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The Dream Makers

A full length play
by
Barbara Hockley

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The Characters

Some of the characters are rather archetypal and the male/female casting becomes quite important. However, it isn't always crucial and casting can be quite flexible. Some roles can be combined if necessary and the Dreamers can play other parts as well. The preferred male/female casting is noted should it be possible to allocate parts in this way.

The Grounders

Beka	Female. Would like to be a Dream Actor.
Holly	Female. Down to earth Grounders supervisor.
Connor	Male. Bit of a joker and friend to Beka.
Faith	Female. Rather nervous.
Jude	Male. The new boy. Mysterious.

The Dream Actors

Keri	Female. New to dream acting and learning the ropes.
Loren May	Female. The romantic lead.
Nathan	Male. The romantic and adventurous hero.
Tobias	Male. Plays all other male parts that don't require a hero.
Sofia	Female. Plays minor roles.
Dextra/Dex	Male/Female. Dream Extra.
Vextra/Vex	Male/Female. Dream Extra.

The Crew (Male or Female)

Director	The Dream Director.
Violet	Lighting.
Decibella	Sound.
Lacey	Costume.
Smokey	Special Effects.
Aestheta	Set Design & Dressing
Rouge	Make-up.

The Dreamers (Male or Female)

Dreamer 1	Anxiety dream
Dreamer 2	Romantic dream / Female
Dreamer 3	Nightmare
Dreamer 4	Flying & underwater dream
Dreamer 5	Heroic dream

2 Secret Agents Male or Female

2 Security Guards Male or Female

Notes on the play

The Dream Makers is set in a 'dream palace' - a place where dreams are created - off-the-shelf as well as bespoke. All the action takes place on one of the 'dream stages'. The Grounders aren't aware of dream action as their awareness is focused on the mundane and practical aspects of the process. Their job is to clean up after dreams and to perform routine maintenance tasks. They take their cues to leave or arrive on stage via light or sound. The dream world is inhabited by a whole range of people - actors, technical crew, artists and a director. They are likewise oblivious to the presence of the Grounders. Cleaning, to them, is as much a magical process as dreaming is to the Grounders (as they never witness it happening).

The set should consist of a central playing area, possibly with a large dream-catcher above it (a nice touch, but not crucial). At one side of the stage there should be a light/machine of some sort that is used every time the Grounders are required to clear up the dream stage – alternatively you can use sounds of any sort to indicate the same. To the other side large imposing 'dream gates' stand (can be anything that indicates a 'large doorway'). Ideally the dream gates should light up whenever a dream is about to take place. When they are lit it is possible to go through them from the dream stage to the 'backstage' area of the dream palace where the actors & crew hang out. When it is not lit access is by code/hand scan etc, & this information is not available to Grounders, therefore they are not aware that there is anything at all beyond the gates. The rest of the set is entirely up to the imagination of the designer, but requires hiding places and places to keep props and costumes. It should look as dreamy and as bizarre as possible.

Notes on Dreams

There are 5 dream sequences in the play and they offer tremendous scope for creativity. The general concept of each dream and any crucial action that relates to the plot/character development or discovery is detailed in the script. Other than that you can have a lot of fun with sounds, music, dance, mime, film – anything you like to create a fantastical sequence worthy of the best remembered dreams! Each 'dreamer' enters the dream stage and proceeds to interact with the dream actors who become the others characters in the dream. Some dreams work out well .. others not so. But have fun with them!

ACT I

Scene 1 Beka's Dream

Front tabs closed (or dark playing area if no tabs).

Keri enters from back of space/auditorium/hall. She's running. She reaches the curtains and knocks as if there's a door (sound of booming door knocker). The curtains are pulled slightly aside revealing a light beyond (use light only if no tabs).

As this happens Beka appears from the same place.

She sees Keri.

Beka Keri. Stop.... Keri ... please stop. It's me ... it's Bekaplease stop.

Keri turns and looks puzzled. It's as if she's heard something in the far distance, an echo of a voice she once knew.

Beka begins to run towards her.

Keri turns away and enters the 'door'

It closes.

Beka reaches the 'door' and knocks (different sound effect each time she knocks, industrial noises, farmyard noises - anything but a 'knocking' noise).

Beka Let me in. Keri! Open the door. Please. Let me in.....I know you're there. I know you are. (*Sinks to her knees*) So tired ... So tired...

Beka lies down & falls asleep.

Front tabs open to reveal the dream palace.

Sound effects and/or lights indicate that a dream is about to take place.

Positioned around the central playing area are the Crew & Director.

The Crew have equipment appropriate to their jobs (lighting boards, lights, sound equipment - it should look a bit like a film set (without the cameras).

