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The Wolf and Its Shadows

(Radio Manuscript)

By

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Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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(THE WOLF AND ITS SHADOWS [RADIO MANUSCRIPT])

ISBN: 978-1-61959-257-5

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This radio version of *The Wolf and Its Shadows* was first produced by The Open Eye Theater, Margaretville, N.Y.

Many thanks to Producing Artistic Director Amie Brockway for her belief in this play and her deep understanding of the importance of wolves, dogs and stories.

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CHARACTERS

ACTOR 1 (w): Also plays WOLF.

ACTOR 2 (m): Also plays DOG.

ACTOR 3 (m): Also plays HUNTER, SHEPHERD and the voice of the SPIRIT OF THE SKY.

TIME: One night, from dusk until dawn, and imagined times.

PLACE: A forest, and imagined places.

PRODUCTION NOTES

CHARACTER NOTES: The actor playing DOG projects a younger voice and often regresses to the antic, indecisive manner of a puppy. WOLF's voice should be mature and strong but never mean-spirited, although DOG often misinterprets her forceful natural bearing as a personal threat. To WOLF, DOG is a puppy: amusing, naive. To DOG, WOLF is a mystery, at once both fascinating and dangerous.

MUSIC: A flute highlights the WOLF's stories and certain parts of the action, but other instruments, such as a guitar and cow (or sheep) bells, should be used for the HUNTER's and SHEPHERD's stories. The effect should be natural and folkloric, but with an obvious difference between the artifice of the stories told by the HUNTER and SHEPHERD and the stark simplicity of those told by the WOLF.

SOURCES OF THE STORIES

The Fable of the Wolf and the Dog—Aesop

The Foolish Wolf—Russian folktale

The Tired Wolf—Tlingit story

The Caribou and the Wolf—Inuit story paraphrased in *Never Cry Wolf* by Farley Mowat.
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The Old Wolf in Seven Fables—Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (German, 1729-1781)

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AT RISE: Flute is heard, followed by forest sounds. All fade out as a chorus of wolf howls begins. Howls fade. Flute plays softly as ACTOR 1 speaks.

ACTOR 1. It is said that the wolf travels easily between the spirit world and our own—

ACTOR 2. Along the path we now call the Milky Way—

ACTOR 3. Once known as the Wolf Road.

ACTOR 2. Forever moving—

ACTOR 1. Moving in shadow—

ACTOR 3. Moving in mystery—

ACTOR 1. The wolf disappears into the night—

ACTOR 2. And returns before the morning sun.

ACTOR 3. Knowing what we cannot see—

ACTOR 1. Seeing what it cannot say—

ACTOR 2. The wolf dies—

ACTOR 3. And is reborn—

ACTOR 1. Dies—

ACTOR 2. And is reborn—

ACTOR 3. In both worlds—

ACTOR 2. And in the stories people tell.

ACTOR 1. We tell the stories.

ACTOR 2. We believe the stories.

ACTOR 3. We become the stories.

ACTOR 2. Be still!

ACTOR 1. Listen!

ACTOR 2. Understand!

(Flute plays a moment longer, then fades.)

ACTOR 3. Early one evening, deep in a forest, a wolf and a dog chanced to meet.

(Forest sounds up then fade. DOG is heard panting as he trots along.)

WOLF. Good evening, Dog. What brings you into the forest?

DOG *(still uncomfortable, but ever perky and eager to please)*. Oh, I enjoy a romp in the wilderness now and then. But perhaps I have gone a bit farther than usual.

WOLF. It is I who have traveled farther than usual. Hunger has forced me to leave my pack. (*Growls with the thought of it.*)

DOG (*whimpers nervously*). Hu-hunger?

WOLF. We have gone many days without a successful hunt.

DOG. You haven't eaten in *days*? How dreadful!

WOLF. You seem fat and comfortable enough. Tell me, Dog, how do you manage it?

DOG. There's food enough for all at my master's house—if you're willing to work.

WOLF. I do what I must to keep from starving. What is this work you speak of?

DOG. I bark to keep thieves away from my master's door. (*Demonstrates with noisy yips and yaps.*) In return, he gives me scraps from his own table, morning, noon and night. That is the secret of my shiny coat.

WOLF. I could do as much as you and more. (*Emits truly menacing growls and snarls.*) Is there work for me at your master's house?

DOG (*more than slightly apprehensive, he whimpers again*). No doubt there is.

WOLF. Then show me the way.

(Flute and forest noises indicate a change in time and place. Sounds of DOG and WOLF trotting and panting. All else stops as a sharp whistle is heard in the distance.)

WOLF. Dog! Did you hear that whistle? We must hide! Quickly!

(Sounds of twigs breaking as she leaves the path.)

DOG. Why? What's wrong?

WOLF (*from a slight distance*). There's a man nearby.

HUNTER (*from a greater distance*). Dog!

(Another whistle.)

DOG. It's only a hunter. He won't do *us* any harm.

(Footsteps, twigs breaking, a closer whistle.)

DOG (*cont'd*). Wolf? Where are you?

HUNTER (*footsteps very close, then stop*). Dog!

(DOG whimpers.)

HUNTER (*cont'd*). Come to me!

(DOG whines apologetically and trots over.)

HUNTER (*cont'd*). Did I just see you trotting through the forest with a wolf?

DOG (*whispering affectionately now*). We're going to my master's house. She intends to ask for work and be given food in return.

HUNTER. You're bringing a wolf to your master's house?

DOG (*confiding, in a whisper*). She'll make a meal of *me* if I don't.

HUNTER (*laughs it off*). She'll have to catch you first.

DOG. She's very quick!

HUNTER. But not very clever. The wolf's a fool and that's a fact.

DOG. She didn't seem ... foolish.

HUNTER. Let me tell you a story. Then you may decide for yourself.

(HUNTER's music, possibly including a guitar and whistled melody, marks the transition into the story, then fades out under the dialogue.)

HUNTER *(cont'd)*. A dog that had grown old and weary and was of no more use to his master was turned out into the forest and left to die. Bemoaning his fate, the dog made a terrible racket—

(DOG howls mournfully.)

HUNTER *(cont'd)*. Until he attracted the attention of a huge, grey wolf.

(DOG yips in alarm. HUNTER speaks the lines in quotation marks as STORY WOLF. DOG as STORY DOG.)

HUNTER *(cont'd)*. “Greetings, mangy cur. Do you remember me? I was the one you chased from your village when I was driven there by cold and hunger. At last, I will have my revenge!”

DOG. “What do you intend to do with me, Wolf?”

HUNTER. “What do I intend to do? First—”

(Guitar strikes an ominous chord.)

HUNTER *(cont'd)*. “I intend to eat your fur.”

(STORY DOG whines.)

HUNTER *(cont'd)*. “Next—”

(A second ominous chord.)

HUNTER *(cont'd)*. “I intend to eat your hide.”

(STORY DOG whimpers.)

HUNTER *(cont'd)*. “Then—”

(A third, even more ominous chord.)

HUNTER *(cont'd)*. “I intend to eat your flesh.”

(STORY DOG yowls.)

HUNTER *(cont'd)*. “And after I've eaten all that I can—”

(Several chords.)

HUNTER *(cont'd)*. “I intend to dance on your miserable bones!”

(Guitar finishes up with something like a gleeful jig.)