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We help older performers fulfill their theatrical dreams!

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Excerpts from THE DIARY OF ADAM* and EVE'S DIARY

Translated by
Mark Twain

*[*NOTE: I translated a portion of this diary some years ago, and a friend printed a few copies in an incomplete form, but the public never got them. Since then I have deciphered some more of Adam's hieroglyphics, and think he has now become sufficiently important as a public character to justify this publication. — M. T.]*

Abridged and sequenced by Nona and Cal Claus

CAST

ADAM: The first man in The Garden
EVE: The first woman in The Garden

Place

In the Garden of Eden

Time

Shortly before once upon a time

Introduction To This Reading

Mark Twain began writing the Diary of Adam in 1892. It went through several versions with the final one appearing in 1904. After his wife, "Livy," passed away in that same year he wrote Eve's Diary. It has been said that he composed this piece as a kind of therapy to lift him out of the funk he was in after the passing of his beloved. In a way it truly is a kind of love story. Studs Terkel thought so. Each year at Valentine's Day he read these two diaries on his Chicago radio program.

This was our inspiration in 1982 to put together a condensed version. They were originally written as two quite separate works, and this was the way Studs read them. However, we thought it might make some sense to bring them together in a sequence with Eve reading her day, followed by Adam's notes about that same day or one near it in time. Since it takes over two hours to read these diaries

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aloud, we decided to edit them down to about a 45 minute Reader Theatre performance. Furthermore, we felt it might be well to have the days in sequence, with the first being presented through Eve's eyes, followed by Adam's impressions of events. This alternation continues until we find Adam at Eve's grave for the last word.

We have been totally faithful to the words of Mark Twain. The alternation and sequencing of diary entries also follow closely the day-to-day chronicling according to Twain's translations "from the original." A similar type of editing was done in 1988 by David Birney. He and his wife, Meredith Baxter Birney, performed their 58 minute version on public television. This was done completely independent of our adaptation, and is available on a VHS tape.

[Adam and Eve are in repose within The Garden. They seem puzzled by their surroundings, consider their circumstances, and have recorded their thoughts.]

EVE: Saturday — I am almost a whole day old now. I arrived yesterday. That is as it seems to me. And it must be so, for if there was a day-before-yesterday I was not there when it happened, or I should remember it. It will be best to start right and not let the record get confused, for some instinct tells me that these details are going to be important to the historian some day. For I feel like an experiment, I feel exactly like an experiment. I followed the other experiment around yesterday afternoon, at a distance, to see what it might be for, if I could, but I was not able to make it out. I think it is a man. I had never seen a man, but it looked like one, and I feel sure that that is what it is. I realize that I feel more curiosity about it than about any of the other reptiles, if it is a reptile, and I suppose it is. For it has frowsy hair and blue eyes, and looks like a reptile. It has no hips; it tapers like a carrot; when it stands it spreads itself apart like a derrick; so I think it is a reptile. I was afraid of it at first, and started to run every time it turned around, for I thought it was going to chase me; but by-and-by I found it was only trying to get away, so after that I was not timid any more, but tracked it along, several hours, about twenty yards behind, which made it nervous and unhappy. At last it was a good deal worried, and climbed a tree. I waited a good while, then gave it up and went home.

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