

Excerpt Terms & Conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity of scripts.

Family Plays

Tales From Hans

Christian Andersen

Book by
Mary Jane Evans & Deborah Anderson

Lyrics by
Mary Jane Evans

Musical score by
Ed Archer

Tales From Hans Christian Andersen

First produced by University Theatre of California State University-Northridge, the original cast featured 12 performers.

*Musical. Adaptation by Mary Jane Evans and Deborah Anderson. Music by Ed Archer. Lyrics by Mary Jane Evans. From the tales of Hans Christian Andersen. Cast: 7m., 5w., with doubling, or up to 50+ (22m., 16w., 12+ either gender). In this brilliant theatrical adaptation, four favorite tales are turned them into song, dance, mime and transformations. As a storyteller sings of "Stories to Tell! Stories to Sell!" he is joined by a chorus who spontaneously takes up the action of a rhythmic rendition of "What the Old Man Does Is Always Right." Caught up in the fun, they then decide to enact *The Princess on the Pea*. As this ends, a skeptic sings of his doubts that it was a real story. To prove the power of imagination, the company transforms him into the Ugly Duckling, becoming the other characters in that tale. Numbskull Jack fulfills the company's sung request to have a funny story follow the happy-sad duckling adventure. A reprise of "Stories to Tell!" reminds the audience that they've just begun to share the fun (and joy) of Hans Christian Andersen. Production notes are available in the script containing details on costumes, set, props and casting. Single set. Basic Victorian costumes with added pieces for character changes. Approximate running time: 50 minutes. Code: TL4.*

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098-3308
Phone: (800) 448-7469 / (815) 338-7170
Fax: (800) 334-5302 / (815) 338-8981

www.FamilyPlays.com

ISBN-13 978-0-87602-257-3



Tales From Hans
Christian Andersen

Tales From Hans Christian Andersen

Book by

MARY JANE EVANS & DEBORAH ANDERSON

Lyrics by

MARY JANE EVANS

Musical score by

ED ARCHER

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by FAMILY PLAYS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website www.FamilyPlays.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: FAMILY PLAYS, 311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

© 1980 by
MARY JANE EVANS & ED ARCHER

© 1983 by
ANCHORAGE PRESS, INC.

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(TALES FROM HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN)

ISBN: 978-0-87602-257-3

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author(s) of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author(s) *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author(s), if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
Family Plays of Woodstock, Illinois”

TALES FROM HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

Program of the Premiere Performance

Autumn 1978

Presented by University Theatre

California State University, Northridge

Book by Mary Jane Evans and Deborah Anderson

Lyrics and Direction by Mary Jane Evans

Music composed and Directed by Ed Archer

Costume Design by Cathy Pyles

Choreography by Candy Sherwin

Set and Lighting Design by Owen W. Smith

THE COMPANY: James Dellay, Denny Fathe-Aazam, Gregg Fletcher, Dana Merl Greene, Stefan Haves, Kim Kilgore, Alison Muller, Jeff Pickett, Robert D. Romans, Candy Sherwin, Derrick D. Spiva, Laurie Urstein

MUSICIANS: Maty McDonald, Matthew Newman

PRODUCTION STAFF: *Associate Director*, Maria Fazio Truxaw; *Assistant Music Director/Accompanist*, Mary McDonald; *Stage Manager*, Bruce Dick; *Assistant Stage Manager*, Michael Shannon; *Technical Director*, Owen W. Smith; *Property Master*, Andrew Keith; *Transportation*, Art Riddle; *Shop Foreman*, Dennis Dillon; *Costume Supervisor*, Hella Burrell; *Director of Theatre*, John S. Furman; *Theatre Manager / Publicity*, Jeffrey Levy; *House Maager*, Robyn Siebler; *Poster / Program Design*, Thomas White*; *Photography*, Jo Ann Zarifian; *Program Preparation*, Sally Shulman

PRODUCTION CREWS:

LIGHTS: Jeff Clark, *Crew Chief*; Michael Bernstein, Steven Bogdanoff, Constance Richardson, Kim Reimer

MAKE -UP: Eileen Billings, Torrie Doves, Meredyth Hayes, Share Grubin, Barbara Weg, Kim Gilmore (on tour)

COSTUMES: Denny Fathe-Aazam, *Crew Chief*; Karen Birch, Alexandra Carlyle, Cindy Frank, Heidi Holicker

SCENERY: Gregg Fletcher (on tour), Christopher Bell, Michael Firth, Kim Gilmore

PROPS: Robert Monteleone, Chris Promen

COSTUME CONSTRUCTION CREW: Lorraine Pola, Beverly Kirkpatrick, Claudia Contreras, Eileen Billings, Claudia De Cea, Patty McKinnon, Gail Mosley, Kim Palmer, Julie Thompson.

