

Innocent In Eden

A Play for Young Audiences

By Thomas J. Gardiner

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SYNOPSIS

In the Prologue, Light, Night, Sky, Sea and Earth tell how and why God created them, and why He went on to create Adam to rule over all the other creatures on the Earth.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam decides to name all the animals he meets. A pair of Elephants teach him some manners, describe how versatile their long noses are compared with his, and leave him to ponder his limitations. A pair of Monkeys play word games with him to arrive at their name, which Adam finally decides must be "Montgomery." Satan as the Snake appears and privately reveals to the audience his rebellious origin and subversive ambitions. He tries to persuade Adam to think a Wolf is really a sheep and a Lion just a kitten, then gives Adam instructions about following all his appetites and impulses, and disregarding all rules and regulations.

A week later, Eve appears and helps Adam name various fruits. The Elephants return and teach Adam the botanical terms for the fruits which he has hilariously misnamed. The Monkeys return and, having concluded that Adam must be a case of arrested development, play new games to humor him. The Snake returns and with satanically seductive arguments persuades Eve and Adam to sample the forbidden fruit. A storm occurs and they realize their mistake.

The following day the Elephants decide to leave the ruined Garden and complain to Eve of their disappointment with human nature and its ill effects on all the animals. The Voice of God confronts Adam and Eve and demands an explanation from them. They blame the Snake, who is confronted and cursed by God and made to crawl away. An Angel enters to send Adam and Eve into exile. But the Angel also tells of God's pity for the human condition and His mercy for the mistakes of human history, and prophesies the coming of the Messiah to restore humanity to paradise.

In the Epilogue, Light, Night, Sky, Sea and Earth tell about how Jesus as the new Adam will lead men and women and children back to the Garden of Eden for good, and the animals dance with each other in celebration.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Prologue and Epilogue

LIGHT

NIGHT

SKY

SEA

EARTH

The Play

ADAM: He would best be played by an adult, though someone as young as a high school student would be satisfactory, and even a mature junior-high student might be acceptable.

EVE: She is the same age as Adam.

MALE ELEPHANT

FEMALE ELEPHANT

MALE MONKEY

FEMALE MONKEY

THE SNAKE: He should be played by an adult if possible, though a younger person might manage.

THE VOICE OF GOD: The voice is strong and clear but not too loud. It must be spoken seriously; a slight undertone of compassion would be acceptable, but any comic tone would not.

AN ANGEL

*The Prologue and Epilogue are optional: if a shorter play with a smaller cast is desired, they may be omitted.

*Additional production notes at the end of the script.

SETTING

The Garden. The scenery can be as simple or as elaborate as you wish: a bare stage; or one with a plain green backdrop; or a backdrop with beautiful plants, animals, birds, and mountains painted on it; or a row of potted plants at the back [and/or front.] of the stage, etc.

The Garden, a week later. The scenery is the same, except that toward the UPC "The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" appears. A potted plant [as large as is practical.] can be used, with some apples [or similar fruit, real or artificial.] attached to it; or the Tree can be painted on a backdrop or flat with artificial fruit [one detachable.] pasted on it.

The Garden, the following day. The scenery is in total disarray. If potted plants were used, they should be lying on their sides, including the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, if possible. If a backdrop was used, it should be hanging crookedly or drooping badly.

PROLOGUE

(A bare stage in total darkness. NIGHT and LIGHT enter from SR and walk to DSC to address the audience. Night is dressed all in black, Light in yellow. A SPOTLIGHT comes on them at DSC.)

LIGHT: In the beginning, before there was anything at all,
God called me "Light," and I woke up to His call
And shone over all the vast and empty darkness.
God liked the way I looked, and so He blessed
My smile, and told me to stay, as the Light of Day.

NIGHT: I was there with God in the beginning, even before
Light was born; all the space in the universe wore
My color - even the mighty wind that blew
Over the stillness and through the emptiness too.
When God decided to part me from my brother
He called me "Night," so I could be the other
Side of Light. Now I and my brother stay
Together always: the first dozen hours he's Day,
And the second dozen hours I am Night:
Every twenty-four hours we repeat it all just right!

(THEY step back a few paces. SKY, SEA, and EARTH enter from SR and walk to DSC. Sky is dressed in blue, Sea in aquamarine, and Earth in brown.)

SKY: I am the Sky that separates the Stars
From each other, that keeps the planets Venus and Mars
From falling together; I lift up the Moon and the Sun,
And let the Comets and the Meteors run
Their fiery races through the empty spaces.
God made me to be true blue at all times and places,
Heavenly blue that always welcomes you!

(HE steps back, between LIGHT and NIGHT.)

SEA: Earth separated from me, making me the Sea,
Rolling in big waves everywhere. God made me
The mother of all the fishes: Minnows and Whales,
Mackerel and Tuna, scary fishes with tails
Like Manta-Rays and Sharks - and nice shellfish like
Snails
And Oysters and Lobsters. With the tides I flow
To the edge of every sandy beach, and I go
Wherever the currents tell me and the winds blow.

*(SEA takes one step to her right, but remains standing near
EARTH at DSC.)*

EARTH: God made me mother Earth, and I gave birth
To many plants and trees whose fruits and seeds
Feed all the other creatures I bore and meet their needs:
Grass for my Cows, alfalfa and corn for my Sows;
Peaches and pears for my Bears, berries for the Hares
That hop away from the Hawks; tall green stalks
For the Pandas of shoots of bamboo; lichens for Caribou,
Bananas for Monkeys, and fruit for the Kangaroo!
God was so pleased with my fertility
And that of the Sea, that He smiled on us, and He said:
"Let us make one more creature, to be the head
Of all the other creatures, just as I
Am the Head of all the Planets and Stars in the Sky.
We'll make a Man who like us will be free
To rule all the fishes and animals, who will be
King of earth's creatures lowly and diverse,
The way that I am King of the Universe!"
So He took some earth out of me and made a Man
With the breath of His life, and gave him the name "Adam."
God planted a Garden in Eden in the east
And put Adam in it, along with every beast
Of the field and bird of the air - He put them all there,
And left the Garden of Eden in Adam's care.

*(If there is a curtain it is lowered or closed here; if not, after
the last word the characters turn together and walk off, SL.)*

End of Freeview

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