

Excerpt terms and conditions



This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing



Comedy

Adapted by

MARY HALL SURFACE

From the book by

KENNETH GRAHAME

THE RELUCTANT DRAGON

A nationally successful adaptation of the Kenneth Grahame classic. This charming tale of an unlikely friendship was co-commissioned by the Kennedy Center Theatre for Young Audiences and the Seattle Children's Theatre.

Comedy. *Adapted by Mary Hall Surface. From the book by Kenneth Grahame.* *Cast: 5m., 3w.* The village of Guildermere blames the dragon who lives upon the downs for dying crops and sour milk. But this dragon is a peace-loving, poetry-spouting fellow who would much prefer a cup of tea to a battle. When Saint George arrives, the dragon and his young friend, Glaston, face quite a challenge indeed. While true to the spirit and language of the charming original, this adaptation embraces the dramatic power of what happens when misunderstanding escalates into prejudice and violence. An enormous success in its original productions. *Unit set suggests a medieval village and outside of the dragon's cave.* *Music in book.* *Approximate running time: 1 hour.* Code: R94.

(Cover art: Alfredo Lista Garma from the Honolulu Theatre for Youth Production.)

ISBN-10 1-58342-766-X
ISBN-13 978-1-58342-766-8



9 781583 427668 >

The Reluctant Dragon
(Surface)



Dramatic Publishing

311 Washington St.
Woodstock, IL 60098-330
ph: 800-448-7469

www.dramaticpublishing.com

THE RELUCTANT DRAGON

Adapted by
MARY HALL SURFACE

From the book by
KENNETH GRAHAME



Dramatic Publishing
Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, 311 Washington St., Woodstock IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

© MCMXCVII by MARY HALL SURFACE
© MCMXCXVII by ANCHORAGE PRESS, INC.

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved

(THE RELUCTANT DRAGON)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-766-8

**Commissioned by
The Seattle Children's Theatre
and
The Kennedy Center Theatre for Young People**

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author(s) of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author(s) *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author(s), if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY
of Woodstock, Illinois

The Reluctant Dragon was co-commissioned by the Seattle Children's Theatre and The Kennedy Center Theatre for Young People. The Reluctant Dragon premiered at the Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle, Washington, on November 2, 1990, under the direction of Rex E. Allen. Set Design was by Shelley Henze Schermer, Costume Design by Paul Chi-Ming Louey, Lighting Design by Rogue Conn, Sound Design by Steven M. Klein, Fight Choreography by Geoffrey Alm, Dance Choreography by Richard Jessup and Stage Managed by John Lovick. The artistic director for SCT was Linda Hartzell and Managing Director was Thomas Pechar.

The Cast

Glaston	Joel Summerlin
Darby	Mary Irey
Woolchester	J. Christopher O'Connor
Kendal	Sharolyn Scott
Morpeth	Jayne Taini
Grimsby	Tom Roberson
The Dragon	Eric Ray Anderson
St. George	Terry Edward Moore

The Relucant Dragon opened at The Kennedy Center Theatre for Young People, Washington, D.C. on March 8, 1991 under the direction of Graham Whitehead. Composer was Robert Goldstein, Set Design was by Keith Belli, Costume Design by Jane Schloss Phelan, Lighting Design by Robin Lyttle, Fight Choreography by Robert Giglio, Dance Choreography by Statia Ward, and Stage Managed by S. Guinn Smith. The producer was Carole C. Sullivan.

The Cast

Glaston
Darby
Woolchester
Kendal
Morpeth
Grimsby
The Dragon
St. George

Chris Egan
Karin Abromaitis
David Dossey
Elizabeth Pringle
Brilane Bowman
Ritchie Porter
Kevin Reese
Eamon Hunt

For Graham

Cast of Characters

<u>Glaston</u> -	11 - year - old boy
<u>Darby</u> -	Glaston's Mother
<u>Woolchester</u> -	Glaston's Father
<u>Kendal</u> -	The noblewoman of Guildemere
<u>Morpeth</u> -	The tavern keeper of Guildemere
<u>Grimsby</u> -	A would-be Squire in Kendal's service
<u>The Dragon</u>	
<u>St. George</u>	

Setting

The Downs of England
and the village of Guildemere.

