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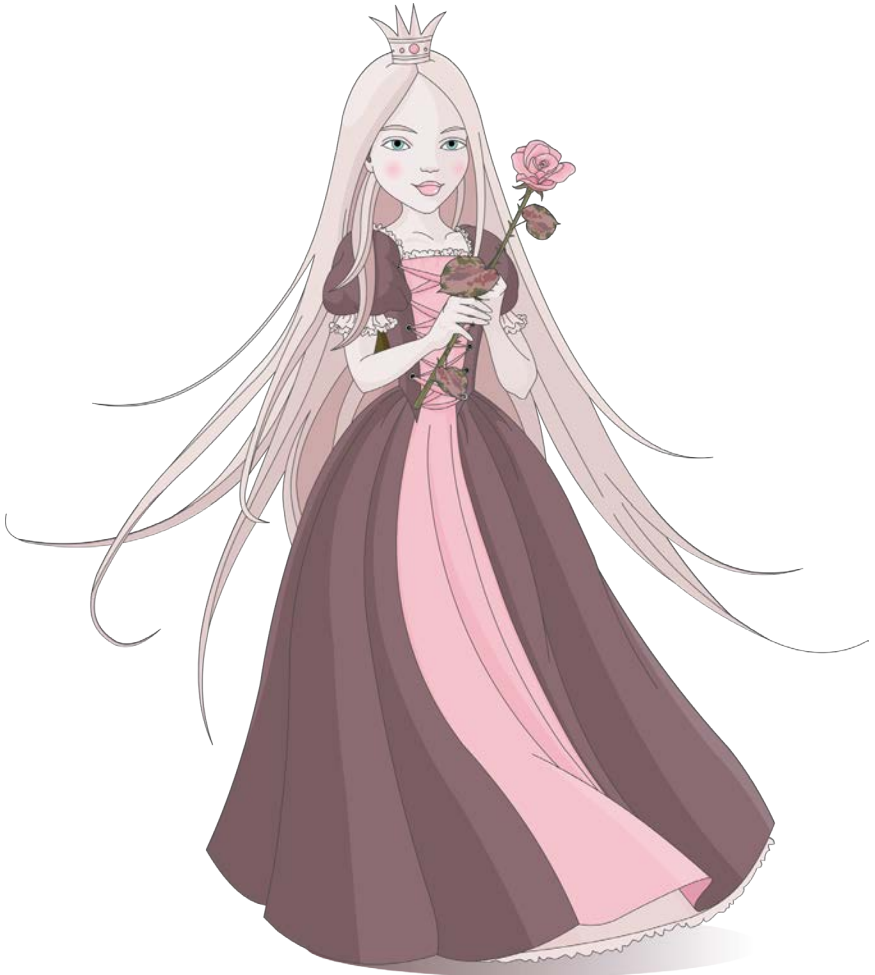
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Family Plays

The Silver Whistle

By
Patrick B. Mace



The Silver Whistle

First produced by
the Eastleigh Children's Theatre Group in England.

Fairy tale. By Patrick B. Mace. Cast: 3m., 2w., 8 either gender, plus extras. This tale has been a prize-winning play and a favored production throughout Britain. Originally written for audience participation, it is readily adaptable to nonparticipation format. In this fairy tale, a silver whistle possessing magic powers is lost by a princess, and great adventures are had in the search for it. The whistle may be used to summon the slave of the whistle, who obeys commands, grants wishes and occasionally issues warnings or reproof. Magic, trickery, theft and the intervention of a bird bring about changes in the whistle's ownership. Its uses result in exciting and sometimes awkward situations. Finally, the policeman asks the audience for assistance in his search for the whistle. Their ready help may be accepted and used or skillfully rejected by the actors. The whistle is ultimately returned to the princess, who, along with the policeman, decides how best to deal with it. *Simple set with various locales. Fairy tale costumes. Approximate running time: 55 minutes. Code: SU6.*



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CHARACTERS

Bago and Rago.....Rogues
Policeman
Soldier
Slave of the Whistle
Danino.....A Conjuror
Cook
Four Servants
Princess
A Bird
Townsfolk

The action takes place variously outside the town, in a street in the town, in an hotel, in a courtroom, and in a prison.

