

Acting Edition

Sometimes the Rain, Sometimes the Sea

by Julia Izumi

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|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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www.concordtheatricals.com

www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

FOR PRODUCTION INQUIRIES

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

info@concordtheatricals.com

1-866-979-0447

UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE

licensing@concordtheatricals.co.uk

020-7054-7298

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SOMETIMES THE RAIN, SOMETIMES THE SEA was first produced by Brown University's Sock & Buskin in Providence, RI, on April 5, 2018. It was directed by Kate Bergstrom and assistant directed by Ahmed Ashour, with set design by Renee Suprenant, assistant set design by Zach Silberberg, costume design by Alison Walker Carrier, lighting design by Tim Hett, sound design by Noah Usher, and props design by Miranda Friel. The production stage manager was Jessie Zambrano. The cast was as follows:

RAIN CLOUD	Karishma Swarup
BESSIE	Anthony DeRita
RALMOND	Kai Barshack
MIDI	Marianne Verrone
EDVARD	Conor Sweeney
INA	Oyindamola Akingbile
DOLAN	Brendan Gero
LITTLE ONE	Maaike Laanstra-Corn

SOMETIMES THE RAIN, SOMETIMES THE SEA was first professionally produced by Rorschach Theatre (Jenny McConnell Frederick and Randy Baker, Artistic Directors) at Atlas Theater in Washington, D.C., on March 27, 2023. It was directed by Gregory Keng Strasser, with set design by Sarah Beth Hall, costume design by Alexa Cassandra Duimstra, lighting design by Dean Leong, sound design by Veronica J. Lancaster, video design by Hailey LaRoe, and props design by Rooster Skylar Sultan. The production stage manager was Caraline Jeffrey. The cast was as follows:

RAIN CLOUD	Sydney Dionne
BESSIE	Arika Thames
RALMOND	Jordan Brown
MIDI	Janine Baumgardner
EDVARD	Colum Goebelbecker
INA	Jordanna Hernandez
DOLAN	Nick Martin
LITTLE ONE	Jolene Mafnas

CHARACTERS

RAIN CLOUD (*pronounced like ☁*)

No age / A rain cloud, then a female human

BESSIE (*pronounced like 🐮?*)

Age unknown / A cow? A sea witch? A human? A dream?

RALMOND (*pronounced like “almond” with an R in front*)

28, then no age / A male human, then a rain cloud

MIDI (*pronounced like “mini” but with a D in the middle*)

29 / A female human

EDVARD (*pronounced like “Edward” with a V in the middle*)

Just Old Enough to Marry / A royal male human

INA (*pronounced like “I? Nah.”*)

Old Enough to Marry / A secretly royal female human

DOLAN (*pronounced like “Dole Whip”^{*} except instead of “whip” you say “an”*)

Timeless / Hans Christian Andersen

LITTLE ONE (*NOT pronounced like “mermaid”*)

Little / A female hero and storyteller

SETTING

A far off city where rain clouds fall in love with humans

A far off kingdom where mermaids fall in love with humans

A far off past where humans fall in love with humans

RULE

Dolan cannot physically touch any of his characters, so he often stays as far away as possible. His characters have the ability to touch him, and when they do it feels like water and knives.

^{*} A Dole Whip is a simple yet delectable dessert sold exclusively in Disney World and Disneyland.

CASTING

While all the characters speak as people in Hans Christian Andersen's real life, they do not look anything like them (or else Dolan would recognize them!). This play is about overturning old narratives and takes place in fantastical realms. If your fantasy world is populated mostly by people who look like they walked out of eighteenth-century Denmark, then I recommend you choose a different play. It is particularly necessary for the narrative for Rain Cloud, Ralmond, and Ina to be played by actors of mixed race and/or who are immigrants of color or children of immigrants of color. There is even more resonance in the narrative if Rain Cloud is played by an actor of Indian descent. The name "Midi" is actually short for "Midori" which is the Japanese word for green (like the grass), if that also informs anything. Bessie is a female cow but can be played by an actor of any gender—Bessie takes ownership of gender fluidity in a way that Hans Christian Andersen could not.

