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*Dramatic Publishing*

# The Princess and the Pea, No TV, and Other Plays



Four short plays for children  
By  
Ric Averill



The Dramatic Publishing Company

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# The Princess and the Pea, No TV, and Other Plays

**The Princess and the Pea.** Cast: 2 m., 5w., 1m. or w. This retelling of the classic fairy tale features a prince, dumb with adolescence, whose only hope is to find the perfect princess. Though three others apply, Princess Rose is the only one who can pass the test of the pea under 12 mattresses and save the kingdom. *Unit set representing castle interior with one small outside area. Approximate running time: 30 minutes. No TV.* Cast: 3m., 2w., 3m. or w. *Doubling possible.* Serenity is grounded from television and told to clean her room. With no TV and only a Deluxe Filter Queen vacuum cleaner to play with, her imagination runs wild and brings forth such characters as the Dust Bee, Prince Charmin, and the Underbedgator. A triumph of the imagination over the idiot box. *Unit set representing Serenity's bedroom. Approximate running time: 25 minutes.* **Cats and Bats.** Cast: 2w., 2m. or w. Lazy Lucy the Calico Cat is extremely content, until her Mistress Nolan brings home a new "baby brother" in the form of Belfry the Bat. Belfry is so hyperactive that it looks like the two will never get along, until they have to band together to stop the neighborhood bully, Ranger the Dog. *Unit set representing Nolan's backyard. Approximate running time: 15 minutes.* **The Great Alphabet Robbery.** Cast: 3m, 1w, 28m. or w. *Doubling possible.* Oscar and Archibald are incorrigible students. The only hope their principal can see is to send them down the "blue hallway" of imagination where they set out to steal the letters of the alphabet. As they steal letters, they can't use them in speech, and soon they discover the value of learning. *Unit set representing classroom, office, "blue hallway" and "alphabet land." Approximate running time: 20 minutes.*

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**Four Short Plays for Children**

**by**

**RIC AVERILL**



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

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For Trish, my Princess  
For Will, the Great One  
and, of course,  
For Jeanne, my Muse

# **THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA, NO TV, AND OTHER PLAYS**

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*THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA* was first produced by the Seem-To-Be-Players for a Kansas tour in the fall of 1998 with the following cast and crew:

Director . . . . . JENNIFER GLENN  
Music composed and performed by . . . . . RIC AVERILL  
Costumes . . . . . RIC AVERILL  
Sets . . . . . MARK REANEY, BRENT OLIVER

Prince . . . . . CAM DEVICTOR  
Queen . . . . . JENNIFER GLENN  
Page . . . . . JERRY MITCHELL  
Wizard . . . . . JASON WARE  
Princess Rose . . . . . ERIN KESSLER  
Princesses Nettle/ Ivy/ Briar . . . . . KIRSTEN PALUDAN

# THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA

## CHARACTERS

PRINCE

QUEEN: His mother.

PAGE: Their messenger (male or female).

WIZARD

PRINCESS ROSE: A beautiful young maiden.

PRINCESS NETTLE: A greedy young maiden.

PRINCESS IVY: A needy young maiden.

PRINCESS BRIAR: A bossy young maiden.

PLACE: In a kingdom faraway.

TIME: Long ago.

SETTING: *Lights come up on a unit set. Castle spires in the background inform the audience that the chambers before them are royal, complete with a throne and a grand entrance slightly UL. DL is an archway that leads to a bedchamber. UR are steps leading up to an overlook near one of the castle spires. DR is an archway that leads to a small area which serves as "outdoors," with a tree overhanging a small clearing. The action moves from the castle chamber to outside and back again, with the next to last short scene in the royal bedroom.*

AT RISE: *PRINCE enters. He is very young and handsome, but sad. He looks around and sighs.*

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PRINCE. Ahhh. Empty. The room is empty. The castle is empty. My life is empty. *(Sighs again.)* Ahhh.

*(PRINCE turns, walks up the steps to the overlook and leans on his elbows, looking very winsome. PAGE enters. PAGE is enthusiastic and somewhat cocky.)*

PAGE. Prince! Prince? Where are you? *(PAGE looks about, pokes his head into the bedchamber. Runs back into the room and looks out the front door, shakes his head.)*

PRINCE *(sighs)*. Ahhh. *(PAGE hears him, runs to the bottom of the steps.)*

PAGE. Ha, there you are. Fishing today, Your Majesty?

