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Dramatic Publishing





DAY OF THE KINGS

DRAMA BY DAPHNE GREAVES

DAY OF THE KINGS

Drama. By Daphne Greaves.

Cast: 4 to 7m., 4w. (expansion possible by using dancers to play revelers). Inspired by actual events, *Day of the Kings* tells the little-known story of Enriquetta Faber, a courageous woman living a dangerous lie. In early 1800's Cuba, it is illegal for women to practice medicine. So Faber, the widow of a French surgeon, disguises herself as a man and becomes a respected doctor with a thriving practice. Faber negotiates the harsh extremes of Cuban society and realizes she is not the only one living a lie and breaking taboos. Hector Nuñez is the owner of a large plantation. His increasing debt, an unhappy wife, and a passionate mistress are taking a serious and painful toll on his health. Hector's teenage daughter, Blanca, is undergoing her own growing pains. When she falls in love with Esteban, a young slave in the family's household, Blanca embarks on a potentially disastrous course. The crises of this family, her patients, swirl around Faber as she attempts to maintain her own lonely and secretive existence. However, when Faber falls in love with her young apprentice, her life spins out of control. On the Day of the Kings—a day of celebration, drink, music and dancing in the streets—secrets are revealed and lives overturned, and Faber is forced to make the hardest decision of her life. "Sparkles with imagination and exhilarating language, but it also tackles 'risky' themes such as slavery, cross-dressing and interracial love in 18th-century Havana." (*Variety.com*) "An exquisitely crafted drama about human bondage, secret passions and the hysteria of social change on the hothouse island of Cuba in the early 1800s ... With its very title—a reference to the Feast of the Epiphany, when Cuba's slaves are allowed to enjoy one Mardi Gras-style day of freedom and celebration—*Day of the Kings* hints of things to come: the slow crumble of the power play between Cuba and Spain, blacks and whites, women and men." (*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*). Flexible set. Approximate running time: 90 minutes.

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Day of the Kings

Daphne Greaves

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DAY OF THE KINGS

A Play in Two Acts

by

DAPHNE GREAVES

The following excerpt contains
sexually



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(DAY OF THE KINGS)

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DAY OF THE KINGS was originally produced by Alliance Theatre, Atlanta, Georgia, (NEED DATE HERE), artistic director - Susan Booth, managing director - Thomas Pechar. The production included the following:

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director SUSAN V. BOOTH
Set design. SCOTT BRADLEY
Costume design MARIANN S. VERHEYEN
Lighting design KEN YUNKER
Original music and sound design. LINDSAY JONES
Production stage manager *LARK HACKSHAW
Production assistant KATRINA S. COOPER
Dramaturg. MEGAN MONAGHAN
Casting JODY FELDMAN
Movement consultant. PATDRO HARRIS

CAST (in alphabetical order)

Atalaya Nuñez	*ROMI DIAS
Dr. Faber	*KATIE FIRTH
Diego de la Hoya	*SANDRO ISAACK
Blanca Nuñez	MARIA PARRA
Esteban	THEROUN PATTERSON
Cecilia.	*CRYSTAL PORTER
Don Alarico/Officer/Revolutionary/Soldier/Tito.	*MAURICE RALSTON
Hector Nuñez	*TRINEY SANDOVAL

* Denotes a member of Actor's Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

DAY OF THE KINGS

A Play in Two Acts

For 4 to 7m., 4w.

(expansion possible by using dancers to play revelers)

CHARACTERS:

DR. FABER. a woman disguised as a man, early 30s

DIEGO DE LA HOYA . . Dr. Faber's apprentice, early 20s

HECTOR NUÑEZ a Cuban planter, late 30s

ATALAYA NUÑEZ Hector's wife, Blanca's mother,
early 30s

BLANCA NUÑEZ daughter of Hector and Atalaya,
ages from 13 to 17 during play

ESTEBAN Cuban-born slave in Nuñez household,
ages from 15 to 19

CECILIA mulatta mistress of Hector

DON ALARICO* Spanish merchant and financier

OFFICER* an officer of the Proto Medico

SOLDIER* a member of the guardia

TITO* a guard at the Casa de Beneficencia

*Played by the same actor.

PLACE: Havana, Cuba.

TIME: Act One - January 6, 1817, and January 6, 1819.
Act Two - January 6, 1819, and January 6, 1820.

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

(Faintly, African drumming is heard. As the drumming gets louder a spot of light fades up on a man. No, it is a woman [FABER] with short hair, wearing men's clothing. The drums crescendo as the light reaches full brightness.)

