

Plays for Young Audiences

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

2400 THIRD AVENUE SOUTH
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55404

612-872-5108

FAX 612-874-8119

Monday's Child

By
Brendan Murray

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INTRODUCTION

This play is the result of a lot of reading and talking and sharing ideas – the story of two people (if they are two people), discovering and remembering. The text is deliberately sparse: it reads at just 20 minutes. But the resulting play is a solid 45 minutes, so you can imagine the enormously important roles played by the design, music, movement and performers. Indeed, of all my plays this perhaps demands the most genuine level of collaboration and investment on the part of all the creative artists involved.

LEGEND

Joy and woe are woven fine,
A clothing for the soul divine,
Under every grief and pine,
Runs a joy with silken twine...

...It is right it should be so,
Man was made for joy and woe,
And when this we rightly know,
Through the world we safely go..... William Blake

THANKS

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DEDICATION

For Cherie...

THE PLAY BEGINS...

IN A WHITE GARDEN AN OLD WOMAN WATCHES A YOUNG GIRL AS SHE DANCES TO A MADE UP SONG. THE GIRL HOLDS A SMALL BOX. THERE ARE LEAVES ON THE GROUND AND A BENCH AND MORE BOXES OF VARYING SIZES...

GIRL

Monday's child is fair of face,
Tuesday's child is full of grace,
Wednesday's child is full of woe,
Thursday's child has far to – Oh!

SHE FINDS A STONE, PLAYS & DANCES WITH IT
AND PUTS IT IN HER BOX

Monday's child is fair of face,
Tuesday's child is full of grace,
Wednesday's child is full of woe,
Thursday's child has far to go,
Friday's child is loving and giving,
Saturday's child works hard for a – Ah!

SHE FINDS A FEATHER, PLAYS & DANCES WITH IT
AND PUTS IT IN HER BOX

Monday's child is fair of face,
Tuesday's child is full of grace,
Wednesday's child is full of woe,
Thursday's child has far to go,
Friday's child is loving and giving,
Saturday's child works hard for a living,
But the child who is born on the seventh – Hey!

SHE FINDS A SHELL, PLAYS & DANCES WITH IT
AND PUTS IN HER BOX

GIRL

But the child who is born on the seventh day is...

WOMAN

Bonny and blithe and good and gay.

THE GIRL SEES THE WOMAN

GIRL

You came back!

WOMAN Came back?

GIRL I knew you would.

WOMAN Have I been here before?

GIRL You came last week.

WOMAN Was that me?

GIRL Yes. You come every week, and play till tea time.

WOMAN I think you must be mixing me up with someone else.

GIRL You are funny!

WOMAN Am I? (BEAT) That... what you were doing just then...

GIRL Collecting treasures?

WOMAN With the music.

GIRL Singing?

WOMAN No, the other thing: moving about...

GIRL Dancing?

WOMAN Yes.

 THE GIRL DANCES AS THE WOMAN WATCHES...

WOMAN Where did you learn all that?

GIRL From you! You taught me.

WOMAN When?

GIRL Last time you came.

WOMAN So I've been here before?

GIRL Don't you remember?

THE WOMAN TRIES TO REMEMBER

GIRL We played till tea time.

THE WOMAN TRIES TO REMEMBER

GIRL We could play something now if you like.

WOMAN Oh, no, I can't. Not today.

GIRL It's all right: no-one'll mind or tell us off.

WOMAN No, it's just... I'm doing something, you see.

GIRL What?

WOMAN Well, it's...

GIRL Have you forgotten?

WOMAN No, I've not -! (BEAT) Just can't remember for the minute.

GIRL Is it something important?

WOMAN Yes.

GIRL Very important?

WOMAN (BEAT) Do you work for the council?

GIRL No.

WOMAN Well, you ask a lot of questions.

GIRL You could have a think. That's what you did last time.

WOMAN Is it? Yes. Well, I'll just sit here, then. Have a think.

SHE SITS AND THINKS.

PERHAPS FROM TIME TO TIME SHE LOOKS AT THE BOXES...

GIRL Why don't you have a sweet? Help you think, you know.

WOMAN I don't think I've any -

GIRL In your pocket.

WOMAN (LOOKING) Oh yes!

THE WOMAN UNWRAPS A SWEET AND EATS IT

GIRL Is it nice?

WOMAN Mm. Would you like one?

GIRL Yes, please.

WOMAN Oh, wait a minute! Not supposed to take sweets from strangers.

GIRL But you're not a stranger, are you?

WOMAN Well, I've only your word for that. Perhaps when I know you better.

GIRL Alright. (BEAT) Is it helping?

WOMAN What with?

GIRL Trying to remember.

WOMAN Am I trying to remember something?

GIRL You're trying to remember what you're doing.

WOMAN Oh.

GIRL And you're having a think.

WOMAN (BEAT) I'll maybe have a sweet! I've heard that can help.

GIRL You've just had one!

WOMAN (BEAT) Well, who's counting?

