

SETTING: *The forest, hills and meadows of a beautiful land, where truth is everywhere.*

AT RISE: *The music begins. One by one the various creatures enter: FOX, CROW, BEAR, BUTTERFLY and RACCOON.*

#1 How Many Days

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Once upon a time... | FOX |
| Once upon a time... | CROW |
| Once upon a time... | BEAR |
| There was a beautiful, faraway land... | BUTTERFLY |
| So far away... | RACCOON |
| And yet not far at all... | FOX |
| A land of Ancient Forests... | CROW |
| And Golden Meadows... | BEAR |
| And Sacred Hills... | BUTTERFLY |
| A land where every stone was a teacher... | RACCOON |
| And every breeze a language... | FOX |
| And in this land lived... | CROW |

BEAR

A Bear...

BUTTERFLY

A Butterfly...

RACCOON

A Raccoon...

FOX

A Fox...

CROW

A Crow...

(LITTLE ONE appears in a light.)

LITTLE ONE

And a girl. And girl who wanted to know... the Truth.

(The Animals start swirling around the girl, singing to her.)

FOX

Listen well...

CROW

To look is not always to see...

BEAR

I taste a miracle – I taste a promise...

BUTTERFLY

Spread your wings, child...

RACCOON

In the wind, in the trees...

FOX

Listen...

CROW

You can tell...if you...

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| <i>Listen well...</i> | ANIMALS |
| <i>Morning falls...</i> | RACCOON |
| <i>The morning rises with a promise...</i> | BUTTERFLY |
| <i>For a promise...</i> | FOX |
| <i>In the creases of the earth you'll find a promise</i> | CROW |
| <i>In the dust...</i> | BUTTERFLY |
| <i>What some may call...</i> | BEAR |
| <i>Of the sunlight...</i> | BUTTERFLY |
| <i>You will find what some may call...</i> | RACCOON |
| <i>What some may call...</i> | FOX |
| A truth. | ALL but LITTLE ONE |
| <i>Listen well, child</i> | FOX |
| <i>(CROW climbs up a tree.)</i> | |
| Caw! Caw! | CROW |
| Caw! Caw! | LITTLE ONE |

CROW

Little One! Climb up to me in this tree – I’ve something to show you.

LITTLE ONE

I’m coming, Crow!

(LITTLE ONE climbs the tree.)

CROW

Just look at this!

*How many days
How many moments
Have I sat right here
On my little perch
In my favorite spot
On the whole wide earth
Oh how many days?*

LITTLE ONE

How many days?

CROW

At least a million!

LITTLE ONE

Ah, you exaggerate.

CROW

“Exaggerate?”

LITTLE ONE

Yes! My father taught me this word. It means “to magnify beyond the limits of truth.”

CROW

The limits of truth? Oh, Little One. Truth has no limits.

*How many days
How many moments
Would it take to drink
In the big blue sky
And the endless trees
With their leaves of fire
Oh how many days?*

LITTLE ONE

How many days?

CROW

Look well, child. Tell me what you see...

LITTLE ONE

*I see a river rushing to the sea
And a dazzle of sunbeams dancing through the trees
Are they dancing for me?*

CROW

I guarantee it...

LITTLE ONE

*It's got to be
The most amazing thing my eyes have ever seen*

CROW

*Those sunbeams are promising
When dark fills the sky
There is light on the other side
And that is a truth*

FOX

Little One! Come down here, I've something to show you.

LITTLE ONE

Coming, Fox!

(LITTLE ONE climbs down to the ground.)

FOX:

*How many days?
How many moments
Have I stood right here
On the sacred ground
With my ears held high
Catching every sound
Oh how many days?*

LITTLE ONE:

How many days?

FOX

Not nearly enough. Listen, child...

Tell me what you hear...

LITTLE ONE

*I hear the laughter of a dragonfly
And a tired old mountain give a great big sigh
There's a song in the breeze that I don't recognize*

FOX

*The song is a promise
If you're lost and alone
The wind is there to guide you home
And that is a truth*

LITTLE ONE

A truth.

FOX

Yes. Truths are all around us – the earth is full of secrets if we will only learn to listen.

BUTTERFLY/BEAR

*How many days?
How many moments...*

RACCOON

*When the stars arise
And the earth falls still
There's a wise old wind
Blowing through the hills*

OTHERS

*Oh how many days?
How many moments?*

LITTLE ONE

*I feel the earth beneath me
Warm and sweet
Every stone has a message
Written just for me*

ANIMALS

A secret song in the breeze

ALL

*That we will never tire of singing
Not for all of our days*

FATHER (O.S.)