In loving memory of Travis Johnson

(Somewhere, it is raining.)

VOICE. Beyond the tallest buildings
 And the highest mountains,
 The sky is as vast as the imagination.

 And way up above,
 When a breath meets a breath,
 They form a cloud.

 And when the clouds collect close
 They turn grayer than the thickest stone.
 And become rain clouds.

 Now on one occasion, three breaths uniquely
 met
 And something happened that hadn't before:
 A rain cloud was formed with a soul.

(RAIN CLOUD appears.)

 This Rain Cloud was unlike any other
 For this Rain Cloud could see the world below
 And think about the world below
 And the Rain Cloud
 Wanted to know
 More
 About the trees
 And the grass
 And the cows

(A cow moos in the distance.)

VOICE. And especially about
 The humans
 Where they went
 How they went
 And why they hid underneath those awful
 sheets on sticks.

(**RAIN CLOUD** goes “*blegh.*”)

One particular human caught the Rain
 Cloud’s attention.

This human was particular in three ways.

RAIN CLOUD. One...

VOICE. He held no umbrella in his hands.

RAIN CLOUD. Two...

VOICE. In fact his hands were empty and outstretched,
 as if he welcomed the rain.

RAIN CLOUD. Three...

VOICE. And most importantly, he faced not down,
 not forward, but up.
 And the Rain Cloud saw his eyes.
 And the Rain Cloud thought:

RAIN CLOUD & VOICE. One and Two and Three
 He is made for me.

VOICE. And as for the human—

(**RALMOND** appears, arms outstretched,
 looking up.)

He was not really thinking or seeing or
 learning.
 Only feeling.

And slowly some words escaped him on a breath:

RALMOND. I love the rain.

VOICE. And when that breath collided with a raindrop—

(It stops raining.)

(RAIN CLOUD falls into RALMOND's arms.)

(Like plops from the sky, crash landing in his arms.)

RALMOND. Oh god, oh god, what happ— are you okay?

RAIN CLOUD. Oh god, oh god, what happ— are you okay?

RALMOND. I'm fine, but you—?!

RAIN CLOUD. I'm fine, but you...?

RALMOND. Me?

RAIN CLOUD. Me...?

RALMOND. ...??

RAIN CLOUD. I love you.

RALMOND. *(Laughs awkwardly.)* Thanks. I'm. I'm gonna put you down now.

(He gently and slowly tries to put RAIN CLOUD on the ground.)

(It is supremely awkward. Limbs going in all directions.)

(RAIN CLOUD doesn't quite know how to stand.)

(So it starts kind of tipping over and RALMOND has to hold it up.)

Did you hurt your legs?

RAIN CLOUD. ...Legs. Cows have legs. I have legs?

RALMOND. Yeah?

RAIN CLOUD. I love you.

RALMOND. Thanks, I love...that you're still alive!

RAIN CLOUD. I am not a...live. I am a...Rain Cloud.

RALMOND. ...Oh?

RAIN CLOUD. I am a Rain Cloud. You love the rain. I love you.

RALMOND. Okay, so, um, I'm starting to get the feeling that "I love you" is not a hyperbolic statement of gratitude but a genuine feeling. So I'm gonna let you know that I do have a partner—a girlfriend. So, um, sorry.

RAIN CLOUD. You have a girlfriend. I have a cowfriend. You have legs. I have legs. You love me. I love—

RALMOND. No, no, you see, I don't love you—I can't love you because I have a girlfriend.

RAIN CLOUD. But I have a cowfriend and I love you.

RALMOND. Yes, but Midi and I have the kind of relationship where we love each other and nobody else.

RAIN CLOUD. What is a Midi?

RALMOND. A digital musical interface from the 80s. But also the name of my girlfriend.

