What's your name?

KEIKO. I'm Keiko.

CLASS ADLIBS (*overlapping*). My name is Beanie. Hi, I'm Tricia. They call me Ben. I'm Nicholas.

TRICIA. And this is Felicia Ann. She's shy.

GOONEY BIRD (*smiling*). That's OK. Nice to meet you, Felicia Ann.

CHELSEA (*pointing to MALCOLM who is under his desk*). And he's Malcolm. He lives under his desk.

GOONEY BIRD. Hey, Malcolm, that's pretty neat.

BARRY. I bet you can't spell parachute. Nobody here can.

NICHOLAS. That's Barry Tuckerman. He knows everything except how to spell parachute. We were having our spelling lesson.

GOONEY BIRD. Parachute. P-a-r-a-c-h-u-t-e!

(GOONEY BIRD tags off her correct spelling by taking a bow. The STUDENTS should display a full range of reactions to a confident character like GOONEY BIRD. Some might applaud and give her a "high-five." Others might hang back a bit, viewing GOONEY BIRD with some skepticism. NOTE: A few of BARRY's comments are intended to give the "new kid" a little ribbing. Depending on the size of the cast, others might follow suit. In time, GOONEY BIRD will have won everyone over.)

CLASS ADLIBS *(overlapping)*. Way to go, Gooney Bird. Showoff. I hate spelling. She's kinda weird. Can I see your dictionary?

BARRY. Smarty-pants. Did you really come from China?

GOONEY BIRD. Yes, I did.

BARRY. Did not!

GOONEY BIRD. Maybe someday I'll tell you the whole true story!

BEANIE. What's in your lunch box? *(The STUDENTS are now huddled around GOONEY BIRD.)*

GOONEY BIRD. I've got some sushi and some red grapes and an avocado. Anybody want some?

CLASS ADLIBS *(overlapping)*. Sushi, ugh! I like bologna! Sushi stinks. I hate mayonnaise! Anybody want my peanut butter?

NICHOLAS. Give me some sushi, I'll eat anything.

MRS. PIDGEON. Class, it's not time for lunch yet, so let's—

GOONEY BIRD. And oatmeal cookies!

CLASS ADLIBS (*overlapping*). Oatmeal cookies! All right! Go Gooney Bird!

MRS. PIDGEON (*trying her best to focus the STUDENTS' attention*). That's very generous of you, Gooney Bird, but we'll all have to wait for lunch.

BEANIE. Save me a cookie, Gooney Bird!

MRS. PIDGEON. Beanie?

BEANIE. Sorry, Mrs. Pidgeon.

MRS. PIDGEON. Now, everyone, today we start a new lesson. How to tell a story.

CLASS ADLIBS (*overlapping*). Oh, boy, we don't have to do arithmetic! Great. I love stories. I don't know any stories.

BARRY. Everyone knows how to tell a story.

MRS. PIDGEON. What does a story need most of all? Anyone? (*BEN raises his hand. Other STUDENTS raise their hands, as well. Sometimes they speak before they are called upon. The atmosphere should be one of eagerness, curiosity.*) Yes, Ben.

BEN. A book. You have to have a book.

NICHOLAS. My grandmother tells stories all the time about when she was young, and she's not a book.

CHELSEA. My grandma lives in Boston!

KEIKO. Mine lives in Honolulu.

TRICIA. My grandma is very rich!

CLASS ADLIBS (*overlapping*). Lucky you. She can be my grandma if she wants, Tricia. My grandmother's just old.

MRS. PIDGEON. *Class!* You can't all talk at once.

(BARRY kneels on his desk, waving his hand in the air as hard as he can.) Yes, Barry.

BARRY. When my grandma was twenty years old, she went to jail for civil disobedience, whatever that is.

MRS. PIDGEON. Thank you, Barry, for sharing that with us, but—

CHELSEA. That's not a story, Mrs. Pidgeon.

CLASS ADLIBS *(overlapping)*. It was too short. We don't know what happened? Besides, it sounds boring!

