

# Parents and Children of Cain, or To Kill the Poet

*A selection of dramas and poems by  
Daniel Kharms, Nikolai Oleinikov, Kornei Chukovsky  
and Samuel Marshak  
With songs by "Aquarium," Sergei Nikitin  
and Vladimir Vysotskii*





## PREFACE

*Most of the widely known Russian nursery rhymes and children's literature were written in the early 1930's by a group of poets who called themselves OBERIU (Union of Real Art). Absurd and funny, their verses brought a spirit of liberation to the gloomy atmosphere of Stalinist Russia.*

*All these poets were arrested and executed in the late 1930's. In memory of these authors we based our play on their nursery rhymes, children's literature, and absurd poetry.*

*This is a funny play, but not a comedy. It is rather a tragicomedy, and the fate of OBERIU is incorporated in the detective story of the life and death of Adam, Eve, Cain and the Poet. It starts with the Creation and then shows contemporary Russia, going back to the 1930's Soviet State.*

*In the end the Poet is arrested, but the actors recite his poem in hopes that people who disappear can come back some day.*

**YOU NEED NOT KNOW RUSSIAN TO ENJOY THE  
PLAY. PLEASE, READ THE SYNOPSIS AND FEEL  
FREE TO SING AND READ POEMS WITH US!**



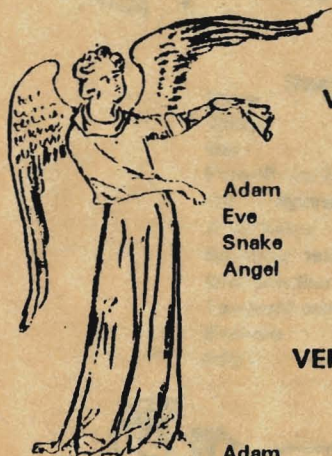


# CAST

(in order of appearance; \* signifies a soloist)

## Act One

### VERSION 1 - LYRICAL



Adam  
Eve  
Snake  
Angel

David Robbins  
Betsy Browning  
Brigham Redd  
Cherry Summers

### VERSION 2 - ZOOLOGICAL

Adam  
Eve  
Angel  
Cat  
Dog  
Parrot  
Horse  
Unicorn  
Rabbit  
Hunter

Brigham Redd  
Stephanie Bagwell  
Melinda Richards  
Sarah Powell\*  
Natesha Mokhova\*  
David Robbins\*  
Rawlo Smith  
Margo Vanderbeek  
Betsy Browning  
Jason Swenson



### VERSION 3 - SOCIALIST

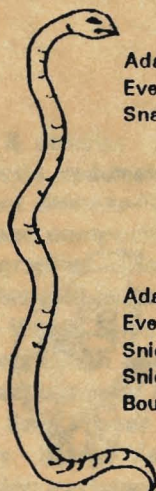
Adam  
Eve  
Snake

Chris Carpenter  
Christina Blackhurst  
David Robbins

### VERSION 4 - CAPITALIST

Adam  
Eve  
Snickers salesman #1  
Snickers salesman #2  
Bounty salesman #1

Niles Watterson  
Erika Larson  
Greg Nelson  
Aaron Love  
Scott Suggs





(act one cont'd)



Bounty salesman #2  
Model #1  
Model #2  
Model #3  
Model #4

Chris Carpenter  
Margo Vanderbeek  
Sarah Powell  
Ewona Bernarczyk  
Stephanie Bagwell



## VERSION 5 - POLITICAL (The Arrest)

Adam  
Eve  
The Man in the Black Coat  
Militiaman #1  
Militiaman #2  
Janitor

Scott Suggs  
Ewona Bernarczyk  
Greg Nelson  
Chris Carpenter  
Aaron Love  
Jason Swenson

## INTERIM



Adam  
Eve  
Cain  
Abel

Brigham Redd  
Stephanie Bagwell  
Scott Suggs  
Erik Black



## Act two

City crowd  
Rabbit  
Hunter  
Citizen Kuznetsov  
Builders

Detective  
Militiaman  
Liar  
Absent-Minded Man  
Grandfather  
Elephant  
Crocodile  
Bunnies  
Monkeys  
Bear  
Kangaroo  
Rhinoceros  
Bus Driver  
Nina  
Cain Ivanovich  
Mathematician

All  
Cherry Summers  
Brigham Redd  
Jason Swenson  
Scott Suggs, Aaron Love,  
Greg Nelson, Chris Carpenter  
David Robbins  
Brigham Redd  
Erika Larson  
Greg Nelson  
Brigham Redd  
Rawlo Smith  
Jason Swenson  
Betsy Browning", Sara Powell  
Natasha Mokhova, Erika Larson  
Rawlo Smith  
Aaron Love  
Greg Nelson  
Aaron Love  
Tanya Galeeva  
Scott Suggs  
Niles Watterson

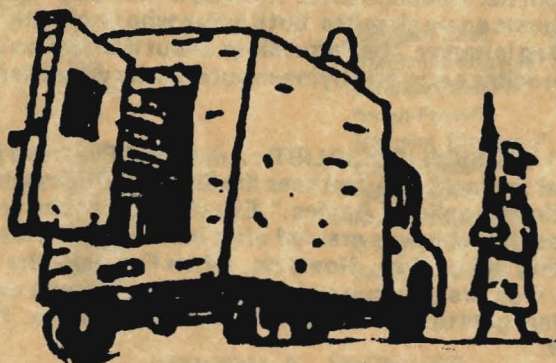




## Act Three

Klava  
Alexei  
Ella  
Peter Petrovich  
Fly  
Aunt Katya  
Samovar  
Grandmother  
Tanyechka  
Serezha  
POET