RAIN CLOUD. Bessie is the name of my cowfriend. Midi is the name of your girlfriend. You are the name of my lovefriend.

RALMOND. No, *Ralmond* is the name of your lovefriend. No, wait, I mean—

RAIN CLOUD. *Ralmond* is the name of my lovefriend.

RALMOND. Boyfriend. Nope, wait, I mean—

RAIN CLOUD. Ralmond is the name of my *boyfriend*. And I have no name because I am a rain cloud. But I am a unique Rain Cloud. With a soul. That's what Bessie says. And Bessie is very wise.

RALMOND. You're a...rain cloud. With a soul...?

RAIN CLOUD. And you are a human. And all humans have souls.

RALMOND. Um, are you sure you don't want me to walk you somewhere?

RAIN CLOUD. I want you. I want you to love me.

RALMOND. (*A little blush.*) Right. I'm...I'm sorry that I... can't. Because of Midi. And because...because I am human! That's right, oh my god, yes, I'm a human! And I can only love other humans! That's it! That's why I can't love you!

RAIN CLOUD. Oh...

RALMOND. But! You seem like a really nice—!!

RAIN CLOUD. So if I become a human, then you will love me.

RALMOND. Uh...how would you...become a human?

RAIN CLOUD. I do not know. And when I do not know something, I go ask Bessie. I will go ask Bessie.

RALMOND. Cool, you go do that. Uh, see you around!

(**RALMOND** *waves.*)

(**RAIN CLOUD** *looks at its hand and copies the move back. A little intensely.*)

RAIN CLOUD. See! You! Around!

(**RAIN CLOUD** *has returned to the sky.*)

(**RALMOND** *rubs his eyes for there is no one there.*)

(It is raining again.)

(RALMOND looks up at the rain.)

RALMOND. Huh...

VOICE. And there was thunder.

(Thunder. Lightning.)

Bessie was a cowfriend, and a very good one at that.

(BESSIE moos.)

Bessie moos at the rain

Giving Rain Cloud knowledge

And Rain Cloud waters the grass

Giving Bessie food

So Bessie and Rain Cloud liked each other very much.

As often friends do.

(Unless you are the kind of friends with weird tensions.)

(VOICE laughs weirdly.)

But in any case.

It is raining.

And there is thunder.

(Thunder. Lightning. Darkness.)

(It is raining.)

(Lights up on BESSIE, a cow, sitting to tea with RAIN CLOUD.)

(Translations of BESSIE's text are somehow communicated to the audience. The word "Translation" that precedes all her lines should be communicated as well.)

RAIN CLOUD. But I must become a human, Bessie, because that is how Ralmond will love me and I love Ralmond. I love Ralmond, Bessie. I love Ralmond.

BESSIE. Moo. [Translation: I dunno, it's tricky...]

RAIN CLOUD. You must tell me how because Ralmond is made for me.

BESSIE. Moo... [Translation: Well...to become a human... A human must love you. And only you.]

RAIN CLOUD. But...Ralmond cannot love me unless I am a human...and you are saying I cannot become a human unless Ralmond loves me.

BESSIE. Moo. [Translation: That's why I said it's tricky, you dingdong.]

RAIN CLOUD. So then it is...not possible.

BESSIE. Moo. [Translation: Not "not possible." You can convince him to love your soul.]

RAIN CLOUD. My soul?

BESSIE. Moo. [Translation: Once he loves your soul, you will receive a human body. Then, he will love you as a human.]

(BESSIE turns to the audience.)

[To summarize, this story is saying that you cannot be a full human unless someone loves you.]

RAIN CLOUD & VOICE. Huh?(!)

BESSIE. *(Shrugs.)* Moo. [Translation: Lol, j/k.]

RAIN CLOUD. How can I make him love my soul?

BESSIE. Moo. [Translation: Moo.]

RAIN CLOUD. What?

BESSIE. Moo. [Translation: To moo is to make big gestures to show someone how much you love them.]