BARRY. My grandmother isn't boring!

MRS. PIDGEON. I'm sure she's a lovely lady, Barry, but—

GOONEY BIRD *(standing up with her hand in the air)*.

Stories have to be exciting, Mrs. Pidgeon, and have lots of surprises and interesting people who are clever and mysterious and fun and fascinating!

MRS. PIDGEON. Good for you, Gooney Bird. Just like Babe Ruth and Christopher Columbus. *(As is often the case with many of MRS. PIDGEON's observations, this one is received by the STUDENTS with little enthusiasm. MRS. PIDGEON valiantly pushes forward.)* And since Christopher Columbus's birthday is coming up, I thought we could learn about who he was and what he accomplished.

MALCOLM. We already know about Christopher Columbus.

NICHOLAS. Yeah, he sailed across the ocean and discovered us.

TRICIA. We want to learn about interesting characters who are living today.

BARRY. Like me!

CLASS ADLIBS. Are you kidding? Barry's not very interesting, Mrs. Pidgeon.

BARRY. I could be!

KEIKO. How about Gooney Bird Greene? Like the color with a silent "e" on the end?

CLASS ADLIBS. Yeah, Gooney Bird's really different. She wears pajamas to school! Yeah, weird. She came from China!

BARRY. From China? No way!

FELICIA ANN. I want to hear about Gooney Bird.

MRS. PIDGEON (*good-naturedly*). Well, Gooney Bird, how do you feel about this?

GOONEY BIRD. Can I be right smack in the middle of everything? Can I be the hero?

MRS. PIDGEON. If it's your story, I guess you can be the hero.

GOONEY BIRD. OK, then, I will tell you an absolutely true story about me!

MRS. PIDGEON. Come right up here to the front of the class. (*GOONEY BIRD moves to the front of the class. She checks out her clothes to be sure all is in order. She feels her earlobes.*)

GOONEY BIRD. I should have worn the dangling diamond earrings that I got from Mr. Prince, but I didn't know I was going to entertain you on my first day in school.

CLASS ADLIBS (*overlapping*). You know a prince? That's cool!

MALCOLM. No way. Nobody knows a prince.

GOONEY BIRD. I do. And maybe I'll wear my diamond earrings next week.

MRS. PIDGEON (*with understandable skepticism*). Diamond earrings, Gooney Bird? Really?

GOONEY BIRD. Well, actually, Mr. Prince didn't give me the earrings. I really got them at The Palace.

CHELSEA & TRICIA. You were in a palace?

GOONEY BIRD. Well, first I was in jail.

BARRY. Just like my grandma!

MRS. PIDGEON. Gooney Bird, I think the class is ready.

GOONEY BIRD. All right, everybody, what do you want to know?

CLASS ADLIBS (*overlapping*). Tell us about the jail. And the prince. And the palace.

FELICIA ANN. Tell us how you got your name.

GOONEY BIRD (*reminiscent of a carnival barker*). OK, that's a good place to start. At the beginning. Gather around, everybody, and listen to the absolutely true story of "How Gooney Bird Got Her Name"!

(GOONEY BIRD waves her arms in the air like a magician. MUSIC: A FANFARE/DRUM ROLL is heard as a BANNER/SIGN appears, announcing "How Gooney Bird Got Her Name." LIGHTS shift focus to the "story area" as MR. GORDON GREENE and MRS. BARBARA GREENE enter. MRS. GREENE is pregnant. GOONEY BIRD "walks in place" during the transition, then moves into the "story area." NOTE: MR. and MRS. GREENE, and all the characters in GOONEY BIRD's stories, play their lines in the "past tense" or in the "present tense" as each situation dictates.)

GOONEY BIRD. Once upon a time, my mom and dad discovered something important.

MRS. GREENE. I'm pregnant!

GOONEY BIRD. With me! Tada! And they wanted to name me using their initials.

MRS. GREENE. "G" for Gordon.