SHOP CONSTRUCTION CREW: Denny Fathe-Aazam, James Dellay, Javad Pishvaie.

*Cover Design of Playbook also by Thomas White

STORIES USED IN THIS MUSICAL PLAY ADAPTATION:

Story I: "What the Old Man Does Is Always Right"

Story II: "The Princess on the Pea"

Story III: "The Ugly Duckling"

Story IV: "Numbskull Jack"

CAST ASSIGNMENTS

Casting requirements are flexible, since this is written as an ensemble piece. The original production was staged with seven actors and five actresses. With the exception of the Storyteller, who kept his role throughout, each player was assigned several parts; and all of them served as members of the chorus whenever they were not in a specific role. The following shows how the company was organized for the original production:

Actor/Actress	Story I	Story II	Story III	Story IV
1st man	Storyteller	Storyteller	Storyteller	Storyteller Alderman
2nd man	Sheep Owner	Bed Servant	Chicken Goose #1	Jack
3rd man	Old Man	Chorus only	Chicken Goose #2	Suitor
4th man	Rooster Englishman #1	Chorus only	Ugly Duckling	Suitor
5th man	Horse	Bed Servant	Father Duck Chicken Hunting Dog	Harold
6th man	Cow	Chorus only	Duckling Chicken Swan	Olaf
7th man	Cow Owner	Prince	Duckling Child	Squire Suitor
1st woman	Wife Goose	Bragging Princess	Chicken Hen	Citizen
2nd woman	Dog	Princess	Farm Girl Cat	Citizen
3rd woman	Sheep	Bossy Princess Queen	Duckling Barnyard Dog	Citizen
4th woman	Servant	Shy Princess	Mother Duck Old Woman Swan	Citizen
5th woman	Goose Owner	Vain Princess	Duckling Child	Princess

The number of men and women can vary, and roles can be assigned according to the special talents of members of the company.

In the original production, two musicians also were used, one for keyboard and one for percussion.

SETTING

The setting consists of fourteen book-like structures, solidly built to be used in the action of the play. Two of the books are not attached to the permanent background so that they can be moved to serve as platforms, thus providing variety in the staging.

The permanent background is made up of eight individual units which can be detached from each other for portability. The central book is open on top. It also is hinged in front to provide a doorway.

PROPERTIES

Properties should be few and simple. Following is a suggested list:

Set Properties: three stools — two of normal chair height; one tall
a bed platform of miniature size, four mattress-like pads,
and a coverlet

Story I: a necktie, hat and handkerchief for the Old Man
a stuffed cloth duck
a stuffed cloth hen
a box that can open
a bag of apples
two bags of gold

Story II: tiaras or crowns for all royalty
a cloak for the "real" Princess
a mirror for the Vain Princess
an elaborate book for the Braggy Princess
a small note pad and quill pen for the Bossy Princess
a fan for the Shy Princess

Story III: none

Story IV: two hobby horses
one goat built like a hobby horse
a bag for Jack
three soft foam rubber balls to serve as the crow, shoe and mud
scepter for the Princess
crown for the Princess
crown for Jack
a scroll for the Alderman

COSTUMES

Men: The Storyteller is dressed in a typical Victorian gentleman's suit, complete with hat and walking stick.

All other men wear colorful knee breeches, long-sleeve shirts with full sleeves, jackets or vests, flowing neckwear, white hose, black dance shoes, and caps.

Women: Full peasant blouses with sleeves of varying length, full skirts with petticoats, knee-length underbreeches ruffled in back, close-fitting bodices, bonnets, white hose, and black dance shoes.

General: Character changes are indicated by the demeanor of the actors. Bonnets and caps can be added or removed. Caps can be worn in a variety of ways. Women's skirts are lifted over the arms to suggest wings for bird characters. Crowns are added to suggest royalty. Men's vests and jackets can be added or removed.

TALES FROM HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

(OVERTURE. MUSIC then introduces the STORYTELLER's song. He enters, traversing the stage as he sings.)

STORYTELLER: Stories, stories, stories to tell!
Stories, stories, stories to sell!
Who will buy, who will buy my stories?
Stories, stories, stories to tell!
Stories, stories, stories to sell!
Who will buy, who will buy my stories?
Some are old. Some are new.
Every one of them could be true.
Oh, who will buy my stories?