RAIN CLOUD. Gestures like this? I learned this from Ralmond.

(**RAIN CLOUD** *waves aggressively.*)

BESSIE. Moo... [Translation: I don't know how humans moo, but that's definitely not it.]

RAIN CLOUD. So I should study how humans moo and then moo Ralmond the way they do!

(**BESSIE** *laughs.*)

BESSIE. Moo moo! [Translation: Omg, did I say moo? I totally meant woo. My bad.]

RAIN CLOUD. Oh. I will *woo* Ralmond to make him love me!

BESSIE. Moo. [Translation: I mean it ain't gonna be easy because he loves a digital musical interface from the 80s.]

RAIN CLOUD. Won't wooing him make him stop loving Midi?

BESSIE. Moo moo moo. [Translation: Who knows, you know? Love is a very complicated concept. Like religion. And carbohydrates. But you better woo him quick before he seals the deal with something like marriage.]

RAIN CLOUD. Marriage?

BESSIE. Mooooo. [Translation: Marriage is committing to one human for life—which, like, I don't really understand, but apparently marriage can get you monogrammed towels. And once he is engaged to be married your soul will lose its purpose and you will dissolve into seafoam.]

RAIN CLOUD. (*Gasp.*) If I become seafoam, then I can never see you or Ralmond or anyone!

BESSIE. Moo. [Translation: But should that happen, know that I will always remember you.]

RAIN CLOUD. And I will always remember you, Bessie.

BESSIE. Moo! [Translation: Seriously, please don't forget me as you go ga-ga over this dude!]

RAIN CLOUD. I promise.

BESSIE. Moo. [Translation: Now, go get this Ralmond. If he's anything like an almond, he's probably very tasty.]

RAIN CLOUD. Thank you, Bessie. See you around!

(RAIN CLOUD waves aggressively again.)

BESSIE. Mooooo. [Translation: See you around, Rain Cloud.]

(RAIN CLOUD runs off as BESSIE waves.)

MOO! [Translation: Oh, dung, I forgot to warn about flooding—WAIT!]

VOICE. But the Rain Cloud had flown off.
Too soon to hear about the dangers of
flooding.
Too eager to learn how the humans woo.

The Rain Cloud spends days above the
people.
Watching them woo.
As the Rain Cloud lingers
There's water, water, everywhere.
Through the roofs, through the windows.
Best time to be a maintenance man.
Especially for leaky homes, like this one.
The home of Ralmond.
And Midi.
And there is thunder.

(Thunder. Lightning. Darkness.)

*(And, suddenly, when the lights come up, we
are somewhere else.)*

(Instead of rain we can hear the sea.)

*(And we happen upon **EDVARD** in mid-speech
to **INA**.)*

EDVARD. —And you are all the sights worth seeing!

And all the songs worth singing!

And all the, the, the everything!

THE EVERYTHING!

Your eyes! Your lips! Your cheeks—! Do you know how
incredible your cheeks are?!

Do people tell you how lucky they are to see you on a
daily basis?

Because everyone who does not spend every moment
of their time looking at you is wasting their life away.

Wasting.

WASTING!!!

You

Are

Necessary

To

Sea

Sky

Land

And

Me

And

Everything

And

I

Can't

I can't.

(Big breath.)

(Pause.)

Please say something.

INA. Okay. Bye.

EDVARD. Wait, did you—did you not—did you hear what I said?

INA. Yea.

EDVARD. Do you need me to say it again? I can start over—

INA. That's not necessary.

EDVARD. But I just, like, bore my soul to you and, like, I just feel like...you maybe didn't get that.

INA. Well... I asked you which way the seamstress was and I feel like you didn't get *that*. So...

(She starts to leave again but he cuts her off.)

EDVARD. But I think I'm in love with you!

INA. But I think you're crazy.

EDVARD. You don't believe in love at first sight?

INA. I don't believe you can know someone in a minute.