Beka remains asleep to one side of the dream stage throughout the following scene although the Actors do not see her.

Scene 2 The Anxiety Dream

The Director and Crew work throughout the sequence, but without making a noise. They gesture & make signs only.

The Dreamer enters through the dream gates, followed by the Actors.

This dream is loaded with anxiety. Searching for something, but never finding it. Chasing something, being chased & as many variations as possible. Should last about 3-5 minutes.

The Actors and the Dreamer all speak during the dream (ideally on soundtrack rather than live) and it becomes clear that Nathan is not at all keen on this kind of dream. He frequently attempts to change the dream to something more heroic/exciting & is stopped by other Actors (especially Loren May who knows him well) & the frantic gesticulations of the Director.

The pecking order of the Actors should become fairly clear (Loren May, Nathan, Sofia, Tobias, Keri, Vextra & Dextra)

There is no narrative that holds the dream together completely. Random and surreal images/moments should be used throughout. The overall effect must be one of an anxiety-laden event.

It is important that heaps of props and other items are used & left lying on the floor afterwards.

As the dream fades (music /sound fades out & lighting starts to 'normalise') the Actors step back from the dream stage, but stay onstage. The Dreamer gradually becomes quiet and exits through the dream gates. The action continues as soon as the Dreamer has gone.

During the following scene the Actors are resting and feeding back information to the Crew & Director.

SCENE 3 Post Dream Analysis

Director That's it everyone. Dream over. Back to reality.

Loren May Nathan, what on earth were you thinking?

Nathan I just get so tired of these off-the-shelf dreams where nothing happens. There's no story - what's the point?

Loren May It's not for us to judge.

Nathan On the contrary, we're in the ideal position to inject a little excitement into a dreamer's life.

Keri But surely we should just provide the dream the customer ordered?

Loren May Of course we should Keri dear. However tedious it might be at times we are professional dream actors and should behave as such. Take no notice of Nathan, if he had his way all dreams would consist of heroic deeds on top of mountains.

Tobias I could do that. I could do mountains and heroic stuff.

Everyone ignores Tobias - they usually do

Keri What sort of heroic deeds take place on mountains anyway?

Sofia You wouldn't understand, it's far too advanced for you.

Keri I know what a mountain is and I'm familiar with the concept of heroism. So what happens on mountains?

Sofia Explain it to her Nathan. You know so much about this sort of thing.

Nathan Well for a start climbing a mountain is a heroic deed.

Keri Why?

Nathan Why? Because mountains exist and anyone brave enough to climb one - like me for example - must be a hero.

Vextra Or an idiot.

Dextra Or a fool.

Tobias Rescuing people from mountains, now that's heroic!

Vextra Or stupid.

Dextra Or foolish if you ask us.

Sofia We didn't. Dream extras have no opinions to give, everyone knows that.

Tobias *(To Vextra & Dextra)* Is that right?

Vextra Are you asking for our opinion on the matter?

Dextra Or would you like us to borrow someone else's?

Tobias Ummmm.... Ierrr...

Director OK everyone. Good job. The reports show that we manage to increase the dreamer's anxiety levels from a pre-dream level of 35% to a post dream level on waking of 88%. Excellent work!

Vextra & Dextra exit & the Crew start to move out as well. Keri addresses anyone within earshot.

Keri Why exactly do people order anxiety dreams? I mean, why would you want to wake up feeling anxious?

Director It's all about balance my dear. You see if people only ever had heroic dreams (*looks towards Nathan who chooses to ignore the comment*) they might start to believe that they actually could jump from a plane, or race a fast motorbike, or ...

Keri ... climb a mountain?

Director Exactly! And we can't have people going around being adventurous and heroic all over the place, I mean they'd all fall off, or get stuck or something. By injecting a regular dose of anxiety into dreams it keeps people scared and anxious - but safe.

Keri So anxiety keeps people from getting stuck on mountains?

Director Precisely.

Nathan But you're missing the whole point. If more people were stuck on mountains, I could rescue them.

Loren May You lumphead! You're a dream actor - you can only rescue them in their dreams. What if people actually started climbing mountains - real ones?

Sofia You're so brave Nathan. I wish I were stuck on a mountain.

Tobias You can't climb a mountain.

Sofia I don't want to climb it, I just want to get stuck.

Tobias But you'd have to climb it to start with. You can't get stuck at the bottom.

Sofia I'm not stupid Tobias. I would get someone to drop me off halfway up.

Tobias Like who?

Sofia I don't know. Someone with a helicopter?

Keri How did we manage to get so stuck on mountains?

Tobias We're not stuck anywhere, we're here.

Loren May Oh, please.... Can we drop the whole mountain thing and get some breakfast!

