THE LEAFY AND WEEDY SEA DRAGONS

A one-act comedy for young audiences by
Kemuel DeMoville

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

NARRATOR, male or female.

LEAFY, male or female. A sea dragon who wants to dance.

WEEDY, male or female. A sea dragon who wants to play.

PYGMY YELLOWJACKET, male or female. A little fish.

BLUE GROPER, male or female. A big fish.

ELEPHANT FISH, male or female. A big fish.

WOBBEGONG SHARK, male or female. A big fish.

FLOUNDER, male or female. A fish who likes to hide.

ORNATE COWFISH, male or female. A little fish.

FLYING GURNARD, male or female. A fish who likes to fly!

SENATOR WRASSE, male or female. A little fish.

SPANISH DANCER, female. A dancing nudibranch.

KELP, male or female. A chorus, or a recording of many voices, or the cast when not performing as sea creatures.

SEA STAR, male or female. A dancing partner.

SETTING

A coral reef off the coast of Australia. The design can be as simple or as complex as the production (and budget) allows. The humor in some of the scenes works better if there are lots of places to hide and make entrances/exits from.

NOTE

Multiple casting is expected and encouraged. The use of puppets for various characters is also encouraged (if possible). I leave it up to the various productions to decide which character(s) to double or make into puppets. Also gender

denotations amongst the animals of the play can easily be changed to suit the cast of the production.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Leafy and Weedy Sea Dragons was commissioned and first produced in 2007 by the Kennedy Theatre at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, with the title ***Kraken-Ka The Komodo Dragon and Other Pacific Rim Dragon Tales***. The play premiered with the following cast:

NARRATOR—Alan Shepard
LEAFY—Tiana DeBell
WEEDY—Emily Hare
PYGMY YELLOWJACKET—Clara Bowden-Kerby
BLUE GROPER—Frank Henry Kaash Katasse
ELEPHANT FISH—K.C. Odell
WOBBEGONG SHARK—Jordan Savusa
FLOUNDER—Savada J. Gilmore
ORNATE COWFISH—Melissa Stevens
FLYING GURNARD—Kat Pleviak
SENATOR WRASSE—Carolyn Wendel
SPANISH DANCER—Michelle Hurtubise
KELP—Melissa Cozza, Kelly Konecko, Kat Pleviak and Morgan Alicia Smith
SEA STAR—Alan Shepard
PACIFIC RIM DANCERS—Clara Bowden-Kirby, Shealin Johnson, Parrish Massey, Rebecca McGarvey and Lauren Santos

Dedicated to my brother Michael who always had very strong opinions about this play, and to Tennyson and Barrett for being awesome.

(The play opens with the NARRATOR and KELP on the reef. Both the Narrator and the Kelp are on stage the entire time. If a director needs to have them enter and exit, that would work too – but ideally, they serve as a kind of chorus to witness and comment on the events from time to time.)

(The Kelp sway and move with the rhythm of the sea. After a moment or two, the Narrator begins to find a rhythm and the Kelp start to follow his lead – the tides have started to shift. The Narrator and Kelp chant/sing in the style of an Australian Aborigineal Corroboree:)

NARRATOR: GET THE CLAPPING STICKS AND THE DIDJERIDU,
FOR WE FEEL THE URGE FOR ENJOYMENT.
HEAR THE RHYTHMIC BEAT, THE SINGING OF THE REEF FISHES,
CLANS FROM THE LAND OF THE TIDE.

KELP: CHESTS TURN TOWARDS THE COLD WEST SWELLS,
AND THE SOUND OF THE DIDJERIDU.
STICKS CLAPPING, FOR WE FEEL THE URGE FOR ENJOYMENT: INVOKING THE WESTERN TIDES…
SOUNDS RISING LIKE BUBBLES, DRIFTING ALONG THE WAVES.

NARRATOR: WITH THIS SINGING THE TIDES BEGIN TO SHIFT,
SWAYING THE KELP, THE SEA GRASSES AND WEEDS

KELP: COLD STRANGE CURRENTS FROM SOMEWHERE BRING STRANGERS,

NARRATOR: STRANGERS TO THE REEFS OFF KANGAROO ISLAND!