(ENSEMBLE enters, singing.)

ENSEMBLE: Stories, stories, stories to tell!
Stories, stories, stories to sell!
Who will buy, who will buy

STORYTELLER: My stories?

ENSEMBLE: We will listen, we will buy,
We will laugh, and we might cry.
Let us hear, let us hear your stories!

(ENSEMBLE noisily gathers around the STORYTELLER, who quiets them and continues the song.)

STORYTELLER: Settle down and gather 'round.
Here are tales that I have found.
Stories that are lots of fun
From Hans Christian Andersen.

(Enthusiastic response from the ENSEMBLE.)

From long ago and far away
In once upon a time

SINGER 1: Birds can talk as well as fly,

SINGER 2: And good things happen to the little guy.

SINGER 3: When life seems to be unfair,

SINGER 4: And nobody seems to care,

SINGER 5: And nothing, but nothing seems to go right

ENSEMBLE: A story can make our troubles light.

STORYTELLER: Imagination helps us deal
With things that seem too real.
Now come with me, and you will see
Some troubles solved most happily.

STORY ONE

“What the Old Man Does Is Always Right”

STORYTELLER: (*Speaking*) I will tell you a story that was told to me when I was a little boy. I take it for granted that you have been in the country and seen a very old farmhouse. Well, the one I'm thinking about is in Denmark. It is very small.

(MUSICIANS begin a rhythmic accompaniment suited to the verse dialogue of the story. From now on all movement is in rhythm, and the accompaniment continues through all action and dialogue. When the rhythm begins, the ENSEMBLE moves to form a house, with their arms arched as a roof.)

ENSEMBLE: Like this?

STORYTELLER: Yes. And it has a thatched roof with plants on top. And in it live an old mom and pop.

(ENSEMBLE members break away from the house, becoming a ROOSTER, who enters and crows; a DOG, who barks as he emerges; and a HORSE, who whinnies as he enters the farmyard. OLD MAN and WIFE come out of the house. The rest of the ENSEMBLE remains on stage as spectators, dancers or characters as needed.)

WIFE: Mornin', Husband!

OLD MAN: Mornin', Wife! It's a mighty fine day.

WIFE: You bet your life.

(They look around, throw some feed to the ROOSTER, pet the DOG, and ignore the HORSE's bids for attention. Suddenly the day does not seem so fine after all.)

BOTH: Ho-hum!

WIFE: Husband?

OLD MAN: Wife?

WIFE: It's always the same.

OLD MAN: It's a boring life.

WIFE: We need something new.

OLD MAN: Would a shiny pebble do?

WIFE: Oh, honey!

OLD MAN: But we haven't any money.

(During the following they look at the animals, who try to get out of their way.)

WIFE: Is there something we could sell?

OLD MAN: Is there something we could trade? *(Spying the HORSE)*
There is something we don't need.

WIFE: The horse! He's one more mouth to feed.

(HORSE protests mightily and tries to hide.)

OLD MAN: I will take him to the fair.

WIFE: I'm sure that you'll be lucky there.

OLD MAN: But, Good Wife, shall I sell or trade?

WIFE: You'll know what's best. You'll be well paid.

OLD MAN: But, Wife . . .

WIFE: What is it now?

OLD MAN: What shall I bring home in exchange?

WIFE: You'll know best, Old Man.

(One member of the ENSEMBLE comes forward and hands the tie to the OLD MAN. Another brings a hat and handkerchief, which the WIFE takes, giving them to the OLD MAN at the right moment.)

OLD MAN: Now to get ready. Here's my tie.

WIFE: Your hat . . . your handkerchief . . . now good-bye.

(They kiss. The OLD MAN sets off with the reluctant HORSE as the WIFE moves into the ENSEMBLE, which is upstage moving rhythmically to the beat of the accompaniment. Individuals break from the group to become the various characters the OLD MAN meets, returning to the group as their scenes are over. The first encounter is with a COW and its OWNER.)

OLD MAN: Look at that cow, so nice and glossy! Does she give good milk, that smooth old bossy?

OWNER: Sure, she gives good milk, and rich thick cream.

OLD MAN: This might be the answer to my good wife's dream. Will you give me your cow for this strong, stout horse?

OWNER: Now that's a good deal. I will, of course.

