

A Day of Dreaming

By Claudia Haas

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SYNOPSIS

Melisande dreams of catching a unicorn, Ana dreams of capturing the perfect sunrise, River dreams of finding the all-consuming love of his life, while Kristi seeks to unlock her love. These are just a few of the stories of love lost and found in “A Day of Dreaming.” We meet young people with powerful dreams which they write in a Dream Journal that is nestled in a covered bridge (which exists today in Winterset, Iowa). There is always the hope that if they write down their dreams, they will come to fruition. The stories run the gamut of forging new connections to tough goodbyes. There is the silly (star-crossed lovers who can only speak to each other in song titles), the poignant (high school sweethearts say goodbye), and the quirky (can a leprechaun catch a unicorn?). Tying the stories together is the love story of Charlie and Dancie whose love lasts to the great beyond. The play will take you on a magical mystery tour filled with intrigue, tenderness, and sweetness sprinkled with spice. Running time: 65-75 minutes.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 w, 4 m for small cast; 8 w, 7 m, 2 flexible for large cast)

Scene 1: Remembering Dancie

DANCIE: (18-20) Female; a spirit; a helper.

CHARLIE: (Ageless 18-?) Dreams of Dancie.

Scene 2: Nobody Can Hear You Scream

MARION: (16-17) Female; dreams of writing potboilers.

HAROLD: (18-19) Male; photographer; dreams of the perfect shot.

ANA: (17-18) Female; dreams of revenge.

Scene 3: Unlocked

KRISTI: (18) Female; in love but dreams of getting out of love.

MATLOCK SHERLOCK: (18-20) Flexible; locksmith helping people get rid of their love locks; no dreams.

STANLEY: (18-20) Male; dreams of staying alive.

Scene 4: American Gothic

OSWALD: (19-21) Male; dour farmer; passionate dreamer; will *never* show that side.

ETHEL: (19-21) Female; dour farmer; passionate dreamer; will *never* show that side.

Scene 5: A Moment of Privacy

AVERY: (17-18) Flexible; dreams of giving his beloved the perfect goodbye.

DANCIE and CHARLIE

Scene 6: Saying Goodbye

AVERY, DANCIE, and CHARLIE

Scene 7: Not Fishing

MELISANDE: (16-18) Female; a wisher; dreams of unicorns.

TOM: (16-18) Male; a wannabe helper; dreams of a pot of gold.

Scene 8: Rain

RAIN: (16-?) Female; bursting with rain; dreams of a different existence.

RIVER: (16-?) Male; woebegone, lost; dreams of falling in love.

Scene 9: Paris

MARIE: (19-20) Female; moving on; dreams of a new life in Paris.

PAUL: (23) Male; moving back; dreams of Marie.

Scene 10: Together Again

DANCIE and CHARLIE

PRODUCTION NOTES

An intermission is between Scenes 5 and 6. A one-act version can be devised, however. Use the four Charlie-Dancie scenes (Scenes 1, 5, 6, and 10) and two scenes from each act. You may delete a scene or two if it doesn't work with your casting. You may also rearrange scenes, except of course for the Charlie-Dancie scenes. These scenes in both versions *must* stay. They are the heart of the play.

SET: You can perform the show in front of a curtain, or outside, or use levels for area staging. Use projections, a backdrop or whatever suits your fancy to suggest a bridge. Of course, you can always build a bridge. Charlie mentions the bridge right away, so the audience knows it's there.

COSTUMES: Summer contemporary costumes. Play with Rain's costume such as having an umbrella with drops falling off or a hat with rain streamers.

PROPS:

- Dream Journal with pen tied to the bridge
- 2 Cameras
- Car keys
- Variety of locks on the bridge (locked)
- Saw, pliers and hammer (May be toy-sized)
- Water bottle
- Pitchfork
- Urn with "ashes"
- Piece of paper
- Phone
- Covered basket
- Bucket, fishing pole, and grass
- Photo in wallet or as background on phone
- Small telescope

Scene 1: Remembering Dancie

(AT RISE: LIGHTS up on Hogback Bridge. SFX: bees buzzing and birds chirping. It is summer and there is a combination of flowers, grass, and farmland. A bench is near the bridge. CHARLIE enters or is already there.)