PRINCE *(sighs)*. Ahhh.

PAGE *(shrugs)*. Chess, perhaps?

PRINCE *(sighs)*. Ahhh.

PAGE *(runs to bedroom, looks in)*. A nap?

PRINCE *(looking down, finally noticing PAGE)*. Is that my Page making so much noise?

PAGE. Indeed, Your Majesty. Your first Page, your last Page, your one and only Page. I'm the whole book.

PRINCE. I really don't want company and I don't want to play. I just...I just want to look over the ramparts and... *(Sighs.)* Ahhh.

PAGE *(shakes his head)*. Something is wrong with you. Something is definitely wrong with you. I'm going to go get the Court Wizard. He'll know what to do. *(He runs out the UL entrance.)*

PRINCE. I don't want anybody to *do* anything. I just want to be left alone. *(Sighs.)* Ahhh.

(PAGE enters UL with the Court WIZARD. PAGE is talking.)

PAGE. ... doesn't want company, doesn't want to play. He just wants to look over the ramparts and... Ahhh. (*Sighs, imitating the PRINCE, who sighs immediately after.*)

PRINCE. Ahhh.

PAGE. You see?

WIZARD. Ah, I do, I do see. I always see. That's my job, you know, I'm a seer. And being a seer, I'm also a believer. And I believe I know the root of this boy's problem. Yes, the root is known and we can pluck it out, or cure it at least. Page, go and get the Queen. I'll stay here with the boy. (*PAGE exits.*)

PRINCE (*looks down at WIZARD, who returns his gaze*). I don't need anyone to stay with me, Wizard. I don't need any of your spells.

WIZARD. Ha, you may think not, but I know the root of your problem and it will make you wildly unpredictable, mark my words, and I do mark my own words, which is why I have so many books in my chambers.

(*QUEEN enters UL, ushered in by the PAGE.*)

QUEEN. What is it, what is it? It must be important to bring me away from tea before crumpets. (*She notices her son.*) Why are you up there, my Prince?

WIZARD & PAGE. He doesn't want company, he doesn't want to play, he just wants to look over the ramparts and— (*They sigh.*) Ahhh.

QUEEN (*stops them*). Cut that out! What is going on, son?

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PRINCE. They're right, Mother. I just want to be left alone.

QUEEN. Left alone? Left alone? By all of us?

PRINCE. I believe that's what alone is.

WIZARD. Queen, I think I know the problem, and knowing that, I think I know the solution, and knowing that, I think the problem's solved.

PAGE. Not yet, Wizard, the boy's still up there.

QUEEN. Yes, yes, Wizard, what do you think is the problem?

WIZARD. Adolescence, my dear Queen. The boy has a severe and crisis case of adolescence.

QUEEN. My goodness. Already?

WIZARD. I'm afraid so.

PAGE. Is it catching?

WIZARD. It's inevitable.

PAGE. I'm not going up there.

QUEEN. But what can be done?

WIZARD. It's really quite simple. For now, we must leave him alone. But the ultimate solution is to get him a bride.

PAGE. A bride? Scary.

QUEEN. A princess around the castle? Is it really time, Wizard?

WIZARD. I'm afraid so, Your Majesty.

QUEEN. Then so be it. Page!

PAGE. Yes, Your Majesty?

QUEEN. Go out across the kingdom and proclaim that as soon as we find the perfect princess, the Prince shall take her for his bride and they shall one day be the rulers of this fair kingdom.

PAGE. Yes, Your Majesty.

QUEEN. Come, Wizard, let us continue to experiment with your elixir of youth. I suddenly feel very old. *(She and WIZARD exit. PAGE looks up at PRINCE.)*

PAGE. Uh, Prince, any special requests in princess types?

PRINCE *(looks down at him)*. Just leave me alone, please. I don't care about anything. I just want to be left alone. *(Sighs.)* Ahhh.

*(PAGE shrugs and starts out the DR archway. The lights shift and music moves us forward in time. PRINCESS ROSE enters with milk pails. PAGE stops near her.)*

PAGE. Hear ye! Hear ye! The Prince will take a bride. All perfect princesses should apply. Hear ye! Hear ye! *(He stops and looks at ROSE.)* Hello, ye. What are you doing?