ENSEMBLE: What the Old Man does is always right! *(The trade is made. The COW slumps to the ground, and the OLD MAN struggles to*

get her moving.) Oh, dear! (The OLD MAN moves along with the COW, as a SHEEP and its OWNER appear. The SHEEP is very agile and friendly, "Baa-ing" warmly to everyone.)

OLD MAN: Look at that nice fat wooly sheep! Look at it bound! Look at it leap! *(As the SHEEP comes up to him)* What a cute little friendly grin! It seems to like me. I've got to have him!

ENSEMBLE: You'll know best, Old Man!

OLD MAN: Say there, Mister *(Sister)*, what about a trade?

OWNER: A cow for a sheep? The deal is made!

ENSEMBLE: What the Old Man does is always right!

(The OLD MAN trots along with the happy SHEEP, who tries to eat his handkerchief and tie. A GOOSE appears with its OWNER. The GOOSE is very perky and honks in rhythm.)

GOOSE: Honk . . . honk honk! Honk . . . honk honk!

OLD MAN: I see a goose, all feathery and fat. How I'd like to get my hands on that. Hey, Sister *(Mister)*! Want to make a trade?

OWNER: A sheep for my goose? Now that's a steal. I'm getting the better end of this deal.

(The trade is made. Now several ENSEMBLE members come forward with prop items to trade, and a series of exchanges is made in rapid succession.)

OLD MAN: A goose for your duck? Oh, I'm in luck. How about that rabbit? I really have to have it. What's in that box? I don't need new socks. But I'd like your hen. I can build her a pen. What nice sturdy legs! My wife can use her eggs. I'll take that chick. Come on. Be quick!

ENSEMBLE: What the Old Man does is always right!

(The OLD MAN tucks the hen under his arm. The ENSEMBLE moves into position to become patrons and employees of the inn. All movements are in rhythm and are executed as the STORYTELLER speaks.)

STORYTELLER: Now by this time the Old Man had done a good deal of business, and he was nowhere near the fair. But he was hot and tired. He wanted something to eat. He had to have something to drink. Soon he was in front of an inn. As he was about to enter, a servant was coming out.

(OLD MAN and SERVANT nearly collide. They do a typical dodge step . . . "Pardon me." "Pardon me." etc.)

OLD MAN: That sack is so big.

SERVANT: It's full of rotten apples to feed the pig.

OLD MAN: What an awful waste! They'd be perfect for my wife. They'd suit her taste.

SERVANT: Say, whatever do you mean? You're the strangest old man I've ever seen!

OLD MAN: Last year the winter was very hard, and the old apple tree in our back yard bore just a single apple — only one — but my wife looked upon it like a prize she'd won. She kept it in the cupboard alone on the shelf, 'til it shrank and shriveled like the head of an elf. But she wouldn't throw it out: "It's our property. It's the best we got from our very own tree." With this sack full of apples she'll be happy as can be.

SERVANT: What will you give me for this rotten fruit?

OLD MAN: I'll give you this chicken, and a shake to boot.

ENSEMBLE: What the Old Man does is always right???

STORYTELLER: He went into the inn, leaned the sack carefully against the stove, and went to find food and drink. But the stove was hot, and the apples began to smell. Two Englishmen were visiting the inn. They were so rich their pockets bulged with gold coins. And they liked to gamble, too, as you shall see.

ENGLISHMAN 1: I say, what is that awful smell?

STORY TWO

“The Princess on the Pea”

STORYTELLER: “The Princess on the Pea!”

(MUSIC with a fanfare quality brings on the PRINCE. He circles the stage, bowing to the audience, then exits, and FOUR PRINCESSES enter. When his music is repeated, the PRINCE re-enters. PRINCESSES courtsey. There follows a dance-mime, with music appropriate to the personality of each PRINCESS. The sequence: VAIN PRINCESS approaches the PRINCE. She carries a mirror and calls attention to her charms. His interest is lost, and his attention goes to the SHY PRINCESS, who is trying not to call attention to herself. He is accosted by the BRAGGY PRINCESS, who shows him how clever he is. Again he turns toward the SHY PRINCESS, but the BOSSY PRINCESS takes command and browbeats him about the stage. He eludes her and goes to the SHY PRINCESS as the three rejects sulk. The dance continues with the PRINCE in gentle pursuit of the SHY PRINCESS. Finally she escapes upstage. As the PRINCE watches her, the other three swing him about. He escapes and departs. The three exit in a huff, and the SHY PRINCESS slips away. Note: the dialogue section which follows suggests ways of designing the dance, since the actions of both sequences should be closely parallel.)