Christina Blackhurst  
Chris Carpenter  
Erika Larson  
Niles Watterson \*  
Natasha Mokhova  
Margo Vanderbeek  
Jason Swenson  
Greg Nelson  
Betsy Browning  
Aaron Love  
Erik Black



Author & director - Julia Nemirovskaya  
Co-director and technical director - Erik Black  
Assistant director - Erika Larson  
Music and composition - Melinda Richards  
Choreographer - Christina Blackhurst  
Costumes and assistant choreographer - Ewona Bernarczyk  
Lights - Rawlo Smith, Scott Suggs, Melinda Richards, Erik Black  
Stage technician and assistant choreographer - Niles Watterson  
Stage technicians - Chris Carpenter, Sara Powell  
Props - Sara Powell  
Publicity - Margo Vanderbeek, Christina Blackhurst  
Production assistants - CAST  
Synopsis - Cherry Summers, Erika Larson





# Synopsis of Scenes

## ACT 1: ADAM AND EVE

Each scene shows a different attempt by the poet to explain the story of Adam and Eve.

1. **FIRST VERSION (LYRICAL):** Adam and Eve have just been created. They find each other young and attractive, and, after telling each other how happy they are to meet, they wonder what to do. Eve finds A Long Someone; they introduce themselves and ask him what to do. The Snake tells them he is trained in medicine. He recommends an apple diet and offers them an apple to try. After tasting it, Adam convinces Eve to wrap herself in a towel. An Angel comes too late because he had transportation problems.

2. **SECOND VERSION (ZOOLOGICAL):** Adam and Eve are happy in Paradise. An Angel tells them they must give names to the animals. Adam obeys. All the animals sing their songs, getting used to their new names. The Cat sings about her independence. The Dog is unhappy with her new name. Adam suggests some changes, but it is Eve who finally hits upon the right name. The Dog is happy. The Parrot sings about the hassles of his life. Finally, everyone recites a nursery rhyme about a hunter who killed a rabbit.

3. **THIRD VERSION (SOCIALIST):** Adam and Eve have just been created, and are at the market. Adam sees the Snake and asks what will be sold today. The Snake replies, "Apples." Eve claims that she was first in line. Adam argues that she was created after he was, and thus he must have been standing in line first. However, when Eve asks the Snake to confirm that she was first, he supports her because women are always right. At this, Adam gets upset and begins to quarrel with Eve. The Snake runs away in fear.

4. **FOURTH VERSION (CAPITALIST):** Eve tells Adam that she wants something very much, but she's not sure what. Four actors perform a Russian commercial for the candy bars Snickers and Bounty. Eve decides it is chocolate she is craving. Adam buys her a Snickers, which she eats, but she is still not content. Eight models perform a fashion show. Eve decides fancy clothing is exactly what she needs. Models take Eve away to the shopping mall, abandoning Adam. The snake comes in and suggests that they drink together. He teaches Adam to drink vodka with a pickle.

5. **FIFTH VERSION (POLITICAL):** Adam tells Eve how pretty she is. Eve loves it. Adam suggests that he tell a joke about Stalin. Eve fears that someone will hear, and asks Adam to stop. The Man in The Black Coat, the Janitor, and two Militiamen come in and arrest Adam and Eve.





## INTERIM: ABEL AND CAIN

Abel tells Cain he is bad. Cain claims that he is good, but Abel insists that he is very bad. Cain gets angry and kills Abel. An Angel asks the people why they are so bad. The people answer that they are children of Cain. (Abel did not have any children.)

### ACT 2

Tanechka sings a song about a magic golden city under the blue heaven. A city crowd emerges and recites the poem about the hunter who killed the rabbit. The detective finds the dead rabbit and speaks with some builders, who have dropped several bricks on the head of Comrade Kuznetsov. The chorus recites the nursery rhyme about the man who left his home and disappeared. The detective asks the crowd if they have seen the man who killed the rabbit, but they claim they haven't. The Liar says they have, but also tells the crowd that dogs have learned to fly, the sun will soon turn into a wheel, and nobody can reach his own nose. No one believes him. (Russian nursery rhyme.) A militiaman informs the detective that the poet killed the rabbit. The detective starts to look for the poet, but is prevented by an absent-minded man who thinks he recognises him. The poet disappears. The detective tries to call the secret police and finds the telephone booth occupied by animals, who recite the rhyme "Telephone". The detective shouts at a rhinoceros who is still in the booth; it comes out and attacks the detective. The detective escapes from the rhinoceros on a bus. On the bus, the Poet's wife Nina recites a poem, "Musing about life on a bus."

### ACT 3

The detective finds out that the Poet lives in a communal apartment with several other families. He interrogates the families. The Poet celebrates the publication of his first verse collection by inviting his neighbors to a dinner. While preparing to receive the guests, he sings his new song about the beauty of God to his wife Nina. She tells him how she loves his poetry and he tells her of his everlasting love for her. They dance. Cain Ivanovich, one of his neighbors, who is in love with Nina, spies on the Poet. The guests come. The Poet toasts his friends, but Cain Ivanovich interrupts him and toasts Josef Vissarionovich Stalin. During the party, Cain Ivanovich sneaks away and informs the secret police that the poet Daniel Kharms composes religious songs. The party goes on. Cain Ivanovich tells Nina of his love. The poet's daughter Tanechka is looking for her notebook. Her grandfather finds it. The Man in the black coat comes in and asks Tanechka to surrender the notebook. Tanechka obeys. The Man in the black coat reads the lines about the beauty of God. He says this is not a proper reading for children in a communist state and arrests the Poet. The chorus again recites the nursery rhyme about the man who left his home and disappeared.