EDVARD. You know I'm crazy in a minute.

INA. I have evidence.

EDVARD. I have evidence too! In my body!

INA. Excuse me?!

EDVARD. That's not what I meant! I mean it's kind of what I meant. I mean I don't really know what I meant—Please, give me a chance! I'm good at music! And bowling!

INA. I hate bowling.

EDVARD. Me too!

INA. What?

EDVARD. I'm sorry, I have, like, zero control of what is coming out of my mouth right now please help me. Or kill me. No seriously. Killing me would really help me out right now.

(She chortles.)

You think I'm funny.

INA. I think you need help.

EDVARD. I'm just impulsive.

INA. That's not good for a future king.

(Pause. Oops.)

EDVARD. So. You know who I am.

INA. Your face is on many things, in case you haven't noticed.

EDVARD. I'm disguised.

INA. How?

EDVARD. I'm wearing a hat.

INA. Everyone can still see your face.

EDVARD. Well, no one else has ever talked to me!

INA. They don't want to talk to you, they just want to look at you. People don't want to treat royal humans like humans. They want to admire them like statues.

EDVARD. So you're calling me a work of art.

INA. I'm calling you an idiot if you think that's a compliment.

EDVARD. An idiot you were looking at.

INA. I was looking for the seamstress! I'm still looking for the seamstress!

EDVARD. You really thought that I, a royal human, who has a royal tailor, would know where the local seamstress was?

INA. A good royal human knows everything about their kingdom.

EDVARD. Or maybe. You thought you kinda fell in love with me. I mean, a lot of people do, I am a prince. And you saw me today and you thought, "Maybe." Maybe if you casually talked to me and pretended like you didn't know who I was, then I would fall in love with you. Because you didn't see the royal human, you saw a human. And that would get me, that would...really get me... But I see you too! And I see what you're doing! I gotcha! Oh my god you're blushing—I'm right, aren't I?

(Silence.)

INA. You're an ass.

(She starts to go.)

EDVARD. Wait! I'm so sorry—If you could give us a chance to get to know each other, then I promise—

INA. I don't owe you anything.

EDVARD. You would disobey royalty?

INA. Are you threatening me?

EDVARD. Yes! Maybe! No! I dunno! Feelings are hard! Please just...let me ask one thing about you, and then I promise to...never speak to you again.

INA. Promise?

EDVARD. Yes.

(INA stares at him for a moment.)

INA. Fine.

EDVARD. Okay. What is your...biggest fear?

INA. ...Drowning.

(Pause.)

May I ask you a question?

EDVARD. Please!

(INA walks up to EDVARD, eyes locked, slowly.)

(Once her face is super duper close to his...)

INA. Which way is the seamstress?

EDVARD. ...Two streets that way, then make a left. Third house on the right.

INA. ...Thank you.

(She stomps on his foot. Hard.)

(INA walks away.)

(EDVARD is in so much pain but he is smiling. He hobbles off in the opposite direction.)

(Then, DOLAN weirdly enters. DOLAN is a thin, tall, gawkward [gawky and awkward] man and the owner of the previous VOICE. He holds a book.)

DOLAN. ...Hi.

...

...

Um...hello.

Hi.

I'm.....Dolan.

And I'm a very famous and very genius storyteller

Who has been blessing you all

With this brand new story

That I created

Called:

The Little Rain Cloud.

I didn't mean to interrupt my lovely little story—

And I wouldn't interrupt unless it was utterly necessary—

But I do need to make something very clear:

That scene that just happened.

Is not a scene from *The Little Rain Cloud*.

I don't know what that was or where that came from
or who those strange but very beautiful people were...

But they are not part of my brilliant new story.

So.

Obviously the way to fix this

Is for us all to simply

Forget

That any of this happened.

On the count of three

That scene will just

~Disappear~

from your minds.

Ready?

One.

Two.

Three!

(He does some kind of odd gesture.)

There. All gone!

Now we can return to my story.