STORYTELLER: Once upon a time there was a Prince. He wanted to get himself a princess, but she must be a real princess. So he traveled all

over the kingdom to find one. Word traveled fast, and soon everyone knew that the Prince was searching for a real princess. There were plenty of princesses, but there always seemed to be a catch somewhere.

(VAIN, BOSSY and BRAGGY PRINCESSES enter and gather in a group. SHY PRINCESS enters and stands apart.)

WOMEN: *(Ad lib)* Have you heard the news? The Prince is seeking a wife!
I know. It's said he's coming this way. Surely he'll choose me. Etc.

(PRINCE enters. They scramble to position and bow. He acknowledges them, but gives his attention to the VAIN PRINCESS.)

STORYTELLER: Some were too vain and made the Prince feel that he wasn't very handsome.

(The MUSIC symbolizing each PRINCESS is played softly under each encounter.)

PRINCE: Hello. My, you certainly are a pretty one!

VAIN: I know. Have you noticed my eyes? Look at my beautiful white teeth.
Have you ever seen such lovely hair?

(PRINCE backs off. VAIN PRINCESS sulks and sits on a stool. BRAGGY PRINCESS loses no time in stating her case.)

STORYTELLER: Some bragged too much and made the Prince feel smaller and smaller.

BRAGGY: My father owns the largest kingdom in the world. And I'm the most talented girl you've ever seen. I can play every musical instrument . . . ride the most spirited horses . . . whistle through my teeth . . . and sing more melodically than a bird. *(She demonstrates her talents as she speaks.)*

(PRINCE turns away from BRAGGY, who goes off to the side in a huff, pushes VAIN from the stool, and sits.)

STORYTELLER: Others were too crabby and bossy and made the Prince feel that they were leading him around on a leash.

(BOSSY PRINCESS abruptly approaches the PRINCE.)

BOSSY: You must understand that I will want you at home for an early dinner.

PRINCE: But I don't . . .

BOSSY: You will have to stop hunting and spend your time with me.

PRINCE: But I love to hunt!

BOSSY: I don't like the way you dress . . . *(PRINCE protests)* or the way you talk. All that will have to be changed. And I will have to have two maids and a footman for my own carriage.

(PRINCE escapes. BOSSY angrily goes to the stool, forces BRAGGY from it and sits. BRAGGY joins VAIN on the floor. PRINCE turns to SHY PRINCESS.)

STORYTELLER: Some were too shy and made the Prince feel as if he had nothing to say.

PRINCE: *(As he speaks to her, SHY keeps running from him.)* You have not said a word. Hello! *(She never responds.)* It's a lovely day. . . . What did you say your name is? . . . You don't happen to know what time it is . . .

(SHY PRINCESS hides. The PRINCE starts for the palace, stopping to sing:)

PRINCE: Where is the princess for me?
Where in this world can she be?
I've searched the country 'round,
But every princess I've found
Is bossy *(BOSSY PRINCESS flounces off.)*
Braggy *(BRAGGY PRINCESS follows.)*
Vain *(VAIN PRINCESS goes.)*
Or shy. *(SHY PRINCESS, who has been peeking in, slips away.)*
Not one I've seen is fit to be queen.
Where is the princess for me?
Where in this world can she be?

(PRINCE exits as music fades.)

STORYTELLER: Finally the Prince went home and was very unhappy.
(Pause) One night there was a terrible thunderstorm!

(The stage grows dark and lights flash. With percussive accompaniment, the ENSEMBLE create the actions and noises of the storm. The PRINCESS, wearing a cloak to set her apart from the rest, enters and is swept up in the storm. She tries to escape, but finally is picked up bodily and carried off. All members of the ENSEMBLE, except the PRINCE, QUEEN and PRINCESS, range themselves upstage as if asleep. The sound of wind and rain continue until the PRINCESS is admitted.)

STORYTELLER: In the middle of the storm there came a knock on the castle door. The Queen went to answer it.

QUEEN: *(Entering and climbing over the sleeping SERVANTS)* Now who could that be? And all the servants asleep!

PRINCE: *(Entering)* What is that noise?

QUEEN: Someone's knocking at the door. Imagine being out this late and in this weather! *(Knocking continues.)* Who are you? What do you want? Who sent you?

PRINCESS: *(Off)* I am a real princess who has lost her way. I am looking for my father's castle. Could you give me food and shelter until the storm is over?

(The QUEEN makes no move.)