FABER *(to audience)*. A dream. It seems my entire stay on the island was spent in the fitful hold of a dream. *(The drumming resumes.)* Five years of rising in the dark—before prying eyes could see—to transform myself from Enriquetta to Enrique. I was Enrique. Dr. Enrique Faber. Appointed by the Proto Medico of the Crown. A respected member of the community.

(Throughout, self-contained scenes between a trio and a pair of characters will occur within the overall scene in which DR. FABER addresses the audience. The first occurs stage left; the lights slowly rise to reveal a woman and her daughter [ATALAYA and BLANCA] praying at their home altar. A young slave [ESTEBAN] waves a large fan to cool them. The women cross themselves.)

FABER *(cont'd)*. Before I went to Cuba I had been almost as restricted as the ladies there are.

BLANCA. Mama, you should see Mercedes, she's marching as the maestra of her cabildo. It's a great honor for her.

ATALAYA. So that's where her head was yesterday. Maestra or no maestra, if she has ruined the luncheon she'll taste leather.

FABER. I was allowed to go to medical school at the Université de Paris, but not to take a degree. Allowed to work as a midwife, or to stand at the side of my doctor husband to ensure the modesty of female patients, but nothing more. Allowed to think but not to act. And I wanted to act, knew I could do much more. And I had. I was a respected doctor entrusted with the care of patients and the training of an apprentice...Diego. Ay, Diego. How you haunted my dreams.

(The drums alter their beat. As if by mentioning his name, DR. FABER conjures up a young man [DIEGO]. He approaches FABER from behind. He presses the front of his body against her back. He caresses her.)

DIEGO *(a statement of fact)*. You like that.

FABER. Yes, yes oh god—I want...

DIEGO. What?

FABER. To be...

DIEGO. A man.

FABER. That's ridiculous.

DIEGO. Then what have you been playing at all week?

FABER *(guiltily)*. I don't know what you mean.

DIEGO *(imitating FABER)*. Diego, would you move some boxes for me?

FABER. I didn't know you objected.

DIEGO (*toying with her*). Diego, take off your jacket first.

FABER. It has been so—

DIEGO. Hot. And every day you've had me moving medical supplies. One day this side of the room. The next day the other side of the room. For no reason.

FABER (*moaning softly*). Oh...

DIEGO. No reason other than to watch as the sweat glistens across my shoulders.

FABER. Ohhhh...

DIEGO. My back, my arms, down my chest, my...

FABER. God...

ATALAYA & BLANCA (*crossing themselves*). I am heartily sorry for having offended thee.

FABER (*her body betrays her words, she melts into him*). Ohhhhhhhhhhhh...I cannot do this.

DIEGO. Everyone does this.

FABER. Yes, yes, all of them. They keep their wives and daughters locked up.

ATALAYA & BLANCA. I do fear the fires of hell.

FABER. While they...

(Stage right, the lights rise to reveal a man and woman [HECTOR and CECILIA] making love. He thrusts, she calls out.)

CECILIA. Oh my god.

(Stage left the kneeling women cross themselves.)

ATALAYA & BLANCA. In the name of the Father.

(The man thrusts again. The woman moans.)

CECILIA. Ohhhhhhhhhhh.

FABER. Ay Diego.

ATALAYA & BLANCA. And of the Son.

CECILIA & FABER. Oh my god.

ATALAYA & BLANCA. And of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

CECILIA & FABER. OH MY GOD!

(FABER turns to take DIEGO in her arms but he is no longer there. The lights fade on the women praying and the couple making love.)

FABER *(turning back toward audience)*. It was a dream. A dream in which I did not know what had become of me. Was this the price of my disguise? My lie? When I lived as a woman I was not like this. Though I loved my husband and cried for the loss of his kisses in my young widowhood, I had never felt like this. Before I came to the island I was a sensible, responsible woman. A woman. In Cuba I lived as a man. I walked the streets free to come and go as I pleased. I visited the cafes and sat in the company of men. Privy to their laughing insults and coarse desires. A daily diet of such vulgarity surely had its effect. As a man I could not blush and turn away. I must laugh and wink and slap my fellows' backside. Pretending my silence was discretion and not the result of nothing to tell. ...Nothing to tell but dreams. Dreams that had swallowed whole my nights and were devouring my days. *(The drums get louder.)* Yes, Cuba was a dream. And everyone was fast asleep. *(Blackout.)*