GIRL Me.

THE WOMAN EATS A SECOND SWEET

GIRL I can count all the way to a hundred now.

WOMAN Can you really?

GIRL 1, 2, 3...

WOMAN School...

GIRL I can say the alphabet, too. Do you want to hear me?

WOMAN Miss Maloney...

GIRL A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K,L,M,N -

WOMAN O!

GIRL What is it?

WOMAN The next letter: it's O.

GIRL I thought you'd remembered!

WOMAN Remembered what?

GIRL What you're doing!

WOMAN Oh... No.

PAUSE

GIRL We could play a game.

WOMAN I thought I was -

GIRL Just till you remember.

WOMAN I suppose.

GIRL We could play "I Spy".

WOMAN Oh no, it drives me up that wall, that.

GIRL You decide then.

WOMAN (BEAT) What about sardines?

GIRL Don't really like fish.

WOMAN Me neither.

GIRL (BEAT) I know! We could play "I think of something and if you can guess what I'm thinking of, you give me a sweet."

WOMAN How does that go?

GIRL Well, I think of something and then if you guess what I'm thinking of... you give me a sweet.

WOMAN Are you making this up?

GIRL No!

WOMAN Go on, then.

GIRL All right.

WOMAN Are you doing it?

GIRL Yes.

WOMAN Oh, right... Are you thinking of... a banana?

GIRL Yes!

WOMAN Really?

GIRL Yes. Sweet, please!

WOMAN (BEAT) Just a minute! That can't be right. How do I know *you* didn't say banana just because *I* said banana?

GIRL Er...

WOMAN It should be: *I* think of something and if you can guess what *I'm* thinking of, I give you a sweet.

GIRL (BEAT) Go on, then: you think of something.

WOMAN All right.

GIRL Are you doing it?

WOMAN Yes...

GIRL Is it a banana?

WOMAN I'm not that daft!

GIRL Is it a puppy?

WOMAN What sort of puppy?

GIRL You know, a cute little puppy that jumps up and licks your face?

WOMAN And has it got big brown eyes and floppy ears?

GIRL Yes!

WOMAN And a tail that wags like anything?

GIRL Yes!

WOMAN No.

GIRL Oh!

WOMAN Well, that's not what I'm thinking of.

GIRL Is it a sweet?

WOMAN Why would I be thinking of sweets?

GIRL Just asking.

WOMAN Well, it's not.

GIRL Is it a picture?

WOMAN No.

GIRL A mirror?

WOMAN No.

GIRL	Clock?
WOMAN	No.
GIRL	A train?
WOMAN	No.
GIRL	A tree?
WOMAN	No.
GIRL	A tractor?
WOMAN	No.
GIRL	A ball?
WOMAN	No.
GIRL	Bubble?
WOMAN	No.
GIRL	Blancmange?
WOMAN	No.
GIRL	Is it a knight in shining armour?
WOMAN	No.
GIRL	Is it a dragon with slithery scaly skin and great big leathery wings and all smoke coming out of its nose and when it sees you coming into its cave it opens its mouth and its got these terrible teeth and it goes Aaaaaaargh!
WOMAN	Oh! (BEAT) No.
GIRL	What is it then?
WOMAN	What?
GIRL	The thing.

WOMAN What thing?

GIRL The thing you're thinking of.

WOMAN (BEAT) Am I thinking of something?

GIRL Yes!

WOMAN (THINKS) I can't remember.

GIRL Oh!

WOMAN You mustn't mind or tell me off!

GIRL You can't remember anything!

WOMAN I know. Sometimes I can't remember what day it is.

GIRL It's today.

WOMAN Well, you say that but what about yesterday? What day was it then?

GIRL Well, yesterday was today, wasn't it? (BEAT) When it was yesterday.

WOMAN And tomorrow?

GIRL Well, that'll be today, too – tomorrow.

WOMAN You see: that's what I mean. It keeps changing!

GIRL (BEAT) I'm going to look for more treasures.

WOMAN That's it!

GIRL What?

WOMAN That's what I'm doing!

GIRL Looking for treasures?

WOMAN Well, not treasures, no but something. Yes. I'm looking for something.

GIRL What is it?

WOMAN Well, it's...

GIRL You've forgotten.

WOMAN I have not -

GIRL Just can't remember for the minute.

WOMAN No.

GIRL But it's something important?

WOMAN Yes.

GIRL Very important?

WOMAN Are you sure you don't work for the council?

GIRL I told you!

WOMAN I'll maybe have a think.

GIRL Don't say you'll have another sweet because it didn't help last time and too many sweets will make your teeth ache.

WOMAN If my teeth ache, I'll take them out and watch them ache.

GIRL How will you do that?

WOMAN You'll know one day.

PAUSE

GIRL Is it your glove?

WOMAN What?

GIRL The thing you're looking for.

WOMAN Why would it be my glove?

GIRL Cos you're only wearing one.