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(Suddenly the PIGMY YELLOWJACKET, ORNATE COWFISH and SENATOR WRASSE jump out from their hiding places in the reef and run around the space in a panic.)

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: Ahh! Ahh! Dragons! Dragons are coming!

ORNATE COWFISH: Dragons?

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: Yes. Two dragons are moving onto the reef. Swim for your lives!

SENATOR WRASSE: Dragons! On our reef! This is completely uncalled for.

ORNATE COWFISH: Dragons are ferocious! They'll swallow us up in one mighty gulp.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: Dragons breathe fire! All they have to do is sneeze and we'll be a bunch of fish sticks.

SENATOR WRASSE: This is terrible.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: This is horrible.

ORNATE COWFISH: Dragons are too dangerous to live here.

SENATOR WRASSE: We have to do something.

(ELEPHANT FISH, BLUE GROPER and WOBBEGONG SHARK come out from various parts of the reef.)

ELEPHANT FISH: Don't worry tiny fish. We'll take care of the dragons for you. No dragon alive stands a chance against my muscles.

BLUE GROPER: Your muscles wouldn't worry a sardine.

ELEPHANT FISH: Oh yeah? You got a better idea?

BLUE GROPER: Yeah. I'll scare them away.

ELEPHANT FISH: What are you going to scare them with? Your face?

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BLUE GROPER: I got this poisonous sea urchin here, see it? See it? How'd you like me to throw it at you, huh? You wouldn't like that. This thing could totally poke someone's eye out.

WOBBEGONG SHARK: Boys. Boys. Stop with all the bickering. You both got it wrong. I'm gonna eat those dragons for lunch.

ELEPHANT FISH: I'd like to see you try it without my muscles to hold them down.

BLUE GROPER: Or without my scary sea urchin to intimidate them into a corner.

WOBBEGONG SHARK: Problem solved then. We'll just work together. Don't worry, small fry, we'll take care of the dragons.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET, ORNATE COWFISH & SENATOR WRASSE: *(Enthusiastically:)* Yay!

BLUE GROPER: Then we'll be the only fish around to eat you little guys.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET, ORNATE COWFISH & SENATOR WRASSE: *(Not as enthused:)* Yay.

ELEPHANT FISH: Yeah. Nobody eats our lunch but us.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: Somehow that doesn't make me feel a whole lot safer.

WOBBEGONG SHARK: Split up, boys. Let's go find those dragons.

(All fish exit. Enter LEAFY and WEEDY.)

WEEDY: What a beautiful reef! Look at all these bright colors and cool places to play.

LEAFY: As if I have time for that kind of thing.

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WEEDY: There's always time to play.

LEAFY: Not when you're in training! I have steps to learn! I have moves to practice! I have to find the rhythm of the sea. I don't have time to play. I need to get myself in shape so I can compete on *Dancing With the Sea Stars*.

WEEDY: Whatever. I wonder where the other fish are? A cool reef like this is usually packed full of fish.

LEAFY: I don't mind, it gives me more space to train so I can be a well-oiled dancing machine.

WEEDY: Sometimes I can't believe we're even related.

LEAFY: Neither can I.

WEEDY: Well I'm gonna try to find the other fish. Are you gonna come with me?

LEAFY: I don't have time. I've got to get myself ready for the audition.

WEEDY: Okay. Have fun with that.

(Weedy exits. Leafy starts rehearsing a dance, but after a while just gives up.)

LEAFY: If only I could feel the rhythm of the sea. If only I could move like the waves.

(FLYING GURNARD enters. He is landing.)

FLYING GURNARD: Look out below!

LEAFY: What's wrong with you? Can't you see I'm working here?

FLYING GURNARD: I'm great at takeoffs, terrible at landings. It's a family curse. What are you doing here on my landing strip?

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LEAFY: Landing strip? This is my rehearsal space. I'm a dancer, or at least I'm trying to be.

FLYING GURNARD: I'm a flying fish.

LEAFY: More like a crashing fish.

FLYING GURNARD: Watch it, sassy.

LEAFY: I don't suppose you know how to dance, do you?

FLYING GURNARD: Of course!

LEAFY: You do? That's great!

FLYING GURNARD: Every day I dance between the sea and sky. There's nothing like feeling the sea under your fins and the salt air rushing at your face. It's exhilarating.