CHARLIE: That's Hogback Bridge. It's not the most romantic name for a bridge that has welcomed dreamers since 1884. It's named because of that ridge where the wildflowers grow. The townspeople thought it resembled a hog's back. Can you see it? Try squinting. Or standing on your head. Maybe then it will be clear. Or not. But the name doesn't matter. It's a place where people come to connect – with lovers, with family, with nature, with the past and even the future. It makes sense to come to a bridge when you are looking to connect. It's the function of a bridge. Of course, once the bridge was solely to connect the ridges over a creek so the farmers could get their grain to town. And the people thought ahead. They knew a bridge would be ravaged by rain and snow in Iowa – so they decided to cover them so that the flooring would remain intact. They designed a lattice truss system to keep the steel pylons intact which you probably don't care about. But it worked. The flooring remained intact. Of course, the covered roofing needed replacement. Once there were nineteen of these bridges. Now there are seven – and to me – this is the most special one because of the Dream Journal.

I care for the Dream Journal – which is the most important part of this bridge. People have been writing their dreams into this journal for decades. And the thing is – they really do write their dreams and they're magical. This journal contains the goodness in the world – in case we need a reminder.

We keep it here – just inside the bridge. It's clipped on this string so people can easily find it. You're going to see some of the entries.

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CHARLIE: *(Cont'd.)* I'm really supposed to check on the nuts and bolts of the bridge but in truth – I stay here for the Dreamers. And to be honest – because of Dancie.

(DANCIE enters and sits on a bench. CHARLIE will hang up the Dream Journal and then join her.)

CHARLIE: *(Cont'd.)* I remember Dancie and what was and what could have been. I remember the past too well.

(It's a summer in the past.)

DANCIE: How long have we been coming here, Charlie?

CHARLIE: Since we were both knee-high like the corn on the Fourth of July.

DANCIE: We had our first kiss here on this bench.

CHARLIE: I remember.

DANCIE: How many picnics? How many dances in the moonlight?

CHARLIE: Jeez, Dancie. Lots. Why so many questions?

DANCIE: It's not enough. I want more.

CHARLIE: I can kiss you more. Lots more.

DANCIE: You're avoiding the subject.

CHARLIE: My heart's paper thin. It beats too fast. Especially when I'm with you.

DANCIE: Don't blame me for not wanting to commit.

CHARLIE: It wouldn't be fair. You'd be left alone with no one to care for you in your old age.

DANCIE: Old age is a distant thought. I want now, Charlie. Let's talk about now.

CHARLIE: You have me now!

DANCIE: Do I, Charlie? Because I'm feeling mighty lonely. I fill up my time helping others and I am happy to do it – but I wonder – do I spend all my time helping others in their lives because I have no life? *(Beat.)* I want a life.

CHARLIE: I want to give you everything you want, Dancie. But I can't give you time. I don't have it.

DANCIE: You can give me "us." I dream of us. Us in our own home. I want "us."

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CHARLIE: I could be gone in one hour/

DANCIE: /or ten years! I'll risk it. And if we only have an hour
– I will make sure that hour gives me all the memories I
need to take me into my old age. Commit to me, Charlie.

CHARLIE: Let me think about it.

DANCIE: Don't think too long. I want a real life. And if I
cannot have it here, I will look elsewhere.

CHARLIE: But you love me. You know you do.

DANCIE: I do. That's what makes it so hard. Storm's
coming. I need to get ahead of it. I promised my sister I
would watch the new babe so she could take a walk and
have an hour of peace to herself. Think about what I said.

*(DANCIE exits. CHARLIE just sits. LIGHTS dim. SFX:
thunder.)*

CHARLIE: She didn't get ahead of the storm. And I've had
more time than I thought I would.

(LIGHTS change to just before dawn.)

CHARLIE: *(Cont'd.)* But that was the past. You didn't come
for that. You came for today. Late August. It's just before
dawn and looks to be the perfect summer day. We could
do with some rain. We say that every August in Iowa. We'd
much rather Mother Nature supply the crops with water
than pay for it ourselves.

