

# **THE GRIFFIN AND THE MINOR CANON**

Story by Frank Stockton

*Adapted by Vern Adix*

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### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

A long, long distance from the town, in the midst of dreadful wilds scarcely known to man, there dwelt the Griffin whose image had put been up over the church door. In some way or other, the old-time sculptor had seen him, and afterward to the best of his memory, had copied his figure in stone. The Griffin had never known this until hundreds of years afterward, he heard from a bird, from a wild animal, or in some manner which it is not now easy to find out, that there was a likeness of him on the old church in the distant town.

Now, this Griffin had no idea how he looked. He had never seen a mirror, and the streams where he lived were so turbulent and violent that a quiet piece of water, which would reflect the image of anything looking into it, could not be found. Being, as far as could be ascertained, the very last of his race, he had never seen another griffin. Therefore, it was that when he heard of this stone image of himself, he became very anxious to know what he looked like, and at last determined to go to the old church and see for himself what manner of being he was.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(5 M, 4W, 3B, 4G + 1 puppet or child)*

**BIRD:** can be a puppet, or a child actor

**MINOR CANON:** the lowliest of the church clergy

**MRS. FRANKLY:** a townswoman

**KATHRINE: FRANKLY:** her daughter

**MARY FRANKLY:** another daughter

**MRS. DOURLY:** a townswoman

**BILLY DOURLY:** her son

**ALICE DOURLY:** her daughter

**MICHAEL DOURLY:** another son

**MRS. GROSS:** a townswoman

**TOMMY GROSS:** her son

**MARY GROSS:** her daughter

**ALBERT FRANKLY:** a farmer, husband to Mrs. Frankly

**GEORGE DOURLY:** a farmer, husband to Mrs. Dourly

**THE GRIFFIN:** last remaining creature of his kind

**MRS. IMILL:** townswoman, a hypochondriac

**HENRY GROSS:** bandaged almost from head to foot.

**Note** - the parts of Mrs. Imill and Henry Gross could easily be played by two of the other adults if it is desirable to reduce the cast list.

OR if additional cast members are required the adults and children could be augmented.

### **SCENES OF THE PLAY**

1. Front of the Wakefield Church, home of Griffin's Statue
2. Bridge, in front of the curtain
3. Wildwood, home of the Griffin
4. Bridge, in front of the curtain, same as #2
5. Front of the Church, same as #1
6. Bridge, in front of curtain, same as #2
7. Front of Church, same as #1
8. Light change only, front of Church, same as #1
9. Behind Scrim, school room
10. Front of Church, same as # 1
11. Behind Scrim, an Infirmary, same as # 9
12. Front of Church, same as #1
13. Meeting room in church, same as #9, behind scrim
14. Front of Church, same as #1
15. Behind Scrim, Schoolroom, same as #9
16. Front of Church, same as #1
17. Behind Scrim, Infirmary, same as #9 and #11
18. Front of Church, same as #1
19. Front of Curtain, same as #12
20. The Wildwood, same as #3

**Additional production information** located at the back of the script

## THE GRIFFIN AND THE MINOR CANON

### SCENE ONE

*(In front of the church in a little medieval type town, probably in the 1800s. Above the church portal is the figure of a GRIFFIN - half eagle - half lion. This is a creature of horrible demeanor - perhaps placed above the doors to frighten away evil spirits - perhaps placed there to frighten the parishioners into seeking the solace of the church and it's hoped for salvation from a here and now that is not too pleasant, and a hereafter that must certainly be better than the here has to offer. A BIRD (Hand puppet or child.) suddenly pops into place near the statue and sings in praise of the beautiful morning. The MINOR CANON, three peasant women, MRS. FRANKLY, MRS. DOURLY and MRS. GROSS and their children emerge from the church doors, or come from the side of the church. The children run off to one corner of the stage to play, while Mrs. Frankly, Mrs. Dourly and Mrs. Gross and the Canon chat. People use a pseudo-Irish dialect.)*

CANON: *(With a simple hand signal accompanying his blessing.)* Bless you m' friends. Thank you for attending early services this morning.

MRS. FRANKLY: Thank your Reverence for servin' us.

MRS. DOURLY: We likes t' hear you preach, Canon.

MRS. GROSS: Y' don't keep tellin' us the world's comin' to an end, like the Bishop does.

FRANKLY: Aye! There's 'nuff trouble in life without being reminded about it.

DOURLY: You talk to us like a brother.

CANON: Bless y' I hope y' have a good day.

DOURLY: Thank y', yer Reverence.

GROSS: *(To her children who are across the stage.)* Get home with y', children! *(Then back to the Canon.)* If y' have a minute, Reverence, I'd a word with y' about me children.

CANON: Aye! What about yer children?

GROSS: (*Other women stay to listen.*) Seems t' me they do too much playin' in yer school an' not enough studyin'.

CANON: Y' think they play too much?

GROSS: Aye, they don't seem t' be doin' much learnin'.

DOURLY: 'tis the same with mine. I'm thinkin' 'twould be better if they were in the Bishop's classes with all the other children.

FRANKLY: Aye, Tell us, now, Canon, d' you have our children 'cause they be rummies?

CANON: Oh, now ... I ...

GROSS: Are they too disruptive fer the Bishop's school?

CANON: Well I... (*Hesitant to talk about it.*) Well ... I ... uh...

DOURLY: Y' can be frank with us, your Reverence.

CANON: 'tisin't right for me to lie to y'. Yes, the Bishop felt that some of the children should be in a special class (*Big sigh.*) and he chose me to take care of that class. Yes, I guess y' might say they're the difficult children.

FRANKLY: Well, now, I must say ...

CANON: (*Interrupting.*) They're lovely children but ...

DOURLY: (*Facing him.*) But what? Reverend Canon.

CANON: I do have a bit of a problem controllin' 'em. They don't exactly mind me ... (*Trailing off.*) That is ... not too well anyway ... an ...

GROSS: Well, now, if my two get out of line you give 'em a whackin' with a good big stick. Y' have my permission t' do it.

CANON: That's not what I be meanin' Mrs. Gross. They're good children ... (*Pause.*) I guess they just just don't like being' cooped up in a school room all day.

FRANKLY: Well, I'm thinkin' y' do a good job with 'em Canon. I'm glad they're not underfoot at home all day. They'd drive me out o' me wits.

DOURLY: If we didn't turn 'em over t' you they'd be gettin' into mischief somewhere else.

GROSS: That's right. Thank y' fer takin' care of 'em in your school even though 'taint as good as the Bishop's school.

CANON: (*Blanching a little. He suddenly realizes that he is nothing but a glorified baby sitter.*) Yes, well I do m' best with 'em.

## **End of Freeview**

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