Little One? Little One, where are you?

(FATHER enters and sees her.)

There you are.

LITTLE ONE

Father!

(She runs and hugs him.)

FATHER

It's getting dark, Little One. We must return home soon.

LITTLE

Father, the animals have been teaching me the most wonderful things! Did you know that the Truth lives in everything around us – even in the rocks and the stones? Did you know that, Father?

FATHER

Indeed, for I was taught by the same teachers as you – isn't that right, Sister Crow?

CROW

Caw!

LITTLE ONE

You mean Crow taught *you* when you were a little boy?

FATHER

She most certainly did.

(LITTLE ONE gives CROW a once-over.)

LITTLE ONE

Crow must be very old.

CROW

Caw!

FATHER

Remember, Little One – the animals have been on this earth a long time and therefore have much to teach us. Let me see if I can recall my lessons...

#2 Lessons (underscore)

(As the music underscores and the lessons are recalled, FATHER, LITTLE ONE and the ANIMALS begin to move as one – am movement that makes it obvious that the humans and animals are at one with the Truth in Nature.)

FATHER

From Sister Crow I learned to see beauty all around me... from Brother Fox, I learned to listen to the song on the breeze... Brother Bear taught me to taste the miracle of sunrise ... From you, Madam Butterfly, I learned to touch humility on the flower's petal... Brother Raccoon taught me to smell justice in the falling leaves... and from Old Turtle, I learned to seek Wisdom in all things.

(FATHER and the ANIMALS bow at the mention of OLD TURTLE. LITTLE ONE is confused.)

LITTLE ONE

Old Turtle? Who is Old Turtle?

RACCOON

You mean you don't know?

(They look at FATHER.)

FATHER

She is young yet. She has just begun to learn.

LITTLE ONE

Who is Old Turtle?

FATHER

She is the wisest creature on the earth.

LITTLE ONE

May I meet her? Does she live close by?

BUTTERFLY

No, indeed! She lives far away...

On a giant hill... BEAR

In the center of the world. FOX

The center of the world? LITTLE ONE

Yes, Little One – the very center. CROW

But I thought this was the center of the world. LITTLE ONE

No, my child – this is just one of its infinite edges. FATHER

Then how do you get there? How do you get to the very center of the world? LITTLE ONE

It's not easy... RACCOON

The journey is very difficult... BUTTERFLY

You must first cross the Mountains of Imagining... FATHER

The Mountains of Imagining... LITTLE ONE/ANIMALS

And ford the River of Wondering Why... FATHER

The River of Wondering Why... LITTLE ONE/ANIMALS

Then find your way through the Forest of Finding Out... FATHER

The Forest of Finding Out... LITTLE ONE/ANIMAL

FATHER

Only then will you find that giant hill in the very center of the world. Only then will you find the wisest creature of all...

ALL but LITTLE ONE

Old Turtle.

(Again, they pay homage to her name.)

#3 Imagine

LITTLE ONE

What does she look like?

FATHER

She has a large shell on her back...

(He picks up a large, round stone and hands it to LITTLE ONE.)

As round and smooth as this stone.

BUTTERFLY

The skin of her great neck is of the warmest leather...

FOX

And her voice rumbles like distant thunder...

LITTLE ONE

What makes her so wise?

FATHER

Living life as long as time itself

Imagine

Things she's seen – the stories she could tell

Imagine

She carries on her back a thousand

Ancient secrets

She's memorized the melody of

Changing seasons

She listens to the heartbeat of the earth

FATHER/ANIMALS

Imagine

FATHER

She's wise because she knows she's much to learn

FATHER/ANIMALS

Imagine

FATHER

*She's slow to speak and quick to hear and**Takes her time**Her eyes are as compassionate as**They are wise**Someday maybe you could meet her...**Imagine...*

LITTLE ONE

*Imagine...**(Suddenly we hear a strange sound. A blaze of light cut across the sky.**LITTLE ONE points to it.)*

LITTLE ONE

Look!

BUTTERFLY

What is that?

BEAR

It's a falling star!

CROW

That's no star – it's too close...

FOX

Whatever it is, it's headed for the Golden Meadow!

CROW

I'll go see!

(CROW exits.)