Nathan Well, I'm off to brush up my heroic skills. You never know what the next dream might bring. It's all in the preparation you know. (*Exits shouting dramatically, while the others stare in horror & amusement*) Hold on, I'm coming to get you, just stay calm

Loren May Romance, that's what we need. A good romantic heroine and a dashing man to woo her.

Tobias I could do that. I could dash.

Loren May If only Serge was still here. Now he knew about romance.

Sofia I think it's about time I played the romantic heroine.

Loren May Perhaps you could have a dash with Tobias? Come along Keri, stay close to me if you want to learn how to do things correctly. (*Exits with a flourish*).

Keri I'm coming. Are you coming Sofia?

Sofia Not with her. She wouldn't know a genuine romance if it bit her on the bum.

Tobias I could do that. (*Thinks*) Well, not the biting bit ... obviously. (*Exits sheepishly*)

Keri (*Looks around*) What a mess! Who clears up?

Sofia No one. It happens by magic.

Keri Magic? (*Looks strangely puzzled*).

They exit.

SCENE 4 - The Clear Up

*The light flashes/siren wails - however the Grounders are called into action.
Beka is still asleep in the same place.
Holly enters & surveys the scene.*

Holly (Shouts) Come on you lot. Work to be done, let's go.

Connor & Faith enter

Faith (Looks at the mess) How did this happen?

Connor Methinks it was an anxiety dream.... Let me see (wanders around) ...ah yes, over here signs of a struggleand here a chase and look here ... someone was searching for something ...

Faith You can't tell all that from this mess

Connor Oh yes I can. And here ...well, well, well.....Dr Beka I presume?

Faith Beka?

Holly Not sleeping again? How did she get here?

Faith Are you sure she's asleep. Maybe she's in a coma, or a trance, or she's been poisoned...

Connor grabs a sheet (or similar) and drapes it over his head and wails loudly in Beka's face. Beka wakes, screams & jumps up.

Connor (Takes of sheet & laughs) Got you!

Holly It's ok Beka, calm down. It was Connor, that was all.

Faith What are you doing here Beka?

Beka I don't know. I saw her .. and I followed her and this is where I ended up.

Holly Oh, not again.

Beka I did! I really did! She ran to the door and knocked.

Faith Is it the same door?

Beka I don't know

Connor It was a dream Beka. It wasn't real.

Holly He's right. It was a dream.

Beka But I saw Keri, I saw her. (Others exchange glances) She went to this place ... she knocked on the door and I shouted at her. She turned. I think she heard me.

Faith What sort of place?

Beka I don't know. I couldn't get in.

Holly Beka, you have to stop this.

Beka But it was her. If only I could get through the door I could find her.

Faith I don't like this talk about dreams. I think we should just get on with clearing up and forget all about it..

Beka This place is made of dreams Faith, you can't just ignore them. They're in the walls, the floor, the pillars - they're everywhere ... (Faith looks around nervously, drops whatever she's just picked up).

Connor Actually, they're not. Dreams are flighty little things. You can't pin them down and they don't live in the walls. You can't keep them and you can't understand them half the time.

Holly Well, listen to Mr Dream Expert here. When was the last time you experienced a dream, other than your own? We work here. Dreams happen. We don't see them, we just clear up - that's all.

Connor There's a lot that goes on here that you don't know about Holly.
Holly I think I know enough to be able to do my job.
Connor And you don't think it's strange that we appear to be the only people in the building?
Holly No. I don't question it. I just get on with my job. Talking of which, we need to crack on here. Come on, let's sort this place out.

Holly & Faith start to clear up. Jude appears at the side of the stage and watches & listens to the following.

Connor Come on, forget it. There's nothing you can do.
Beka I can dream - and I will. I don't understand how Keri managed to leave. Where did she go? She always said she wanted to be a dream actor. I could see her doing that you know, she always seemed to be floating around when we were supposed to be working (*exactly what Beka is doing now*).
Connor Look, life isn't like that. There's no way that a Grounder - like you and me - can become anything else. You don't even know that dream actors exist - you just assume they do because you want them to be real!
Beka They are real. I know they are
Connor Have you ever seen one? Even if they do exist, they're somewhere else ...not here. Forget it Beka, just forget it.
Beka Well then - who makes this mess?
Connor Mess happens! Ok?

Jude enters

Jude Hi
Holly Who are you?
Jude Jude. I'm the new Grounder.

