

The Forgiven Harvest April 2004

The Forgiven Harvest
by Y York

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Characters

Mika, a girl, nine (Long "I" as in "Mike".)

Teddy, a boy, fifteen

Addison, a man, forties

Great, a boy, nine

Mr. Nelson, a man, forties

Uncle Ted, a man, thirty-four

At the end of the millennium on a farm in Minnesota.

Note: No blackouts between scenes.

Act I, scene i; The barn, Friday afternoon. Mika enters. She talks to and pets Sticky, a two-year-old, thirteen-hundred-pound beef steer.)

Mika

Men, jeez. They're going at it again--both of them talking at the same time, neither one of them listening.

(Throughout the play, MIKA acts STICKY's part and speaks STICKY's lines.)

Sticky

You've been known to not listen so good yourself, Mika.

Mika

Hey, I always listen. This is me listening right now. What's this junk on your back? Feels like tar.

Sticky

Maybe it is tar. Maybe I was rolling around in some road and got tar stuck on my back.

Mika

I'll get it out later with the creme rinse--right now I gotta shovel.

Sticky

"Gotta do this, gotta do that, gotta gotta gotta."

(MIKA shoots STICKY a stern look as she begins to shovel manure into the wheelbarrow. It's much harder than she imagined.)

Mika

I can feel myself getting stronger and stronger as I go. Pretty soon these shovels full won't even feel heavy.

Sticky

Where's the creme rinse- I'm all sticky.

Mika

Don't make jokes.

Sticky

Sticky withers--no joke.

Mika

I gotta get your poop outside before it gets dark--.

Sticky

Forget the poop-- get the creme rinse--

Teddy

(Entering.) Mika...

Mika

I wasn't talking to anybody.

Teddy

I didn't say you were--

Mika

Don't be sneaking up on people, Teddy.

I'm not sneaking— Jeez— I just- ...Are you going to be alright on your own?

Where's everybody going?

Dad's going to the field, and I'm going back to school.

Who's helping Dad with the bales?

He's on his own. I can't stand him when he's like this.

He'll never get done.

Sure he will. He can do it all--and then when he messes up he can yell at himself.

Why you going back to school?

Because I am. Where's Sticky's hay?

He ate it.

Are you sure you gave him enough?

(Shouting.) Yes, I'm sure!

Jeez--. I gotta go. (Exits.)

When you coming home--?...What do you think he's up to?

He's older. He gets to be up to things.

(MIKA takes celery out of her pocket.) Eat this if you're hungry. Celery's fat free...You are one gorgeous steer.

I'm a model of steer beauty.

I gotta get your poop to the power plant.

Get me a blanket. I'm cold.

Sticky

(Puts a quilt on Sticky.) You'll never guess where I found this. Teddy doesn't appreciate it at all.

Mika

Teddy does pretty good for a boy--don't go blaming Teddy. Walk me around. That'll warm me up.

Sticky

Okay, but just for a minute.

Mika

It's going to take longer than a minute to warm up all this steer fat.

Sticky

You're not fat. Boney withers- Steer beauty-

Mika

I am fat. Supposed to be fat. Fat as a cow. Fat back. Wide body. Oh woe woe woe is me, one fat steer for eternity.

Sticky

(Enter GREAT.)

I know how to play talking animals.

Great

Hey! What are you doing here?

Mika

Let me talk for your cow, then it'll be more of a surprise.

Great

Get out of my barn.

Mika

(Approaching.) When you talk for your cow, you know what you're going to say.

Great

Don't hit me.

Mika

I don't hit people.

Great

You hit Buddy Frain.

Mika

He wouldn't walk the plank!

Great

What are you doing on my farm, Graham?

Mika

Great

My father is talking to your father on business.

Mika

We don't need computers- we're farmers.

Great

It's not about computers.

Mika

What's it about?

Great

I'll tell you if I can be the cow voice.

Mika

He's a steer.

Great

(Steer voice.) "I'll steer this steer in the right direction."

Mika

Only the handler can talk for the steer.

Great

(Steer voice.) "I have such boney withers."

Mika

Stop it! (Lying) It is forbidden. I have to do the voice myself or I get disqualified.

Great

4H doesn't have rules about a voice.

Mika

How would you know?!

Great

I went to the fair.

Mika

(Lying) The voice is an important part of steer training. So the steer isn't nervous.

Great

I don't think you know what you're talking about. You weren't even there.

Mika

I had a cold. But Sticky would have won a blue ribbon if I hadn't been too sick to go.

Great

(Takes quilt.) My mother collects these.

Mika

Hey!

Great

She buys them through catalogs.

You can't keep out Nature. Nature is too strong. You'd know that if you lived on a farm instead of "Crest View gated community." It's not cified and exterminators on a farm. This is the real world here. Our food comes in live animals not in cellophane from the grocery store.

Great
Is he food? (Points at STICKY.)

Mika
No. I mean...he isn't food...until he wins his blue ribbon.

Great
We only eat free-range meat.

Mika
Sticky's free range.

Great
Okay. We'll eat him.

Mika
I'm going to eat him myself, thank you.

Great
(Waves quilt.) "Slice him up into raw steaks for to feed me hearties."

Mika
Get down from there. Right now.

Great
"I'll fly this captured flag forever over me pirate ship."

Mika
Put it down-!

(Enter MR. NELSON.)

Mr. Nelson
Hey, what's going on?

Great
"Hey hey, me hearties."

Mr. Nelson
Good God, Great, get down from there.

Great
"Sixteen men in a dead man's chest."

Mr. Nelson
We're not going to be pirates anymore, remember?

Great
"Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum."

Mr. Nelson
His mother will kill me if he gets hurt.

Did you call him Great?
Mika

Mr. Nelson
Yeah. We call him Great. Hi. I'm Mr. Nelson, Great's Dad.

Mika
Get out of the mow, Great, or I'll call Pest Away to come exterminate you.

Great
"Flying the flag of the skull and cross bones."

Mr. Nelson
Great. Down. Now.

Great
(Brief pause.) Sure. Catch. (Tosses the quilt to MR. NELSON.) It's disgusting up here. Rodent infestation.

Mr. Nelson
This is lovely. What's it doing up there?

Mika
Somebody took it up there!

Mr. Nelson
It's going to get all mildewed.

Mika
(Takes quilt from MR. NELSON.) I keep it in the house. I'm just airing it out.

Mr. Nelson
Where did you get it?

Mika
It's not for sale!

Mr. Nelson
Do you have more of them?

Mika
They're not for sale either.

Mr. Nelson
Well, I'll be sure to keep my wallet in my pocket. Isn't this a swell barn, Great? Nothing like this in the city. Smell that smell?

Great
Pukey.

Mr. Nelson
That's real, that smell. That comes from the land. That's not diesel exhaust from some truck. That's the smell of life.

Mika
(Corrects him) The smell of manure...I'm getting it outside.

No need on my account, Miss.

Mr. Nelson

Mika.

Mika

Talk about weird names.

Great

Yeah, Great?!

Mika

Mika is a good name from the good book.

Mr. Nelson

No. It's from Mom's brother Mike, but I was a girl.

Mika

Well...whatever. Come on, Great; your Mother is going to be looking for us.

Mr. Nelson

Did you get what you wanted?

Great

We'll see. Come on, let's go. Bye, Mika. (They exit.)

Mr. Nelson

Great. Great Great Great Great Great. (Hugs STICKY.) I'm sorry he said that about the steaks, Mom. What a creep.

Mika