

PERUSAL SCRIPT

CLEVER MANKA

A Czechoslovakian Story
Adapted by Genevieve Aichele

Theatre Tales from Around The World *SERIES*



Newport, Maine

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CLEVER MANKA

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CHARACTERS: 4f, 3m (can be doubled to 3f, 3m)

Narrator, F

Manka, daughter of a Shepherd, F

Burgomaster, youthful head of the village, M

Farmer, a difficult man, M

Shepherd, a man who wants a promise kept, M

Wife, F

Villager, F (could be played by the Narrator)

CLEVER MANKA a Czechoslovakian tale adapted by Genevieve Aichele. 4f, 3m (can be doubled to 3f, 3m) 10-12 minutes. Riddles. Cleverness. This simple, charming story will delight children and adults alike as The Burgomaster of a little village dispenses wisdom and settles legal cases and disagreements brought to him through riddles and his Villagers seem happy. Until clever Manka, daughter of a local Shepherd, begins to unravel all the riddles, and the Burgomaster does something drastic. Twice! But the joke is on him! Part of the TALES FROM AROUND THE WORLD SERIES. **ORDER #3140**

Genevieve Aichele is Founding Executive Director of New Hampshire Theatre Project in Portsmouth, and has performed, directed and taught theatre arts both nationally and internationally for over 35 years, including 20 years of directing the NHTP Youth Repertory Company.

Genevieve has written dozens of story theatre scripts for use both onstage and in the classroom. Her adult scripts include *Neighborhoods* (2001 Portsmouth Spotlight Community Arts Award); original adaptations of *Lysistrata* and *Finding the Prince*; and *Dreaming Again*, commissioned in 2011 by the NH Humanities Council.

As a storyteller, Genevieve performs with musician Randy Armstrong in *World Tales*. Their two CD's have won numerous national and international awards. Her first audiobook recording, *Forest Secrets* by Tracy Kane, was released in 2012. *Ocean Secrets*, her first novel for young readers co-written with Tracy Kane, was released in May 2014.

Genevieve received the 2001 New Hampshire Governors Award for Excellence in Arts in Education and the 2008 NH Theatre Award for her work with youth. In 2002, she received an award for Outstanding Achievement in American Theatre from the New England Theatre Conference.

CLEVER MANKA

(FARMER and SHEPHERD enter.)

NARRATOR: There was once a rich Farmer who was as grasping and unscrupulous as he was...

FARMER: Rich!

NARRATOR: He was always driving a hard bargain...

FARMER: And always getting the better of his poor neighbors.

NARRATOR: One of these neighbors was a humble Shepherd who, in return for service was to receive from the Farmer...

SHEPHERD: A cow!

NARRATOR: However, when the time of payment came...

SHEPHERD: I'm here for my cow.

NARRATOR: The Farmer refused to give him the cow.

FARMER: Cow? What cow! I never said I was going to give you a cow.

SHEPHERD: Yes, you did.

FARMER: No, I didn't.

SHEPHERD: Yes, you did.

FARMER: No, I didn't.

SHEPHERD: Yes, you... never mind. You have given me no choice but to lay this matter before the Burgomaster.

(SHEPHERD & FARMER travel to meet the BURGOMASTER who enters.)

NARRATOR: Now the Burgomaster was a young man without much experience.

BURGOMASTER: Yes, gentlemen, what seems to be the problem?

SHEPHERD: He promised to give me a cow for services rendered.

FARMER: I never promised any such thing.

SHEPHERD: Yes, you did.

FARMER: No, I didn't.

SHEPHERD: Yes, you did.

FARMER: No, I didn't.

BURGOMASTER: Gentlemen! Instead of deciding this case, I will put a riddle to you both. The man who makes the best answer shall have the cow. Are you agreed?

NARRATOR: The Farmer and the Shepherd...

FARMER/SHEPHERD: Somewhat confused!

NARRATOR: Nevertheless agreed to the condition.

FARMER/SHEPHERD: We agree.

BURGOMASTER: Well, then, here is my riddle. What is the swiftest thing in the world? What is the sweetest thing? What is the richest? Think out your answers and bring them to me at this same time tomorrow. Gentlemen?

(BURGOMASTER exits followed by SHEPHERD scratching his head. FARMER fumes. His WIFE enters.)

NARRATOR: The Farmer went home to his wife in a temper.

WIFE: What is the matter, husband?

FARMER: It's that new young Burgomaster. I can't think of any answer to his foolish riddle. Now I'm going to lose my cow!

WIFE: Tell me the riddle.

NARRATOR: So the Farmer told his wife the riddle

FARMER: What is the swiftest thing in the world? What is the sweetest thing? What is the richest?

NARRATOR: She gave him the answers at once.

(WIFE whispers instructions in FARMER's ear.)

FARMER: You're right, wife, you're right! The cow will remain ours!

(They exit. SHEPHERD and MANKA enter.)

NARRATOR: When the Shepherd went home, he was downcast and sad. His daughter, a clever girl named Manka, met him at the door.

MANKA: What is it, father? What did the Burgomaster say?

SHEPHERD: I'm afraid I've lost the cow. The Burgomaster set us a riddle and I know I shall never guess it...

MANKA: Perhaps I can help. What is the riddle?

NARRATOR: So the Shepherd told Manka the riddle.

SHEPHERD: What is the swiftest thing in the world? What is the sweetest thing? What is the richest?

MANKA: Ah, I know just what you should say.

NARRATOR: And she told him what answers to make.

(MANKA whispers instructions in SHEPHERD's ear.)

The next day, the Farmer and the Shepherd returned to the Burgomaster's house.

(MANKA exits. FARMER and BURGOMASTER enter.)

BURGOMASTER: Well, Mr. Farmer, what is your answer to my riddle?

FARMER: *(pompously)* The swiftest thing in the world? Why, my dear Burgomaster, that's my gray mare, of course, for no other horse ever passes us on the road. The sweetest? Honey from my beehives, to be sure. The richest? What can be richer than my chest of golden ducats!

BURGOMASTER: Hmm... And what answers does the Shepherd make?

SHEPHERD: *(bowing politely)* The swiftest thing in the world is thought, for thought can run any distance in the twinkling of an eye. The sweetest thing of all is sleep for when a man is tired and sad; what can be sweeter? The richest thing is the earth, for out of the earth come all the riches of the world.

BURGOMASTER: Good! A fine answer! The cow goes to the Shepherd!

FARMER: Harrumph! May she give you nothing but skim milk!

(FARMER exits angrily.)

BURGOMASTER: Now, Mr. Shepherd, tell me who gave you those answers? Surely they never came out of your head. Come on, tell me now.

SHEPHERD: It was my clever daughter Manka, sir.

BURGOMASTER: Hmm...

(aside)

I shall make another test of this Manka's cleverness.

NARRATOR: The Burgomaster picked up a basket of eggs and gave them to the Shepherd.

BURGOMASTER: Please take these ten eggs to your daughter Manka and ask her to have them hatched out by tomorrow and bring me the chicks.

SHEPHERD: *(looking dubiously at the eggs)* Whatever you say, sir.

(BURGOMASTER exits, MANKA enters.)

3 more pages to the end:

BURGOMASTER: I think we had better consult my wife. You know she's a very clever woman.

NARRATOR: The End.

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