Everyone looks surprised

Jude To replace to one that left
Beka You know about Keri? (*Grabs Jude*) Tell me everything.
Jude Errrr ...I don't really have any details, just that I'm to join your team.
Beka You see. Keri did leave!
Jude Who's Keri?
Holly A figment of Beka's imagination. No one left. We've always been a team of 4 - always.
Beka That's not true!
Faith Stop it Beka, you're getting rather scary.
Jude Ok, ok, so I'm not a replacement, but I'm here anyway.
Holly Great, so now we're a team of 5.
Beka Like we used to be.
Connor (*Together*) No!
Holly (*Together*) No!
Faith (*Together*) No!
Beka I hate it when you do this to me. It's not fair - you've all forgotten, but I haven't and I'm not going to. (*She storms off*)
Jude Sorry. Didn't mean to cause trouble.
Holly What was all that about - to replace the one who left? Who told you that?
Jude I guess I got the wrong message. Sorry. Who is Keri anyhow?

Connor Don't you start. It's bad enough trying to keep Beka in the waking world as it is. She's a dream, that's all. Just a dream and Miss Stroppey has got it all mixed up with reality.

Faith She thinks that her friend Keri ..

Holly ..who doesn't exist ..

Faith ..went off and became a dream actor.

Jude A dream actor.

Connor A mythical person who appears in dreams in various guises.

Jude I know what they are.

Connor Then you should also know that it isn't possible. Don't encourage her.

Jude I wouldn't dream of it. *(They give him a look)*. Sorry. She seems so sure though.

Connor She has lots of dreams. And ...she sleepwalks.

Jude No!

Holly Why did you tell him that?

Connor Because if he's part of our team he'll find out soon enough that she's always falling asleep!

A flashing light (or noise) indicates that it's time to move on

Holly Right. We're done here, let's go. Maintenance on level 3 next, dream gates are stuck.

Holly, Faith & Connor start to leave

Holly You as well, Jude.

Jude I'll follow, just wanted to take a look around. I've never seen a dream stage before.

Holly Don't be long. We're not allowed to wander at will on the dream stages.

Jude Ok, I'll be quick.

*As soon as they leave Jude hides & watches the space.
Beka comes back & starts searching for something, Jude watches.*

Jude *(Steps out of hiding place)* What are you looking for?

Beka Oh! Oh, it's you. Look, why don't you just run along with the others. You'll only think I'm crazy, like they do.

Jude I won't.

Beka Why not? I have dreams you know. And, I get them mixed up with reality - I know what they say about me.

Jude I don't think you're crazy.

Beka Really?

Jude I believe you

Beka Do you believe that my friend Keri, who used to be a Grounder on our team, disappeared one day and became a dream actor?

Jude Well ... I ... I'm not ...

Beka I knew it. You think I'm making it up. You're just the same as the others.

Jude No, that's not true. I don't know about Keri, but I don't think you're making it up and I'd like to help you look for ...whatever it was you were looking for.

Beka *(Thinks about it)* Ok, you can help.

As Beka talks Connor comes back and watches from one side, Rouge stands by the dream gates & watches with interest from the other.

Beka This is how I see it. We're told that because we're Grounders and our dream expertise is limited to clearing up the very real mess that dreams make, we can't understand the deeper meanings of dreams. We're told that our dreams have no significance and that we should ignore them. Therefore, we are told, we're stuck on the first rung of the dream business and there we will stay. I say that's rubbish. We can do anything we want ... but we have to dare to dream and believe in our dreams and follow our dreams - not just cast them aside when we wake up and go back to cleaning and performing routine maintenance tasks. Here we are in the Dream Palace, the place of dreams and magic and imagining and what do we do - we say that dreams aren't real and that we should ignore them. I say we search this place, dream whenever we can and find a way to be part of real dreams. I want to be a dream actor, I want to find Keri - who IS real by the way - and I will do it with you or without youwell?

Jude *(stunned by Beka's passion)* Crikey I'm with you! What are we looking for?

Beka A way in.

Jude A way in to what?

Beka There must be another level where the dreams take place. Look for a door or something.

Jude I don't think we'll find a door.

Beka How do you know?

Jude There were rumours, where I used to work. They say that the dreams are all around us, all the time, but we just can't see them.

Beka Where did you work, which department?

Jude Vending machines.

Beka We have a department just for vending machines?

Jude Yep.

Beka Where are they then?

Jude What?

Beka The vending machines.

Jude Oh .. they left.

Beka They left?

Jude And then the department closed down obviously.

Beka *(Suspiciously)* Ok ...

Jude Look, I have an idea. If it doesn't work we'll search for a door

Beka What is it then.

Jude All we need to do is get ourselves in a state of mind where dreams can come to us.

Beka Asleep, you mean.

Jude Yes and no. Sort of asleep, but not completely. What about if we were just really relaxed and open to dreams?

Beka That's what I call asleep.

Jude No, there has to be something in-between awake and asleep. Let's try sitting and relaxing, but not lying down or falling asleep.

Beka And they all think I'm crazy

Jude Right here.