Producers are advised to see production notes at the back of the playbook.

"THE SILVER WHISTLE" by Patrick B. Mace

(The countryside outside a town. Various people enter, greet each (Note 1) other and talk in groups. Bago enters, beckons to Rago and they both tip-toe round the groups stealing purses, etc. and retire to a corner to compare their prizes. The people move off. Bago sees a policeman in the distance and runs to hide.)

BAGO: Hi! Rago! Rago! Come on! Quickly!

RAGO: What's the hurry, Bago?

BAGO: Don't you see that policeman?

RAGO: What policeman?

BAGO: Over there, Come on. Hide!

RAGO: Oh. Oh dear. *(Looks at policeman and misses Bago)* Hey, Bago, where have you got to? That's funny. He was here a moment ago. *(Yells)* Bago!

BAGO: *(popping his head up)* Ssh! Be quiet. Hide.

RAGO: Where?

BAGO: Quick. There. *(Points. Rago hides, then pops his head up again)*

RAGO: Hey, Bago, will this do? Am I hidden?

BAGO: Will you keep quiet!

RAGO: I only wanted to know—

BAGO: Ssh! Here he comes. *(They both disappear. The policeman enters humming)*

POLICEMAN: Pom-pom-pom- *(He comes right on to the acting area and then notices the audience)* Hullo. I've been looking everywhere for you. *(Pulls out a note book)* I've an announcement to make. You may be able to help me. *(Flips over pages)* Where is it, now? *(Hums)* Ah, here we are. *(Clears his throat)* Lost, stolen or strayed. A silver whistle belonging to the Princess Anita is missing. Will anyone who finds the same please return

it to the palace or to the nearest police station. A reward will be given. Has anyone seen a silver whistle? No? For some reason the Princess is very anxious to get it back. I don't know why she can't just buy another, but she won't. Princesses are like that. Have a look, will you. A silver whistle. Don't forget—there's a reward. (*He puts away his note book and goes out humming*) Bago pops his head up)

BAGO: Rago. Hey, Rago. (*A loud snore comes from Rago's hiding place*) Oh, that man! (*Bago comes out and yawns loudly*)

RAGO: (*appearing*) What was that?

BAGO: Me. Did you hear?

RAGO: Hear what?

BAGO: What he said.

RAGO: What who said?

BAGO: The policeman.

RAGO: No.

BAGO: The Princess has lost her silver whistle. There is a reward for whoever finds it.

RAGO: Oo! Have you found it?

BAGO: No.

RAGO: Oh! Neither have I.

BAGO: But don't you see. It's *the* silver whistle. If we find it we shall be rich for life. It's the *silver* whistle.

RAGO: You mean it's the one—

BAGO: Yes.

RAGO: The one you blow and—

BAGO: Yes.

RAGO: And if we find it—

BAGO: Yes.

RAGO: OO!—I hope/we—

BAGO: Look out. Someone coming. (*They hide. Enter Soldier who is very ragged and tired*).

SOLDIER: I'm tired. I can't go a step further. (*Sits*) I've

had such bad luck, you can't think. I'm a soldier returning from the wars and I haven't any money left. Look. (*Shows his pockets*) Not a penny! Oh well, something will turn up. I'll think of a way of making money. I'm a very clever fellow. Lots of people have said how clever I am—and the ones who don't say it think it. If you don't mind I'll have a little sleep. This looks a good place and I'm sure you won't make a noise, will you? Oh-oh-oh (*Yawns*) I'm sleepy. (*He sleeps. Rago and Bago come out to have a look but see Policeman entering and slip back.*)

POLICEMAN: Pom-pom-pom (*Bitterly*) A Silver Whistle! Asking *me* to find a whistle! You've none of you found it yet have you? I thought not. I don't expect the Princess has lost it at all. I expect it's a fuss about nothing. (*Sees Soldier*) Hullo, who is this? (*To audience*) Who is it? A soldier, eh. I ought to wake him up and tell him to move on—that's what I *ought* to do. (*Yawns*) It makes me sleepy to look at him. Poor fellow. Shall I wake him? No, I won't. Let him have his sleep out. (*He tiptoes, very exaggerated, and falls over himself loudly*) SSH!! (*gets up and tiptoes off*)

BAGO: (*appearing and whispering*) Hey, Rago.