*(HAROLD and MARION enter. It could be shadowy because
the sun is not up yet. SFX: a car door slam.)*

CHARLIE: *(Cont'd.)* People are up and about awfully early
today. Of course, this is Iowa. Up before the sun. I wonder
what they're doing here. *(Exits.)*

End of Scene

Scene 2: Nobody Can Hear You Scream

(MARION is by the bridge. Her brother HAROLD is just inside the bridge. Marion is dressed in black. She fancies herself Morticia Addams or a female Stephen King.)

MARION: HAROLD! Stop snooping in the Dreamer Journal and come out here. It's dark. And spooky. HAROLD!

(ANA enters.)

MARION: *(Cont'd.)* Oh! Hello! I was just ...

ANA: Calling for Harold. I heard.

MARION: Are you one of those Madison-County-Bridge hunters?

ANA: Sorry? Are there people who hunt bridges? Is there a bounty?

MARION: Don't be coy with me. Just saying, this wasn't in the movie.

ANA: What movie?

MARION: *The Bridges of Madison County?* The only thing of worth to come out of this town. Although it did get a bit sappy – could have used a bit more horror. Do you like horror?

ANA: No.

MARION: Then you shouldn't be out here alone ... in the dark ... before the first light.

ANA: I want to photograph this bridge at sunrise. Then I'm going to win a thousand dollars and that'll show him. He'll never question my worth again. And when he begs me to come back – I won't!

MARION: You're entering that contest sponsored by *Sunrise* magazine?

ANA: Yes.

MARION: Are you any good?

ANA: Of course. Sure. Yes.

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MARION: You shouldn't tell strangers your plans. Best to be mysterious. You never know who you will meet. Like suppose I told you that I plan on winning that contest and I don't suffer losses easily.

(ANA moves away scoping out the place. MARION follows.)

ANA: Quiet. With no one around.

MARION: Harold and I aren't no one. But I like it. It's the kind of place where no one can hear you scream.

(Beat.)

ANA: I'll just wait in the car....

MARION: If you're going to take a prize-winning photograph, best to check out all the angles. Down that path is promising.

ANA: It's ... still dark. There might be spider webs.

MARION: Oh honestly, who knows who's out here? A spider could be the least of your worries.

ANA: I think I'll stay here. Near the road. Near my car. With my phone. That has an emergency button.

MARION: You're in the middle of nowhere. Check your bars.

(ANA does. No bars. She grimaces.)

MARION: *(Cont'd.)* No worries. If anything happens, Harold and I are here.

ANA: If you're trying to scare me... it's working.

MARION: Just be on high alert. *(Whispering.)* They never did find the body.

HAROLD: *(Enters from the bridge.)* Marion, are you trying to scare her with your horror story?

MARION: It's a fact. The body was never found. Is that a great first line or what?

HAROLD: I'm Harold.

ANA: I figured you must be.

HAROLD: This is my sister, Marion. Dreamer of all things sinister and black.

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ANA: We met.

HAROLD: So, here to take a sunrise photo?

ANA: How'd you know?

HAROLD: That's why people come here at sunrise. Nobody actually watches the real sunrise. Do you have your shot all figured out?

ANA: I figure Mother Nature will do all the work and I'll just snap it. *(Looks around and faces west. She fiddles with her camera which she doesn't understand.)*

HAROLD: The sun rises in the east. That way.

ANA: *(Twirls around.)* I knew that.

HAROLD: So, you're going to win the contest that I usually win.

ANA: Why not?

HAROLD: Because it doesn't look like you've done this before.

ANA: How hard can it be? This is a pretty place. The sun rises. Click. Done. Send it in. Win. And show my ex that I can do ... some things.

HAROLD: You realize that all over Madison County there are photographers who understand their cameras ready to take a sunrise photo. And they're all going to send it to the same contest.

ANA: You mean people have been here before?

MARION: Sunrise. Sunset. The world's been here snapping photos of corn.

HAROLD: It's coming! The golden hour. Nobody move! Well. Actually, both of you, move! You're blocking the view. And it only lasts a few seconds.

(FX: The sun starts to come up. HAROLD is checking the settings on the camera. ANA just starts clicking away.)

HAROLD: *(Cont'd.)* What are you doing? Did you even check your ISO?/

ANA: /I just/

HAROLD: /What's your shutter speed?/

ANA: /I don't/

HAROLD: /Is this your first photograph?

End of Freeview

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