PRINCE: Mother, open the door.

QUEEN: A real princess, eh?

PRINCESS: Please!

PRINCE: Mother, open the door!

QUEEN: A likely story!

STORY THREE

"The Ugly Duckling"

(The ENSEMBLE holds position as the actor who will become the UGLY DUCKLING moves among them, singing:)

UGLY DUCKLING: Was that real? Could such things be? Do I dare to think it's true?

HALF ENSEMBLE: Of course you can!

HALF ENSEMBLE: Yes, why not?

ALL: We all do!

UGLY DUCKLING: But what's true is true,
And what's not is not!

ENSEMBLE: Use imagination,
And think what you've got.

STORYTELLER: Maybe it's not exactly this way
In the hurly-burly of today,

(As they sing the following, the ENSEMBLE surround the UGLY DUCKLING, completely encircling him. When they shout the last line, four actors become "eggs," the UGLY DUCKLING is pushed down to become an "egg," and an actress becomes the MOTHER DUCK, perched above them.)

ENSEMBLE: But long ago and far away
In once upon a time . . .
(Shouting) Anything can happen!

(Barnyard MUSIC begins as the STORYTELLER speaks.)

STORYTELLER: In among the leaves in a secluded part of the farmyard there lived a duck who was sitting on her nest waiting for her eggs to hatch. She was quite tired of sitting, for it had lasted such a long time. One by one her eggs started to hatch, and the little ducklings poked out their heads.

(To the accompaniment of bells, "do-mi-sol-do," four ducklings hatch, one at a time.)

MOTHER: Welcome, my little ducklings! Do you know who I am?

DUCKLINGS: Mama!

STORYTELLER: Then she led them out for a walk around the river bank to stretch their legs. (*MUSIC as the action occurs.*) When she returned, she saw another egg in her nest.

MOTHER: Oh, my goodness! How could I have missed seeing this one? It's the biggest one of all. The rest of you go practice your walking while I wait for your brother to hatch. A big clumsy egg like this has to hold a boy.

(*MOTHER settles on the egg, while the DUCKLINGS explore the area. MUSIC changes to the FATHER DUCK theme.*)

STORYTELLER: One day the father of the ducklings came by to see if the eggs were hatched.

(*FATHER DUCK enters with an important "Honk!" and a strut. DUCKLINGS surround him, bidding for attention.*)

DUCKLINGS: (*As they spy him*) Papa!

MOTHER: Where have you been, you good-for-nothing? Why don't you come to see me any more?

(*DUCKLING 1 gets FATHER's attention.*)

FATHER: This one has my beak! (*Ecstatic, DUCKLING 1 runs aside as DUCKLING 2 flirts with FATHER.*) This one has my eyes! (*DUCKLINGS 3 and 4 fight for attention. DUCKLING 3 steps on 4's foot.*) This one has my feet! (*DUCKLING 4 lets out a stream of impudent duck chatter.*) And this one sounds just like me!

MOTHER: Indeed it does! Always has its mouth open, just like you.

(*DUCKLING 4 makes a very sassy sound at MOTHER, who stamps at it. It runs to join the others. MOTHER goes to the UGLY DUCKLING egg.*)

MOTHER: What about this one?

FATHER: Looks like a turkey egg to me. Don't waste your time on it. (*MOTHER angrily sits on the nest.*) Get off the nest and teach the others how to swim.

MOTHER: I'll sit on it 'til midsummer if I have to! I have spent this much time on it. A few more days won't hurt.

FATHER: Suit yourself. (*MUSIC. FATHER starts off. DUCKLINGS surround him, trying to keep him with them. He brushes them aside.*) Go back to your mother and learn how to swim. (*DUCKLINGS reluctantly wave good-bye.*)

STORYTELLER: And the father waddled off. At last the big egg cracked. (*Ratchet sound as the hatching starts.*)

MOTHER: I think it's hatching! (*Another ratchet sound and movement from the UGLY DUCKLING*) I know it's hatching! Come, everybody, and help!

(*With much commotion DUCKLINGS come to assist. Drum roll as the UGLY DUCKLING is brought to his feet. He is filled with wonder and awkwardness, always earnest and warm . . . not a caricature.*)

UGLY DUCKLING: (*Makes a honking sound.*)

DUCKLINGS: (*Ad lib*) Oh, ick! What an ugly thing! What can it be? etc.