MR. GREENE. And "B" for Barbara.

MRS. GREENE. What a wonderful idea! How about Gail Beth, Mr. Greene?

MR. GREENE. That's nice, Mrs. Greene, but how about Gwendolyn Belinda? (*GOONEY BIRD adlibs her disapproval until she agrees with their decision.*)

MRS. GREENE. Georgina Babette?

GOONEY BIRD. Mom, please!

MR. GREENE. Grace Bridget?

MRS. GREENE. Gloria Bonnie!

MR. GREENE (*with frustration*). Gazpacho Banana!

(The STUDENTS laugh. The laughter brings MR. and MRS. GREENE into the world of the classroom.)

MRS. GREENE. Oh, hello there. Who are your friends, sweetheart?

GOONEY BIRD. These are the kids in my class.

MR. GREENE. Hi.

KEIKO (*to MR. GREENE*). Did you really say Gazpacho Banana?

MRS. GREENE. He sure did. Mr. Greene had an upset stomach from eating too much.

MR. GREENE. Gooney Bird only tells absolutely true stories.

BARRY. I was named a "B" name for my grandfather Benjamin.

BEN. That's *my* name.

BEANIE (*raising her hand*). My cat's name is Fluffernutter.

MRS. PIDGEON. Thank you, Beanie. Class, do you notice how Gooney Bird uses suspense and interesting characters?

BARRY. She makes them sound like real people.

MR. GREENE. We are real people.

GOONEY BIRD. Then, *suddenly*...

(MUSIC: A FANFARE/DRUM ROLL announces baby GOONEY BIRD's imminent arrival.)

MRS. GREENE (*feeling labor pains*). Oh, oh. I think I...
Gordon, quick!

MR. GREENE (*overlapping*). Honey, are you—? Oh, dear...OK.

GOONEY BIRD. Hurry, Mom!

(MR. and MRS. GREENE quickly exit the stage. The SOUND of a BABY CRYING is heard. MR. and MRS. GREENE immediately reenter the stage. MRS. GREENE is holding a baby doll that looks remarkably like GOONEY BIRD.)

GOONEY BIRD (*raising her arms over her head in "Rocky" fashion*). Way to go, Mom! Six pounds and fourteen ounces. The champ! But what's my name going to be? (*GOONEY BIRD takes the baby doll and animates the details mentioned in this segment, such as wiggling the doll's head and flapping the doll's feet.*)

CLASS ADLIBS (*overlapping*). Wow, you looked funny. Yeah, you had big feet!

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN FOR A CAST OF 18-20 ACTORS

Women (12-13)

Gooney Bird Greene
Mrs. Pidgeon
Mrs. Greene
Van Driver, Camera Operator
Conductor, TV Reporter
Police Officer, Gumball Machine
Mrs. Schinhofen
Cow
4-5 Students – dialogue combined

Men (6-7)

Mr. Greene
Mr. Prince
Catman
3 to 4 Students – dialogue combined

DOUBLING FOR CAST OF 6 ACTORS (3/4w, 2/3m)

Actor #1 (w) – Gooney Bird Greene

Actor #2 (w) – Mrs. Pidgeon, Mrs. Greene

Actor #3 (m) – Mr. Greene, Student

Actor #4 (m) – Mr. Prince, Catman, Student

Actor #5 (w/m) and Actor #6 (w) – Moving-Van Driver,
Police Officer, TV Reporter, Camera Operator, Napoleon,
Gumball Machine, Conductor, Cow, Mr./Mrs. Schinhofen,
Student

DOUBLING FOR CAST OF 5 ACTORS (3w, 2m)

Actor #1 (w) – Gooney Bird Greene

Actor #2 (w) – Mrs. Pidgeon, Mrs. Greene

Actor #3 (m) – Mr. Greene, Mr. Prince, Mr. Schinhofen,
Student

Actor #4 (m) – Catman

Actor #5 (w) – Cow

Actors #4 (w) and #5 (w) – Moving-Van Driver, Police
Officer, TV Reporter, Camera Operator,
Conductor, Student

NOTE: Since Actor #5 (w) plays COW in Scene #5, and both MR. SCHINHOFEN and MR. GREENE, played by Actor #3, share quick moments together, some dialogue and stage directions have been compressed to accommodate the situation. See page 71.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Setting:

A BACKDROP featuring the town's brightly colored/cartooned profile would highlight the zany and mischievous nature of the play.

