



2004

# The Shamrock Road

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Simmonds, Rae. *The Shamrock Road*. Anchorage Press, Inc., 1998. ISBN 0876023626. \$35.00 for each performance. 45 pp.

Reviewer: Hilary Barnett

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Significant Shortcomings

Genre: Adventure Plays--Juvenile Drama; Folklore--Juvenile Drama; Musical

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Ireland--Juvenile Drama;

Theme: Never give up.

Production Requirements: A piano player or recorded music is needed. There are about 9 set changes. With many props needed (included in script) and the production calls for Irish folk and gipsy dances.

Acts: 2

Run Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Characters: 9 and Choruses (10 extra) total-19

Cast: Cast for Children by Adults and Children

Time Period: Late 1800's: Rural Ireland

Jimmy McDonough, his mother and sister are poor, but happy travelers. When a stroke of bad luck and "illegal-like" dealings happen upon this family, Jimmy begins a quest to retrieve the family's mare, Dolly. Jimmy encounters peddlers who teach him how to read and Leprechauns who fulfill Jimmy's wish to find his family and give those "illegal-like" gentlemen a taste of their own medicine by taking his mare back. Through song and Irish folk dance the plot is moved along to a grand finale of exuberant celebration.

The main element of this play is action. The audience will enjoy non-stop encounters with new characters. The show is continuously finding, discovering and moving. Stage combat will need to be practiced. The scene has the potential to be exciting. There are puppets, gypsies, and leprechauns. This spectacle requires a plethora of color and magnificence to enthrall the children's attention. Some magical elements may be difficult but are do-able. The tempo is up-beat. However, the music is over-written. Some songs are important to the show, but others distract from the story and they are the reason for the low rating. They aren't very imaginative and the audience might get a little lost. The few good songs are not enough to counter the "sub-par" ones.

This engaging show breaks the fourth wall which draws the audience in and helps clarify the time, place, and people. It has the potential to be a very entertaining show but lacks the characterization that it needs to reach the enchantment level it strives for.