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Stories Gone Wilde

Rebeca Wallin

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Title: Stories Gone Wild
Author: James Zager
Reviewer: Rebeca Wallin
Publisher: Dramatic Publishing
Publication Year: 2000
Number of Pages: 48
Production Requirements: Simple flower garden set, neutral costumes with add-on pieces, minimal props

Estimated Run Time: 1 hour
Number of Acts: 1
Number of Characters: 29
Cast Requirements: 5 male, 5 female, optional 8 ensemble members of either sex
Time Period: 1800’s
Reading/Interest Level: Primary, Intermediate
Rating: Excellent

Review

Children will be introduced to the works of a famous author in this play comprised of adaptations of stories from Oscar Wilde’s short works of children’s fiction including The Selfish Giant, The Nightingale and the Rose, The Birthday of the Infanta, The Remarkable Rocket, and The Happy Prince. Wilde’s classic sarcasm, quick wit, and ingenious highlight of the brutal, dark side of nature contrasts with acts of unbelievable love and selflessness in this adaptation which stays true to the language and basic plot in the original stories.

Ten or more actors play multiple characters including transitional “spirit” characters between each story. All five stories take place in a garden, setting the stage for simple set requirements. The drastic cuts required to include the five stories in an hour long production result in the loss of some of the meaning and beauty present in the original stories. The simple set and costume requirements as well as number and scope of characters make this a good choice for both a touring company and a high school or junior high production. Original source material provides ample opportunity for pre- and post-show discussion and study.