(He starts exiting, but he comes back.)

I hope you're liking it, by the way.

I'm a very famous writer so you should.

(DOLAN starts exiting again, but comes back again.)

DOLAN. And you know, if you don't like it
Or if you think it's "childish" or "outdated" or "problematic"
Then maybe that's a problem with *you*,
Because as I said,
I am a genius
And ergo
So is my story.

(He barely exits again before he comes straight back.)

And you know.
I didn't just become a genius overnight.
I was born this way.
I came into this world with so much talent
They didn't know what to do with me.
I tried many different paths for my genius to shine.
In fact, I could have been a famous, genius actor
But then I went to get an education
And became a famous, genius writer instead.
So. You're welcome.

(He's getting very comfy center stage now.)

And with all my genius, I know what you are thinking:
How could anyone, anywhere
Possibly think my glorious stories
Are "childish" or "outdated" or "problematic"?
And the truth is
They don't!
But!

We are in wild, ~contemporary~ times
Where there are allegedly some ~contemporary~ people
Who may occasionally have these erroneous thoughts
about my genius work.
So I've written this new story to prove
That I am
Timeless.

Truly, how can these *critics*—
Or ~haters~
(See I can be very ~contemporary~)
Say that my works are
“Juvenile”
Or “Of another time”
Or “Not reflective of our current values”
When they have always been about my values
And my values
Are the values
Of
GOD.

(He laughs weirdly.)

But that's enough about...me.
Let's return to *The Little Rain Cloud*!
Where were we—

(Looks in book.)

Yes! Maintenance men!
Thrilling time to be one!

Because some homes have little leaks.
And some homes have little floods.
And some homes have both, like this one.

DOLAN. The home of Ralmond.
And Midi.
(Isn't she pretty?)

(Clears throat.)

And there is thunder.

(Thunder. Lightning.)

(Lights up on Ralmond and Midi's apartment.)

(There are buckets everywhere, catching drops of water.)

(And the floor is covered in soaked towels.)

(RALMOND has a book open and sees MIDI, at the door.)

(She is drenched, and holds a pile of completely demolished umbrellas.)

RALMOND. Midi! You're—soaked! I bought the last towel on the rack for us, let me grab it—

(RALMOND puts his book on the table and runs off.)

MIDI. Twenty-three.

RALMOND. *(Offstage.)* What?

MIDI. TWENTY-THREE! Twenty-three umbrellas I saw trashed on the street just on my way home.

(RALMOND brings out a towel.)

RALMOND. Here you go—

(RALMOND spreads it out.)

(MIDI ignores it, grabs a pen and paper and sits on the couch.)

(RALMOND places the towel on her shoulders during the below.)

MIDI. That counts for...maybe roughly 1 cubic foot of landfill when compressed—it's roughly a 1.2 mile walk home—so the whole city might have about 70 cubic feet worth of landfill in umbrellas—multiplied by the 7 days it has not stopped raining... yikes...

RALMOND. Midi...

MIDI. If the folks in the Sanitation Department would just put umbrellas on the posters for what's recyclable like I told them to the last time we had that storm, then maybe fewer people would just leave them on the street—when's my next meeting with them? Next Tuesday? No, Wednesday? Maybe I can ask to move it to Friday—ugh but Friday is the big meeting with the mayor about the unhoused population in the impending flood—

RALMOND. Midi—

MIDI. Maybe I can squeeze it in tomorrow? If it's still raining the site visit to the new communal garden might get cancelled—oh but I have to go tomorrow because that's the day the contractor is—

(RALMOND grabs MIDI's head and touches his forehead to hers.)

(They take a breath together.)

RALMOND. Hi.

MIDI. Hi.

RALMOND. How are you, Midi?

MIDI. I'm...cold. How are you, Rallie?

RALMOND. I'm okay. I'm hungry. How was your day?

MIDI. So fun. I yelled at old men in suits about how the week of rain is proof of environmental destruction. How was your day?

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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