LEAFY: That's not the kind of dancing I'm talking about. I mean real dancing. Moving your body to the rhythm of the tide.

FLYING GURNARD: Oh, that kind of dancing. No, I don't do that.

LEAFY: How tragic.

FLYING GURNARD: I can teach you how to fly. Would you like to know how to shake off the surly bonds of the sea?

LEAFY: No. Not really.

FLYING GURNARD: Oh… Okay then. Well, your loss. Once more into the wind my friend. Huzzah!

(Flying Gurnard exits.)

LEAFY: This is the price I must pay for fame.

(Leafy exits. Weedy enters.)

WEEDY: Hello? Hello? Is anybody there? I just want someone to play with me. I'm only a little sea dragon looking for some friends.

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(Elephant Fish, Blue Groper and Wobbegong Shark suddenly pop out of hiding.)

ELEPHANT FISH: Dragon?

BLUE GROPER: Dragon.

WOBBEGONG SHARK: Dragon! Get it before it escapes!

WEEDY: Ahhh!

(Comic chase.)

ELEPHANT FISH: That's right, run in fear from my giant muscles.

BLUE GROPER: Come back here! Hold still and let me throw this poisonous sea urchin at you.

WOBBEGONG SHARK: Come on little dragon, slow down. I'm hungry.

(Weedy hides.)

BLUE GROPER: It got away.

ELEPHANT FISH: How did it do that?

BLUE GROPER: It must be magic. Dragons have magic powers.

WOBBEGONG SHARK: What do you mean magic powers?

BLUE GROPER: You know. Like magic. Like disappearing! Like turning us into stone!

ELEPHANT FISH & WOBBEGONG SHARK: Really?

BLUE GROPER: Yeah.

ELEPHANT FISH: I once saw a clown fish pull a scarf out of the reef and then turn the scarf into a rabbit. You think the dragon could do something like that?

BLUE GROPER: A rabbit?

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ELEPHANT FISH: Yeah. He could only do the trick once though. The rabbit didn't do so well under water. Who 'da thought.

BLUE GROPER: Before we eat the dragon, you think he'd do some kind of trick for us? I've never seen magic for real.

WOBBEGONG SHARK: Will you two shut up! Who cares about magic? We're not talking about magic. We're gonna catch the little bugger and eat him before he turns us into stone fish. Got it?

ELEPHANT FISH: I got a cousin who's a stonefish.

WOBBEGONG SHARK: Got it!?!?!?!

BLUE GROPER: I think someone needs a hug.

(Blue Groper and Elephant Fish hug Wobbegong Shark.)

WOBBEGONG SHARK: Get off me!! Let's look around for him. He couldn't have gotten far.

(They look around, but don't move.)

Well, what are you standing around for?!

(Elephant Fish, Blue Groper and Wobbegong Shark exit. As soon as they have left the stage, Pigmy Yellowjacket, Ornate Cowfish and Senator Wrasse wiggle out from the same hiding place as Weedy.)

SENATOR WRASSE: Ow! You're standing on my fin.

WEEDY: Oh! I'm sorry. I didn't know anybody else was in here.

ORNATE COWFISH: We were here first. There's not enough room for all of us.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: Who are you? I've never seen you before.

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WEEDY: I'm a sea dragon.

ORNATE COWFISH: You? You're the sea dragon?

WEEDY: Yep.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: You don't look ferocious or dangerous.

SENATOR WRASSE: Do you breathe fire?

WEEDY: No.

SENATOR WRASSE: Do you have magic powers? Can you turn us into stone?

WEEDY: What? No. Why are you all hiding in here?

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: We're hiding from you.

ORNATE COWFISH: We thought you were going to eat us.

WEEDY: I was just looking for someone to play with.

ORNATE COWFISH: Oh. Well this is awkward.

WEEDY: Why?

SENATOR WRASSE: We thought you were going to be a big ferocious fire breathing dragon, and so the big fish decided…that um…well…

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: They want to eat you.

WEEDY: What!

ORNATE COWFISH: And they're not going to stop until they do.

WEEDY: Oh no. What am I gonna do?

SENATOR WRASSE: That is a problem. Our bright colors help us hide, maybe they'll help you too. I'll share my pink color with you.