(*No one, including the UGLY DUCKLING, can figure out who or what he is. He experiments to find out.*)

MOTHER: That is a monstrous big duckling! None of the others looks like that. Maybe he is a turkey chick! Well, we shall soon find out. Everyone into the water!

MUSIC. DUCKLINGS assume swimming positions, and the UGLY DUCKLING tries hard, but always is wrong in some way. MOTHER becomes a gym coach.)

MOTHER: Dive! Stroke! Paddle! Float! (*Throughout, she pays special attention to UGLY DUCKLING.*) Dive! Stroke! (*The UGLY DUCKLING, while the others are absolutely synchronized, does not coordinate well, but he does show that he is a water bird.*) No, you're not a turkey. You're my own chick after all. (*UGLY DUCKLING snuggles up to her.*) And not too bad looking, if only you'd stand up straight. (*UGLY DUCKLING tries and gives a sound of triumph.*) Everybody out of the water! (*MOTHER becomes a drill sergeant. DUCKLINGS follow orders with absolute precision, but the UGLY DUCKLING has a terrible time*

and requires coaching every step of the way. MUSIC.) Ready! And . . . hut-two-three-four, hut-two-three-four. Use your legs-two-three-four. Quack properly-two-three-four. Bend your necks to those old ducks over there. Hut-two-three-four. Hut-hut —. Keep your legs apart-two-three-four. Now lift your heads and quack! (*UGLY DUCKLING makes a most unearthly quacking sound. MOTHER is in despair. DUCKLINGS are most upset and at first try to help, but they soon reject him, too.*) Can't you shape up? (*DUCKLINGS scramble to help him do so.*) I can't take you to meet the world like this. I'll be a laughingstock. Oh, I wish I could make you over! What am I going to do with you?

(MOTHER exits. One at a time, DUCKLINGS leave, making nasty noises, one even stamping on UGLY DUCKLING's foot. ENSEMBLE members become HENS, DUCKS, a DOG and a FARM GIRL, following the actions described by the STORYTELLER.)

STORYTELLER: The poor duckling did not know which way to turn because he was so ugly and the butt of the whole farmyard. The ducks bit him. The hens pecked at him. The dog growled at him. The girl who fed him kicked him aside. (*After the GIRL kicks the UGLY DUCKLING aside, the DOG sets upon him, growling and chasing him until he escapes and exits.*)

STORYTELLER: Finally, the Ugly Duckling ran off and flew over the hedge, where the little birds flew up in fright.

(ACTORS' hands over the set show the birds. BELLS are used to signify the flight.)

UGLY DUCKLING: That's because I'm so ugly.

STORYTELLER: Soon he came to a marsh where the wild geese lived. They came over to inspect the newcomer. (*The GEESE are very cocky and enjoy their joke.*)

GOOSE 1: I say there, friend. You are so ugly that we have taken quite a fancy to you.

GOOSE 2: Would you care to join us and become a bird of passage? We know of another marsh close by, and there are some charming wild geese there.

GOOSE 1: They're all sweet young ladies who can say "Qu - aak!"

STORY FOUR

“Numbskull Jack”

STORYTELLER: Somewhere in the country there was an old manor house, and in the old manor house there lived an old squire. He had two sons, and those sons were brainy as could be. One knew the Latin dictionary by heart. His name was Olaf.

(MUSIC out. OLAF separates from the group.)

OLAF: Books, pencils, papers, pens . . .

STORYTELLER: The other, whose name was Harold, was a brilliant mathematician.

HAROLD: Measures, slide rules, formulas, fancy clothes . . . What have I forgotten?

JACK: *(Who has been trying to get the STORYTELLER and the BROTHERS to acknowledge him)* Me!

STORYTELLER: Oh, yes, there was a third brother, though nobody thought he counted for very much, for he was not as clever as the other two. In fact, they forgot him more often than not. But when they thought of him at all, they called him Numbskull Jack. Now this was a very special day. You see, the Princess had announced that she would take for her husband the man who was never at a loss for an answer. Olaf and Harold both decided to propose to the Princess, and felt quite equal

to the task. They had prepared themselves for a whole week, and that was plenty of time, for they were clever and well schooled.

(HAROLD and OLAF are thinking and rehearsing, unaware of anything around them. Having failed to get their attention, JACK approaches OLAF.)

JACK: What are you doing?