If real school DESKS will not be used, perhaps lightweight cubes could be substituted that would allow the STUDENTS to sit or kneel as the energy of the stories accelerates.

PROPS and COSTUMES might fit inside the desks or inside the desk cubes.

Transitions:

All TRANSITIONS should be similar in nature. I have suggested the use of a FANFARE/DRUM ROLL to announce GOONEY BIRD's flamboyant arrivals. The use of "slow motion" movement is in keeping with the exaggerated visual look of the show and allows the actors and audience to have fun while GOONEY BIRD is changing her costumes.

Perhaps a school "bell" or "buzzer" could be used to end and begin each scene, giving the transitions their own dramatic presence. The STUDENTS could make the "bell" or "buzzer" sound, thereby intensifying the performance energy on stage.

To indicate the passage of time, especially during Scene #4, we might hear the PRINCIPAL's VOICE over the loud-speaker announcing a bake sale and a birthday or two, and a meeting of the crossing guards.

ADLIBS, while often specified in the script, may be augmented by quick comments and slang interjections that students of the appropriate age would use at the school where the play is performed.

SOUND EFFECTS that are controlled by actors are often more dependable than those provided by electronic methods. A blend of the two types of sound sources might work nicely, as well.

Scene #1 "Gooney Bird Green Arrives"

As mentioned under the general heading of BANNERS/SIGNS/SLIDE SCREENS, the frequent use of visual prompts throughout the play can be executed in a variety of ways. Actors can carry placards across the stage announcing the title of each story, or bring on a series of placards, one for each

word in the title. The same can be done for the several birds mentioned in the scene.

Artists easels may be employed in a similar fashion with a variety of actors bringing on and taking off the story titles, much as actors in turn-of-the-century melodramas would progress the action by indicating a change of locale or the passage of time.

Scene #2 “How Gooney Bird Came from China on a Flying Carpet”

The STATION WAGON and, later, a BUS could use a common dolly, controlled by the principal actors involved, or moved by scene changers dressed as Watertown citizens. The dolly could accommodate a variety of lightweight and brightly colored cardboard/posterboard cutouts that are inserted or attached to the dolly. Styrofoam, as well, might solve a multitude of problems.

The STATION WAGON and BUS also could be nothing more than a few artfully designed packing cartons, in a variety of shapes, attached by ropes or suspenders which the actors would strap over their shoulders, allowing them to move freely inside.

The PROPS involved in this scene, and throughout the production, should be consistent with the visually exaggerated style of the production. Colorful and imaginative cardboards/posterboards might be drawn/shaped in forced or exaggerated perspective to suggest suitcases stacked upon one another, a torn and well-read bundle of *National Geographic* magazines, a lawnmower and so on.

Also, the size of the props could be only half their normal size, thereby putting visual emphasis on the performer rather than the prop.

A round hole at the end of the ROLLED-UP CARPET would allow the audience to see CATMAN's "glowing eyes."

CATMAN has a series of lines in Scene #5. He can either be played by an actor dressed in costume to suggest he is a cat, or by an actor (puppeteer) who could animate Catman as a hand puppet while speaking CATMAN's lines.

When the script indicates GOONEY BIRD and CATMAN go "flying" out the back end of the STATION WAGON, all that is required is that the performers bounce up in the air and then roll out of the STATION WAGON as the family drives off.