WOMAN Oh. So I am. No. It's not my glove. Something important...

GIRL Have you looked in your bag?

WOMAN Course I've looked in my - Or maybe that was yesterday...

GIRL Have a look then.

WOMAN Yes.

 THE WOMAN LOOKS IN HER BAG. IT IS FULL OF LEAVES. SHE
 RUMMAGES AND PRODUCES A PAIR OF SPECTACLES....

WOMAN Close-ups...

 NOW A PAIR OF BINOCULARS...

WOMAN Far-aways...

 NOW AN EGG WHISK, A CUP & SAUCER, A PAIR OF PANTS –
 WHICH SHE PLACES ON THE BENCH BESIDE HER – AND,
 FINALLY, A BOX OF FISH FINGERS.

 PERHAPS THEY SHARE A LOOK

GIRL Those are fish fingers.

WOMAN (BEAT) I can see that.

GIRL Why have you got fish fingers in your handbag?

WOMAN I'm not sure... But I think I might know where my glove is.

GIRL Are they what you're looking for? And before you ask, I don't work
 for the council.

WOMAN I never said you did. And I don't think fish fingers are very
 important, do you? I wonder if...

 THE WOMAN LOOKS AT THE BOXES.
 THE GIRL PICKS UP THE PANTS.

GIRL What are..?

WOMAN Here! Those are my pants!

GIRL Ugh!

WOMAN Did you just take them?

GIRL No.

WOMAN Then where..?

GIRL They were in your bag.

WOMAN What are you saying? That I'm not wearing any pants?

GIRL I don't know.

WOMAN I think I'd know if I was wearing pants or not, don't you?

BEAT

GIRL You're not wearing any pants, are you?

WOMAN Never you mind. Now give them here.

PERHAPS A CHASE THEN THE GIRLS HANDS OVER THE PANTS

GIRL Aren't you going to put them on?

WOMAN I'll put them when I'm good and ready. And when I've got a bit of privacy.

THE WOMAN PUTS THE PANTS IN HER BAG

GIRL Are they what you're looking for?

WOMAN Well, I know pants are quite important but no, I don't think so.

GIRL Let's look somewhere else then.

WOMAN Where?

GIRL We could look in the boxes.

WOMAN Oh, I don't think we should do that – we don't know who they belong to.

GIRL But they're yours, aren't they?

WOMAN Mine?

GIRL Yes. This one's mine. And those are yours. You told me.

WOMAN Did I?

GIRL Yes!

WOMAN And you think that might be where it is: what I'm looking for?

GIRL Well, it's something important and this is where I keep my important things. Look, I'll show you.

THE GIRL OPENS HER SPECIAL BOX: MUSIC...

WOMAN Oh, what's that?

GIRL It's just a stone really but see!

AND SHE HOLDS IT UP

WOMAN Oh yes!

THEY PLAY & DANCE WITH THE STONE

WOMAN Like a whatdoyoucallit...

GIRL What?

WOMAN You know... the queen wears them, in her crown.

GIRL Jewel?

WOMAN Yes. Oh, that's beautiful!

GIRL Then there's this...

AND SHE TAKES OUT A FEATHER: MUSIC...

WOMAN From a flying thing... with the flappers...

GIRL Bird.

WOMAN Yes.

GIRL See how light it is.

THEY PLAY & DANCE WITH THE FEATHER

WOMAN We could all fly if we had a few of them.

GIRL Would you like that?

WOMAN I don't know. I'm scared of heights.

GIRL Me too.

THE GIRL PRODUCES A SEASHELL: MUSIC...

WOMAN And what's that?

GIRL From my holidays.

WOMAN By the water waves...

GIRL It's got the sea inside!

WOMAN And all the stuff that gets between your toes.

GIRL What stuff?

WOMAN And in your sandwiches.

GIRL Tomatoes?

WOMAN No, you build things with it: castles.

GIRL Oh, the sand!

WOMAN Yes. And when it's wet, your footprints stay behind you.

GIRL But when the tide comes in, they disappear.

WOMAN Like you've never been there...

GIRL But you were.

THEY PLAY & DANCE WITH THE SHELL

GIRL Do you remember?

WOMAN Ice-cream!

GIRL Seaweed!

WOMAN Rock pools!

GIRL Buckets!

BOTH Candyfloss!

GIRL And listen...

AND SHE HOLDS THE SHELL TO THE WOMAN'S EAR...

WOMAN It's still there, then?

GIRL Yes.

WOMAN After all this time!

GIRL I'll put it back.

WOMAN Yes. Keep it safe. With the others. Don't want to lose them.
Beautiful, they are: precious.

THE GIRL CLOSES HER SPECIAL BOX

GIRL So what about these? Shall we look inside?

WOMAN If you're sure they won't mind or tell us off.

GIRL They won't.

WOMAN All right then.

THEY DANCE AND PLAY WITH THE BOXES AD LIB...
THE GIRL OPENS THE FIRST BOX: MUSIC...