Time

The past

Running Time

One hour

MARY HALL SURFACE is an internationally recognized author of over 15 plays for family audiences. Her most widely produced works include Apollo: to the Moon (about the Apollo space program), A Perfect Balance (inspired by the work of Alexander Calder), The Reluctant Dragon (an adaptation of the Kenneth Grahame classic), Broken Rainbows (about hate-violence), Prodigy (about Mozart's childhood) and Most Valuable Player (about baseball legend Jackie Robinson.) After having three German productions, Prodigy was published in an anthology of the best new plays for young people in Europe in 1990. Most Valuable Player was produced in Tokyo in March of 1993 under Ms. Surface's direction and has been performed in Festivals throughout the US and Canada. A Perfect Balance was produced in Lyon, France, one of the most prestigious festivals of theatre for young people in the world. She was Vice-President of ASSITEJ/USA (the International Association of Theatre for Children and Youth) for seven years, and has been a featured speaker at festivals and symposiums in Canada, Germany, Japan, Peru, France, Ireland, Sweden and Australia.

SCENE ONE

(Twilight. 11-year-old GLASTON sits reading in the glow of his lantern light in his small cottage on the Downs. His mother, DARBY, kneads bread dough upon a wooden table, creating a steady, thumping rhythm.)

GLASTON: *(Reading)* "The giant rose slowly! And the boy stepped quietly, quietly. Listening. . . *(pausing dramatically)* for a howl or a growl, a moan or a groan.

(The wind howls.)

But all he could hear was a bre-e-athi-i-ing! Bre-e-e-athi-i-i-ing! Coming closer! And closer! Could this be the tearful, fearful, terrible, unbearable giant with no heart?!

(Just as GLASTON reaches the crescendo of his story, a burst of wind blasts through the cottage. GLASTON slams the book shut. DARBY gasps.)

I'd get that giant, Mother. I'd twist his toes! I'd knock his knees! Criss-cross his elbows! What a battle we'd have!

DARBY: Would ya now?

GLASTON: Giants don't frighten me! Nothing frightens me!

(WOOLCHESTER bursts in through the door, frightening both DARBY and GLASTON.)

DARBY and GLASTON: Ahhhh!!

WOOLCHESTER: I seen him!

DARBY: Ya want us t' leap t' the next county, man!

WOOLCHESTER: It's all up with me! I seen him!

GLASTON: Seen who, Father?

WOOLCHESTER: Never no more will I go up on them Downs. Not for all the shillin's in Sussex!

DARBY: Here now! What is it 'as given you this shake-up?

WOOLCHESTER: You know that cave— the high one— up above the field where I tend me sheep?

DARBY: Aye.

WOOLCHESTER: I never liked that cave, somehow. The sheep never liked it neither. And when sheep don't like a thing there's generally some reason for it.

DARBY: What is it?

WOOLCHESTER: For some nights past, I been hearin' faint noises comin' from the cave. Noises like heavy sighs, with grunts mixed up in 'em.

DARBY: Grunts?

WOOLCHESTER: Aye, grunts! And snorin'! Far away down deep snorin'. Not honest snorin' like you and me a' night, you know.

GLASTON: *(Registering his opinion as to the loudness and regularity of his parents' snoring) I know.*

DARBY: *(Disapprovingly) Glaston!*

WOOLCHESTER: So I took a cast round the cave, quietly, and I seen him! Saints defend us, I seen him as plain as I see you!

GLASTON: Seen who?!

WOOLCHESTER: He was stickin' halfway out the cave, as big as four cart horses, all covered with slimy, shiny scales—

DARBY: *(Gasping)* You don't mean—

WOOLCHESTER: And with every breath, fire flickered out of 'is nostrils.

DARBY: Merciful goodness!

GLASTON: It's a dragon!

WOOLCHESTER and DARBY: Aye!

GLASTON: How wonderful! I knew that cave up there must belong to a dragon! I'm not half as surprised as when you told me that it didn't have a dragon.

WOOLCHESTER: *(Aghast)* That all ya have to say, lad?

GLASTON: Course not! I've read heaps of books about dragons and they say—

WOOLCHESTER: Ya gonna face this beast in battle with only a bloody book?!

GLASTON: Dragons don't read! They guard the treasures of kings, and soar through the air—

WOOLCHESTER: *(Grumbling)* You and your dragons—

DARBY: Don't take on, now, either of ya. We'll get to the bottom o' this. Woolchester, did the beast hurt you?