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PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: I'll share my yellow color with you.

ORNATE COWFISH: I'll share my blue color with you.

(The fish share their colors with Weedy as the Narrator chants/sings:)

NARRATOR: THE SUNLIGHT FILTERS THROUGH THE WATER,
RIPPLING IN THE SLIPPERY CURRENTS.
SEE REEF FISH GIVE THEIR COLORS,
LIKE LIQUID RAINBOWS,
TO THE TINY HELPLESS DRAGON.
THE SEAWEED SWAYS IN THE DISTANCE
TO THE PULL AND PITCH OF THE TIDE.
THE SEA DRAGON SHARES THE COLORS OF THE CORAL,
BLENDING IN LIKE SAND ON STONE.

WEEDY: Thanks. Wow, I look so different.

ORNATE COWFISH: It's amazing what a little makeover will do.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: Come on. Let's get out of here before the predators come back.

WEEDY: Bye. Thanks guys.

(Pigmy Yellowjacket, Ornate Cowfish and Senator Wrasse exit. Leafy enters.)

What are you doing out in the open like that?! There are huge fish swimming around here trying to eat us.

LEAFY: What happened to you?

WEEDY: You like it? I got this from my friends to help me hide from the mean fish.

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LEAFY: You made friends already?

WEEDY: Yes. People are really nice here if you just talk to them.

LEAFY: Did any of them know how to dance?

WEEDY: I didn't think to ask.

LEAFY: I must learn to dance.

WEEDY: It's a big reef. Just ask around.

LEAFY: Where are you going?

WEEDY: I'm gonna go practice my new hiding skills.

(Weedy exits.)

LEAFY: An artist walks a lonely road.

(Leafy starts rehearsing a dance, it's bad and inadvertently humorous. A FLOUNDER enters from a hiding place, then rushes back.)

FLOUNDER: What are you doing?

LEAFY: Who said that?

FLOUNDER: I said it.

LEAFY: Where are you? I can't see you.

FLOUNDER: I'm over here.

LEAFY: Where?

FLOUNDER: Over here!

LEAFY: Where?

FLOUNDER: Right here!

LEAFY: What are you?

FLOUNDER: I'm a flounder.

LEAFY: How sad for you.

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FLOUNDER: What are you doing?

LEAFY: What does it look like I'm doing? I'm dancing.

FLOUNDER: Really?

LEAFY: Yes.

FLOUNDER: Because it looks like you're just flopping around.

LEAFY: I'm… I'm… Oh who am I kidding. I'm terrible. No matter how hard I try, I just can't seem to figure out this dancing thing. I can jump, I can run, I can wiggle, but I just can't seem to put them all together and dance. I'll never learn how to move like the waves. I need a choreographer.

FLOUNDER: Why aren't you hiding?

LEAFY: Hiding?

FLOUNDER: Yes. Why aren't you hiding in the coral?

LEAFY: I can't! I've got to get myself ready for the big *Dancing With the Sea Stars* competition.

FLOUNDER: But there are dragons out there.

LEAFY: Dragons! Ahhh!

(Leafy hides with the Flounder.)

Where are the dragons?

FLOUNDER: They're out there somewhere.

LEAFY: What do they look like?

FLOUNDER: No one knows.

LEAFY: Wow.

FLOUNDER: Yeah. Are you new around here? I don't think I've seen you before.

LEAFY: Yeah. My cousin and I just moved in today.

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FLOUNDER: Really?

LEAFY: Yep.

FLOUNDER: Welcome to the neighborhood.

LEAFY: Thanks.

FLOUNDER: What's your name?

LEAFY: Sea Dragon.

FLOUNDER: Really? I've never met a Sea Dra…Dra…Dragon!

LEAFY: Ahhh!

FLOUNDER: Ahhh!

LEAFY: Where?

FLOUNDER: There.

LEAFY: Behind me?

FLOUNDER: No. You. Dragon!

LEAFY: Me?

FLOUNDER: Yes.

LEAFY: I guess so. Huh. I'm surprised I didn't notice that sooner.

FLOUNDER: Please don't eat me.

LEAFY: No way! That would totally ruin my training diet.

FLOUNDER: Oh. Well… Welcome to the reef then.