OLAF: Never mind! Sum-es-sunt; sumus-estes-sunt. Eram-eras-erat; eramus-eratus-erant. *(JACK imitates OLAF's gestures and movements. MUSIC for a tap dance comes in, and JACK begins to dance. OLAF, without thinking, joins in and creates a lively dance as he continues his conjugations.)* Amo-amas-amat; amamus-amatus-amant. Hic-haec-hoc; huius-huius-huius. Fui-fuistis-fuit . . . E Pluribus Unum! *(OLAF realizes what is happening and comes to an abrupt halt.)* What's going on here? Out! Go! Scat!

JACK: Just tell me what you're doing!

(HAROLD has been unaware of all that has happened. As JACK turns his attention to him, he begins to do sums in the air, gesturing vigorously as he speaks. JACK imitates him, and his movements become those of an orchestra conductor as academic MUSIC swells. The ENSEMBLE hums the melody.)

HAROLD: When executing the construction of our popular parallelogram, please note that an important observation should be made. Being four-sided more often than not, this structure bears a striking resemblance to our common square. To put this formula into effect, one must divide the sum total of the length times width by the density of the parallelogram's interior. Let me see . . . six thirds times four plus . . . *(HAROLD becomes aware of what is going on. MUSIC stops.)* What's happening here? Out-out-out!

JACK: Just tell me what you're doing!

HAROLD: Preparing to win the Princess for my bride.

OLAF: *(Moving menacingly toward HAROLD)* For my bride! *(OLAF and HAROLD tussle, both physically and verbally. JACK's declaration stops them instantly.)*

JACK: I'm coming, too!

BROTHERS: *(Now presenting a united front)* Over my dead body!

(JACK draws an imaginary sword and drives them across the stage. The SQUIRE enters and shouts at JACK.)

SQUIRE: Out-out-out! And now, my brilliant, witty and charming sons . . .
(The horses are hobby-horses, brought forward by members of the ENSEMBLE. Each movement of a horse from now on is accompanied by clapping sounds made on rhythm instruments by ENSEMBLE MEMBERS. (To HAROLD) A white horse for you, all saddled and ready. (To OLAF) A black one for you. What a beauty it is! (HAROLD and OLAF gallop aside.)

JACK: Where is my horse? Haven't you forgotten something? *(Ignored by everyone, JACK approaches the SQUIRE.)* You're forgetting someone!

SQUIRE: *(Brushing JACK aside and addressing the BROTHERS)* Enough of that! Now be off. And may the best man win.

BROTHERS: *(Riding off, quarreling as they go)* I will. No, I will! Etc.

JACK: *(Above the din)* I'm going, too! *(SQUIRE laughs.)* All of a sudden I feel like getting married. If she takes me, she takes me. And if she doesn't, I'll take her anyway!

SQUIRE: Stuff and nonsense! You'll get no horse from me. Why, you've never had a sensible answer to anything. But take your brothers now . . . that's a different matter. They're a couple of bright sparks with answers to spare.

(SQUIRE exits, laughing. A member of the ENSEMBLE comes forward with a billy-goat fashioned like a hobby-horse. Its movements are accompanied by a cow bell.)

JACK: I don't need a horse. I'll take the billy-goat. It's my own, and quite strong enough to carry me.

(MUSIC for JACK's ride. He gallops about the stage, trying to decide which way to go. Despite the fact that the entire ENSEMBLE points in the right direction, he takes off in the wrong one, calling as he goes until his voice grows faint.)

STORYTELLER: So Jack seated himself astride his billy-goat, dug his heels into its sides, and galloped away down the highroad.

JACK: Whee! I'm off! Hey-ho, out of my way!

STORYTELLER: Jack's voice could be heard far and wide, but the brothers rode quietly on ahead. They never spoke a word, for they were practicing their answers, which had to be very clever and smart.

(OLAF and HAROLD ride about the stage. JACK's entrance, and each of his on-the-road encounters with them send them scattering.)

JACK: Hey-ho! Out of my way! *(Stooping)* Look what I've found by the side of the road!

OLAF: A dead crow?

HAROLD: What are you going to do with that?

JACK: I'm going to give it to the Princess.

(BROTHERS ride away from JACK.)

OLAF: I would if I were you.

HAROLD: How she will love it!

(JACK again bursts through the BROTHERS' orderly riding path.)

JACK: Hey-ho! Out of my way! *(Stooping to pick something up)* Look what I've picked up now! You don't find this sort of thing on the road every day!

OLAF: Numbskull! It's nothing but an old wooden shoe with the front part missing.

HAROLD: Is the Princess to have that, too?

JACK: To be sure!

STORYTELLER: How the brothers laughed! On they rode, and soon they were very far ahead.