RAGO: (*appearing*) Yes, Bago.

BAGO: Come on, let's look for it.

RAGO: For what?

BAGO: The Silver Whistle.

(*They peer about, looking under the Soldier and all round the acting area asking the audience for help. The Soldier starts to wake and they tiptoe off*)

SOLDIER: What are they (you) looking for? A whistle? A Silver Whistle? I wonder if this is it? (*He produces the whistle*) I found this lying in a lane a mile away. I thought I might be able to sell it, you know—or there might be a reward. Always pick up everything; that's my motto.

(*He looks at it*) There doesn't seem to be anything special about it. Just a plain whistle. I wonder if it works.
(*Blows it*) Hum! Not very loud.

(*The slave of the whistle rushes in. He is a fantastic little man with a long white beard and he always rushes*) (Note 2)

SLAVE: What are your commands, O master of the Whistle?

SOLDIER: (*very startled*) EH? Oh, my gracious! I must be still asleep and having a nightmare.

SLAVE: O, Master of the Whistle, what are your commands?

SOLDIER: It talks! It—It's real. (*Looks away*) It can't be.

SLAVE: Your commands, master. Hurry Up. I can't stay here all day.

SOLDIER: (*looks*) It's still here. Go away. (*Soldier looks away. Slave rushes out.*) I'm asleep, that's what. I'm asleep. Has it gone? Phew! That was a horrible dream. I thought a queer little man with a beard—nonsense, of course. I say, though, did you see him? And did you notice something? He called me master of the whistle. The whistle! (*Looks at it*) Perhaps it wasn't a dream. Perhaps he really does come when I blow this. (*Makes to blow*) No, he can't. Well, no harm in blowing, then. (*Makes to blow*) But suppose he does? Shall I? (*Makes to blow*) No, I don't like to—I don't know what—shall I? Alright, here goes. (*Blows whistle. Enter Slave*)

SLAVE: (*impatiently*) What are your commands, oh master of the whistle?

SOLDIER: It works! My goodness gracious!

SLAVE: Your commands? I do wish you'd hurry up.

SOLDIER: But—who are you?

SLAVE: The slave of the whistle—of course.

"THE SILVER WHISTLE"

9

SOLDIER: Do you mean you come whenever I blow—

SLAVE: Yes.

SOLDIER: And you'll do whatever I ask?

SLAVE: Anything. Anywhere. Any time. *If you ask something.*

SOLDIER: Then—then—fetch some food.

SLAVE: What would you like?

SOLDIER: Well—let's see—ham—eggs—jam tarts—sausages, ice cream. *(To audience)* What would you choose? *(If he gets answer he chooses one. The Slave rushes out. The Soldier shouts after him).* And bring some sweets. I don't believe he can do it. He's having me on. *(Slave brings food)* Wow! Sausages *(or whatever it is)* Lots and lots and lots. And sweets. *(To audience)* *(Note 3)* Just taste them and tell me if they are nice, will you. *(Gives sweets)* Good, are they? Have some more. *(He eats ravenously)*

SLAVE: What else do you want, Master?

SOLDIER: Eh? Oh, money, lots and lots of money. *(Slave goes out)* This is luck. Now I shall never be hungry. This is wonderful. *(Improvised dialogue until return of Slave with bags of money)* Let me see. Gold! Gold coins! Dozens and dozens of gold coins. Food! Gold! I'm rich! I—I can be a great man. I can have everything I want.

SLAVE: Well, what do you want?