WOOLCHESTER: Not yet.

DARBY: Growl at you?

WOOLCHESTER: Not . . . exactly.

DARBY: It didn't look at you with its evil eye?!

(Both WOOLCHESTER and DARBY do a quick protective gesture, spitting through their fingers, onto the ground.)

WOOLCHESTER: I'd be deader than doomsday if it had.

GLASTON: *(Consulting one of his many dragon books.)* Was he ramping proudly or snarling fiercely?

WOOLCHESTER: No.

GLASTON: *(Thrilled at the thought)* Then he must have been preparing to battle a fearless knight!

WOOLCHESTER: Wish there had been a knight near by, to come rushin' up to pluck me from the clutches of the deadly beast.

GLASTON: *(Puzzled)* Then . . . what exactly was the dragon doing, Father?

WOOLCHESTER: Well. . . it was sittin' there, with its chin, drippin' with poison no doubt, sort of . . . restin'.

DARBY and GLASTON: Restin'?

DARBY: What was he doin' that for?

GLASTON: He was meditating I should think.

DARBY: Meditatin'? What about?

WOOLCHESTER: 'Bout gobblin' up me sheep, sure as I'm standin'. Oh, I ain't used to dragons. They got scales and claws, and a tail, tho' I didn't see that end of 'im actually. But I don't hold with 'em, and that's that.

GLASTON: Don't worry, Father. Not all dragons eat sheep! I'll go up and have a look at him.

WOOLCHESTER: Pay a visit, will ya? On a monster?

GLASTON: I won't let the dragon see me. I'll hide from him.

WOOLCHESTER: Aye, ya better hide.

DARBY: Glaston, you'll only just peak at him, will ya, then come right back?

GLASTON: Promise.

DARBY: *(To WOOLCHESTER)* Well . . . if he's careful and all. Glaston is wonderful knowin' about book-beasts.

GLASTON: Please, Father.

(WOOLCHESTER grumbles.)

DARBY: I do hate to think of any beast quite alone up there. No one to pass the news with—

WOOLCHESTER: *(Aghast)* What?! Next thing I hear we'll be invitin' this dragon round for supper!

GLASTON: Father! Dragons only eat in the mornings. You'll just have to learn these things.

(DARBY and WOOLCHESTER look at GLASTON with a mixture of pride and amazement. GLASTON picks up his book and exits. The parents freeze.)

Juxtaposed to the cottage is a scene in the village. LADY KENDAL is attended by MORPETH, the village tavern-keeper.)

KENDAL: A dragon? Above my village? Impossible!

MORPETH: But Lady Kendal, the crops have been dyin' in the fields.

KENDAL: That is because we have not had enough rain.

MORPETH: Because the dragon's hot breath has shrunken the clouds.

KENDAL: Are you sure?

MORPETH: And he's burned off the tops o' the wheat with 'is eyes like torches.

KENDAL: Eyes . . . like torches?!

MORPETH: But, me lady, you, with your great wisdom, you will find a way to save our village.

KENDAL: Of course.

GRIMSBY: (*Entering*) Lady Kendal. Let me free Guildemere from this dragon's horrid yoke.

KENDAL: You?

MORPETH: Aye! Grimsby's had a bit o' trainin' as a knight.

GRIMSBY: I could slay a gorgon or a gryphon. Any abominable beast that's ere stalked fair England. For your dearest, sweetest honor, me Lady.

MORPETH: He could gouge out 'is eyes.

GRIMSBY: With me noble sword.

MORPETH: Sever its scales, never flinchin' in a moment o' fear.

GRIMSBY: Never flinchin'?

MORPETH: (*Egging him on.*) Aye! Brave Squire Grimsby!

GRIMSBY: Sir Grimsby.

KENDAL: Well, it seems we must do something! This monster could terrorize the entire countryside!

MORPETH: It could slither and slink into the village square.

KENDAL: *(To GRIMSBY)* It has shrunken the clouds, you know.

MORPETH: Or fly like a giant bat through the air.

KENDAL: With his eyes like torches!

(A gust of wind howls through. All are now whispering in fright.)

MORPETH: Wicked.

MORPETH and GRIMSBY: Wretched.

KENDAL: Oh horrid!

ALL: Dragon!

(All exit.)