Scene #3 "Mr. Prince, the Palace and the Diamond Earrings"

The "fashion runway" segment can employ large paper/posterboard cutout clothes that GOONEY BIRD and MR. PRINCE hold up in front of them as they model their clothes. Incorporating the white fold-down tabs used to fasten paper clothing to cutout dolls would reinforce the silliness of the segment. The clothes, as well, might be twice their normal size.

The GUMBALL MACHINE might be played by an actor who could look a bit like the Pillsbury Dough Boy, or an actor could wear a huge plastic gumball helmet and puff out his/her cheeks. The gumballs could be made out of soft sponge rubber and stuck onto the gumball costume with Velcro.

Scene #4 “Why Gooney Bird Was Late for School Because She Was Directing a Symphony Orchestra.”

To visually animate Watertower as GOONEY BIRD walks on her way to school, actors might cross back and forth upstage carrying BANNERS/SIGNS/PLACARDS spelling out names of the key stores in the town. Time and personnel permitting, the stores and buildings could be drawn on the signs/placards.

The same technique may be used when GOONEY BIRD is giving the CONDUCTOR directions through town.

The faces of the MUSICIANS and their MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS can be cartooned/drawn/outlined on cardboard/posterboard and attached to the BUS.

In place of a cutout CLOCK, several STUDENTS might form themselves into a clock, moving their arms slowly and with great frustration.

Scene #5 “Beloved Catman Is Consumed by a Cow”

COW could be played by an actor wearing a cow’s head and spats, or it could be a cardboard cutout or a hand puppet much like CATMAN.

Resource Restrictions:

A director may not have sufficient resources, both personnel and financial, to produce the play as fully indicated here. Understanding that the play will be successful only if the actors are invested in the energy of the play, regardless of the visual look of the production, here are a few suggestions that might help.

If doubling roles is an issue, perhaps interesting name tags could be worn by actors around their necks, thereby allowing one actor to “play” several roles by flipping the name tag front to back, changing body position and creating each character’s distinctive voice and attitude.

Create a wig box and place it on stage with actors donning an identifying hairpiece/wig to help the audience distinguish each character.

If it is not possible to create a STATION WAGON or a BUS, then cast one actor or two to play the vehicles. Give them two cardboard cutout headlights and see what happens!

If several DESKS can’t be secured or built, put two or three long planks of pine on a couple of wooden sawhorses. The audience won’t care a bit.

Solutions to a production’s multiple problems are seldom solved with money. They are always solved by imagination and ingenuity...the way GOONEY BIRD GREENE would solve them. Have fun! Enjoy the show!

Substitute Dialogue for Scene #5...pages 59-60

SCHINHOFEN. Then he curls up beside Ms. Cow and falls fast to sleep. (*COW is not enjoying CATMAN’s attention.*) Then my wife/husband sees you on television.

GOONEY BIRD. “If anybody finds my cat, please call the TV station!”

SCHINHOFEN (*pantomiming dialing a telephone*). Hi! I have that cat here in my barn. Yes, the cat’s just fine. But I’ve got to tell you, I don’t think you’ll be able to take it away from my cow. It follows her everywhere. I’d guess you’d call it something like love. That cat is downright consumed by the cow. But I don’t think Ms. Cow cares one way or another.

COW. You've got that right.

(MR. and MRS. GREENE reappear in the "station wagon.")

GOONEY BIRD. So Mom and Dad and I drive back out to Mr./Mrs. Schinhofen's farm.

MR. & MRS. GREENE'S ADLIBS *(overlapping)*. There he is! Are you all right, little guy? Are you ready to go, sweetie?

GOONEY BIRD. But once we see Catman, we know it's true. Catman is no longer consumed by the Greene family. *(CATMAN "purrs" loudly and rubs up against COW.)* So we kiss Catman goodbye and thank Mr./Mrs. Schinhofen. And we all sing "Farmer in the Dell" and dance in a circle on our tiptoes.

(MUSIC: EVERYONE sings and dances to the tune of "Farmer in the Dell." At the completion of the dance, all exit appropriately as the LIGHTS shift focus to the classroom.)