SOLDIER: You must let me think—but stay around. *(Exit Slave)* I'll put up at the best hotel they have in the town. I'll eat the biggest meal they can cook. I'll sleep in the softest bed they can make. I'll—here. I suppose I'm not dreaming? I'd better make sure. *(Takes out pin and sticks it in himself. Bago and Rago appear)* Ow! I'm awake all right. What luck. Why, I can be the greatest man in the country. I'll be a Duke, an Earl—a Prince—anything. Come on. To the town. Forward.

(He sets off. Bago gets in front of him. Rago circles behind him). (Note 4)

SOLDIER: Haven't I seen you before somewhere?

BAGO: Are you going into the town?

SOLDIER: Yes.

RAGO: *(from behind him)* May we join you?

SOLDIER: Certainly. *(They walk on)* A fine afternoon.

BAGO: Yes.

SOLDIER: Going far?

RAGO: No.

SOLDIER: I see, Just into town, like me.

BAGO: Perhaps.

SOLDIER: May I ask your name?

BAGO: My name is Bago.

RAGO: My name is Rago.

BOTH: We are robbers.

SOLDIER: I'm pleased to meet you—What! *(He runs but they corner him)*. D-D-did you say robbers?

BAGO: Yes.

RAGO: Yes.

BOTH: Come on. Hand it over.

SOLDIER: What's this? How dare you! Let me go.

BAGO: We were watching.

RAGO: We saw.

BOTH: Give us the whistle.

SOLDIER: Oh, no you don't. *(He jumps for safety but they catch him. He struggles.)* Help!

BAGO: It's no use shouting. There is no one to hear.

RAGO: It's no use running. We can run very fast.

BOTH: Hand it over.

SOLDIER: Now, just a minute. Listen. I—ah—happen to have some gold coins on me.

BAGO: We know.

RAGO: We'll have them, too.

SOLDIER: No, be fair. I'll give you ten gold coins each.

(*They laugh*) Twenty gold coins. (*They laugh*) Well, all my money but I keep the whistle.

BAGO: No.

RAGO: No.

BOTH: We want both.

SOLDIER: All right. You win. I can't fight both of you; I'm too weak with lack of sleep. Let go my arms. This is a nice trick, I must say. However. . . . (*He jumps forward and blows the whistle. They attack him. The Slave enters*) Help me! Drive them away. (*The Slave stops the attack and sends them away (Note 5) using magic in the process.*) Ah, ha. That settles you, my friends! Why, I need not be afraid of anyone so long as I have the whistle! Now . . . forward again—to the town—and greatness. (*He goes off*)

II

(*A street in the town. Danino, the conjuror, enters with top hat, wand, etc. for his conjuring tricks. As he approaches he bangs a tambourine to attract attention.*) (Note 6)

DANINO: D - A - N - I - N - O

Danino! Hello! Do you know who I am? I am Danino—a conjuror. But before I can do any conjuring tricks I must attract a crowd. Will you help me? Thank you. I do mysterious, mystifying, marvellous magic. Would you like to help me do that? Fine. I know what we will do! (*From his case he produces tambourines, drums, trumpets or anything suitable*) Who would like one of these? (*Shares out instruments amongst the children*) Now, (*indicating a third of the audience*) (Note 7) I want all of you to say *Mysterious* very mysteriously, like this—*Mysterious*. And while you say it I want you to