SCENE TWO

(As the villagers exit, the open Downs are revealed. We see the mouth of the DRAGON's cave. GLASTON approaches, confidently.)

GLASTON : *(Singing)* "Nine miles to Michaelmas
Our dame began to brew.
Michael set his mare to grass
Lord how fast it snew."
(He stops for a moment.)
There's probably not a real dragon in there at all. Father gets excited so easily! It's probably just a bear, or a badger, or some boring beast.

(He begins again, but as he comes nearer and nearer to the cave, his pace slows a bit. He is clearly more apprehensive than he wants to admit.)

(Singing) "Yet I tell you mickle more,
The cat lieth in the cradle.
I pray you keep true heart in store
A penny for a ladle."

(A low growl comes from the cave. GLASTON stops.)

But . . . if it is a dragon, I'll . . . I'll be as brave as St. George and fight the dragon nobly to the death!

(GLASTON mimes a sword and battle as he sings.)

"Tirlery lorpín, the laverock sings, *(Jab)*
So merrily pipes the sparrow, *(Hack)*
The cow broke loose, the rope ran home..."

(Suddenly the DRAGON emerges from the cave. He is in the middle of a huge stretch and deafening yawn. Glaston whirls around and sees the DRAGON.)

GLASTON: Ahhh!

DRAGON: (*Whirling around, seeing GLASTON.*) AHHHHH!

GLASTON: (*Trying to scramble off, but stumbling.*) Help!

DRAGON: (*Mustering up his ferociousness.*) A little boy is it! Ger-r-r-r-r-a-a-a-l-l-l-l-l!

GLASTON: Stand off, b-b-b-old Dragon. I am n-n-n-noble Glaston of Guildemere.

DRAGON: Now don't you hit me, or bung stones, or squirt water or anything.

GLASTON: I—

DRAGON: And don't you dare produce one of those sling-shot contraptions!

GLASTON: I have no intention of doing anything of the sort.

DRAGON: You don't?

GLASTON: No.

DRAGON: Oh.

GLASTON: (*Backing off.*) I didn't mean to disturb you. I can easily clear out—

DRAGON: You mustn't go!

(*GLASTON stops.*)

I'm a frightfully friendly fellow, really.

GLASTON: Really?

DRAGON: Quite.

(Neither is quite sure what to do with the other. GLASTON begins to circle the DRAGON at a distance, while the DRAGON eyes him warily.)

DRAGON: You're not going to play some trick on me are you?

GLASTON: I don't see it anywhere!

DRAGON: See what?

GLASTON: The smokestack for the furnace inside your stomach or— *(He peeks under the DRAGON's wing.)* somewhere. That's how you blow fire at your enemies!

DRAGON: I haven't an enemy in the world. And as for a furnace. The very thought gives me indigestion.

GLASTON: But there's a jewel inside your head, isn't there. If I were to bash your head in two, I'd find it.

DRAGON: Such a conversation. Bashing my head open indeed. I'd prefer not to test your theory, young man. I'd much prefer a cup of tea.

GLASTON: Tea? A dragon?

DRAGON: I would ask you to join me, but disagreeable little boys don't like tea parties, now do you.

GLASTON: Course I do.

DRAGON: You do? Really?

GLASTON: But I've had my tea today.

DRAGON: I simply cannot recall the last time I had company for tea.

GLASTON: Another day perhaps.

DRAGON: Very well. *(He goes into the cave and returns with a dragon-size tea cup.)*

GLASTON: Dragon, do you plan to stay here long or are you just passing through?

DRAGON: I've only just arrived. And it took me a jolly while to get here.

GLASTON: Why's that?

DRAGON: Well, one day the earth shook, or sneezed or some such silly thing, and all us dragons found ourselves miles underground.

GLASTON: Really?

DRAGON: Quite dull it was down there. So I decided to scratch my way to the top again, and see what you fellows were up to.

GLASTON: *(Looking timidly into the cave.)* Are there any more of you in there?

DRAGON: No. I'm the last dragon fellow about, I believe.

GLASTON: The very last? In the whole world?

DRAGON: Great shame, tisn't it?

GLASTON: Yes.

DRAGON: But haven't I picked the loveliest place to settle down. Such a view from up here! Looking out across the billowy Downs, I only want to sit and snooze and think of things going on and how they keep going on just the same. Know what I mean?