LEAFY: Thanks.

FLOUNDER: I guess I'll see you around.

LEAFY: Wait. Do you know if anyone around here can teach me to dance? I need to be able to move like the waves and be as graceful as the tide before the big audition and I don't know any steps.

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FLOUNDER: I don't know. I could teach you how to hide, though. Hiding is a lot more useful than dancing.

LEAFY: *(In disbelief:)* Are there hiding competitions?

FLOUNDER: *(Proudly:)* Yes! Hide from the Predators!

LEAFY: Really? I've never heard of it.

FLOUNDER: It isn't very popular. They can never find the winner to give them an award. And…by the end of the contest the losers are all eaten.

LEAFY: I'll stick to dancing!

FLOUNDER: Suit yourself then. See you around.

(Flounder exits.)

LEAFY: I'll never learn to dance.

(Leafy exits. Weedy enters being chased by the Wobbegong Shark. Weedy hides.)

WOBBEGONG SHARK*:* You think some fancy new colors can hide you from me? I'll get you!

(Wobbegong Shark exits. Pigmy Yellowjacket, Ornate Cowfish and Senator Wrasse enter.)

SENATOR WRASSE: I was telling the other fish that the sea dragons were these two, tiny helpless seahorse looking things.

ORNATE COWFISH: Really? Did they believe you?

SENATOR WRASSE: Yeah. I told them they couldn't hurt a fish if they tried.

WEEDY: Psst…

ORNATE COWFISH: Did you hear that?

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: What?

WEEDY: Psst…

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ORNATE COWFISH: Oh man. There it is again! It's a ghost! The reef is haunted.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: First dragons, now ghosts. What is this reef coming to?

WEEDY: Psst…

SENATOR WRASSE: Ahh! Run! Hide from the ghost.

(The fish run and hide but all end up hiding near Weedy. They don't notice Weedy.)

WEEDY: Psst…

ORNATE COWFISH: It's still here! The reef is cursed! We're all doomed!

WEEDY: Psst… Over here.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: It's not a ghost. It's that little guy over there.

ORNATE COWFISH: Oh. Okay. That makes a lot more sense.

WEEDY: Is that big fish still out there?

SENATOR WRASSE: Umm…I don't see him.

WEEDY: Good. They've been trying to eat me all day.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: Really? Why?

WEEDY: I'm the sea dragon.

SENATOR WRASSE: You are? I hardly recognized you with all of the different colors we shared with you. You look like a totally different fish.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: Why don't you come away from the reef and play tag with us?

WEEDY: I can't. The big fish will see me and gobble me up.

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SENATOR WRASSE: Our spots and stripes help to hide us. Maybe they'll help hide you too. I'll share some of my stripes with you.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: I'll share some of my little spots.

ORNATE COWFISH: I'll share my dark black color.

(The fish share their patterns with Weedy as the Narrator chants/sings:)

NARRATOR: THE SUNLIGHT FILTERS THROUGH THE WATER,
RIPPLING IN THE SLIPPERY CURRENTS.
SEE REEF FISH GIVING SPOTS AND STRIPES,
LIKE THE PATTERNS OF THE SUNLIGHT CAST UPON THE OCEAN FLOOR.
THE SEAWEED SWAYS IN THE DISTANCE
TO THE PULL AND PITCH OF THE TIDE.
THE SEA DRAGON SHARES THE SHAPES OF THE CORAL,
BLENDING IN LIKE SHADE ON SHADOW.

WEEDY: Wow! Look at all these spots and stripes. It's so beautiful.

PIGMY YELLOWJACKET: There. Now come on. Let's play.

(They play for a moment, then the Wobbegong enters.)

WOBBEGONG SHARK: Hey. Don't I know you?

SENATOR WRASSE: What? Who? Him? No! No… This…this is my brother Michael from out of town.

WOBBEGONG SHARK: No it isn't.

SENATOR WRASSE: It isn't?

WOBBEGONG SHARK: No. It's the little sea dragon.

ORNATE COWFISH: Uh oh.

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WOBBEGONG SHARK: You look nice. You really dolled yourself up for this. You really made an effort and I appreciate that.

WEEDY: An effort for what?

WOBBEGONG SHARK: For me eating you.

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