rattle the tambourines, and bang the drums. Shall we practice? (*practices with improvised dialogue*) And I want all you (*indicating the second third*) to say *Mystifying*—like this—mystifying; and you shake the tambourines. Shall we practice? (*practices*) And you (*the last third*) must say *Marvellous* and you shake the tambourines (*practices*) And now altogether we say *Magic*. Now let's try all that together (*conducting*)—Mysterious, Mystifying, Marvellous *Magic*. Fine. Now all we have to do is wait for a crowd to come along. (*Townpeople appear*) Oh, here comes someone now. Don't forget, will you. (*He begins to attract the crowd*) Ladies and Gentlemen, I am Danino. I am the greatest conjuror in the world and out of it. I do (*making sure the children respond*) mysterious, mystifying, marvellous magic. (*The townspeople are impressed. The Soldier appears on the edge of the crowd*). Excuse me lady (*Produces a scarf from her neck and waves it in the air*) and pardon me lady (*produces an egg from another lady's neck*) allow me (*Note 8*) to present you with an egg. (*crowd react delightedly*) That was nothing. I am now going to show you a real trick. (*Following trick done with appropriate panache and improvised dialogue*). Here I have a piece of paper—a school report. I am going to tear it into pieces, so - so - again - and again. I am going to fold it very very tightly. Now watch very carefully. I start to unfold the paper (*he unfolds and shows a complete sheet of paper*). There! (*bows, delighted applause from crowd*). Now if you would like to come to my real performance tomorrow just gather round here and I will sell you some tickets. (*He turns away from the audience, the townsfolk crowd round him to buy tickets, leaving the acting area open for the Soldier to gain the attention of the audience. The Soldier blows the whistle softly. The Slave enters*).

SLAVE: What are your commands, O master?

SOLDIER: Can you make us both invisible? (The Slave nods) Go on, make me invisible then. (The Slave works magic) I don't feel any different yet. Hurry up.

SLAVE: You are invisible Master. (Note 9)

SOLDIER: What? (*Looks at his hands and then down at himself and obviously cannot see anything*) I can't see my hand. What's happened to me? (*Panics a little*) Get me back! Get me back! (*The Slave does so*) That's better. Now make yourself invisible. (*The Slave does so, the Soldier gropes round for the Slave and eventually catches hold of his beard*). When I say "now" make me invisible again. You understand? (*To the audience*) I hope he understands. (*The Soldier approaches Danino and the crowd*). Pooh! I don't think much of those tricks.

CROWD & DANINO: Hush! Be quiet! etc.

SOLDIER: Anyone can make a scarf appear. Can you make it disappear? Can you make yourself disappear?

DANINO: (*annoyed*) Can you?

SOLDIER: Yes, I can.

CROWD: Nonsense! Humbug! etc.

SOLDIER: I am a better conjuror than he is. I can make myself invisible and he can't.

DANINO: Do it, then.

CROWD: Yes, go on, do it.

SOLDIER: Right, I will do it. Ladies and Gentlemen I am about to make myself invisible. One—two—are you ready? NOW! (*Slave makes gesture and the Soldier is obviously invisible to the crowd. He walks around them occasionally tapping a shoulder, tipping off a hat, etc. making them jump.*)

CROWD: He's gone. Where is he? I can't see him! He is hiding, etc.

A MAN: He has done it. He has made himself

invisible. (*The Soldier, very pleased with himself, makes signs to the audience not to give him away.*)

A WOMAN: But where is he?

A MAN: He is here but you can't see him. (*They feel about and Soldier dodges*)

SOLDIER: (*Aside to Slave*) Make me visible again. (*Slave does so.*) Here I am. (*Crowd applauds and gathers round the Soldier excitedly, calling out, "Do another trick," "He is better than Danino"*) (*Slave goes out*) I'll do a lot more tricks but first you must lead me to the best hotel in the town—the very best.

CROWD: We will—follow us. Etc. (*Exit Soldier and crowd*)

DANINO: (*in a fury*) He has spoiled my show. The humbug! But how did he do it? It's not fair. He has spoiled my show. (*Enter Bago and Rago*)

BAGO: What's the matter?

DANINO: He spoiled my show.

BAGO: Who did?

RAGO: What show?

BOTH: How?

DANINO: I am a conjuror. I was giving a show of conjuring tricks when a tattered, ragged beggar of a fellow comes along and—and—do you know what he did? He made himself invisible! He really did! I can't do that and I am the great Danino! Naturally, all the people followed him.

BAGO: It's him. It's the Soldier.

RAGO: It must be.

BAGO: What luck! Mr. Danino, being a conjuror, will be able to get the Whistle for us. Look. Mr. Danino, would you like to get your own back on this fellow?

DANINO: Would I? I'll teach him to do better tricks than mine.

BAGO: And win a reward?