



The Crane Wife: Adapted from Japanese Folk Tales

Barbara Carlisle

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Play script. Adapted from Japanese folk lore and based on a production idea by Randy Ward, this haunting tale employs a stylistic opportunity through simple staging and a mixture of narrative and theatrical conventions adapted from Japanese theatre. Open stage; simple props. Traditional peasant costumes, with puppets, masks, dance. 12 to 20 actors with varied mixture of male/female. Optional instrumental score by David Newsome available from the publisher.

In the northern province of Echigo where snow falls for nine months, the peasant Kokuro removes an arrow from a stricken Crane, who then comes in secret gratitude to live with him as Wife. When her weaving of magnificent cloth saves them from starvation, the poor peasant yields to greed and suspicion and loses his most precious gift. The peasant chorus and Samurai lord provide laughter and commentary. The crane dancers and weavers offer elegant imagery.

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