PRINCESS ROSE. Silly Page. I've just milked a cow for a poor old woman whose joints were too knobby to do it herself.

PAGE. Yuck. My joints are knobby, too. May I have a sip? *(ROSE smiles and offers him a bucket. He drinks.)* Do you know where any perfect princesses are?

PRINCESS ROSE. I don't know that any princess is perfect. Princess Nettle lives just over that hill, and I—

PAGE. Over the hill. My thanks, milkmaid. Uh, back to work. *(He exits, ROSE smiles and looks up at the castle.)*

PRINCESS ROSE. If I lived in that castle, someone else would do the milking for me. *(Sighs.)* Ahhh.

*(ROSE leaves just as PAGE enters with PRINCESS NETTLE. He is moving in front of her as if in retreat.)*

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PRINCESS NETTLE. Tell me more, Page. How big is the royal tiara? Are the bedrooms nice? Satin sheets? How big is this kingdom anyway? And—

PAGE. Please, please, I'm only a Page. Not even a very interesting or important Page, so save your questions for the Queen and the Prince. *(They enter the DL archway and PAGE cries out.)* Hear ye! Hear ye! Princess Nettle is here to meet the Prince.

*(QUEEN enters with the WIZARD behind her.)*

PRINCE *(looks down and sighs)*. Ahhh. *(Looks away.)*

PRINCESS NETTLE *(curtsies deeply)*. Your Majesty. I'm a perfect princess here to apply to be your loyal daughter-in-law.

QUEEN. Oh, my, what manners. *(QUEEN curtsies back. WIZARD and PAGE bow. NETTLE curtsies again. QUEEN responds in kind. NETTLE curtsies yet again, even lower. QUEEN tries to imitate, gets stuck, WIZARD and PAGE pull her back up.)* I am charmed, Princess Nettle. Tell me, what are your ambitions as princess? What do you desire?

PRINCESS NETTLE. Why, everything, Your Majesty, of course. I want treasure and baubles and dresses and land and more land and more treasures and dances and everything fine. *(QUEEN nods to WIZARD who nods to the PAGE who is shaking his head no, but upon seeing the nods, he nods his head.)*

QUEEN. Done! Just go up those steps and introduce yourself to the Prince and as soon as he agrees, we'll have the wedding and he will sigh no more.

PRINCESS NETTLE. Thank you, Your Majesty. (*She walks up the steps. PRINCE looks at her as she reaches his platform.*)

PRINCE (*sighs*). Ahhh. Hello. Who are you?

PRINCESS NETTLE. I'm Nettle, your perfect princess. Just think, it won't be long before your mother is gone and then you'll be king and I'll be your perfect queen and we shall have everything and what we don't have we will take or tax the people so we can buy it and then we'll have everything, everything, everything—

PRINCE. But love?

PRINCESS NETTLE. Love?

PRINCE. I'm sorry, Princess Nettle, but I really just want to be left alone. (*Sighs and turns away.*) Ahhh. (*NETTLE walks back down and looks dumbstruck at QUEEN and WIZARD.*)

QUEEN. What did he say? When is the wedding to be?

PRINCESS NETTLE. He wants... he wants to be left alone.

QUEEN. What does that mean?

WIZARD (*whispering in QUEEN's ear*). It means he doesn't love her, and not loving her, he doesn't want her.

PAGE (*also whispering*). It means she's not the perfect princess after all.

PRINCESS NETTLE (*looks at all of them, indignantly realizing what's happening*). How dare you, any of you! I'm too good for this tiny kingdom anyway. I'm going to go find a more perfect prince somewhere else. Good day! (*She stomps off.*)

QUEEN. Oh, my, she wasn't perfect at all. Now what?

WIZARD. We keep searching, and searching we find, and finding we—



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QUEEN. Page!

PAGE. I'm on my way!

*(QUEEN and WIZARD exit. PAGE goes DR through the archway as lights shift. ROSE enters carrying a tray of baked goods. PAGE stops near her.)*

PAGE. Hear ye! Hear ye! Hello, ye! I remember you. The Prince will take a bride and all perfect princesses should apply. What goodies do you have there?

PRINCESS ROSE. Silly Page. Just sweetmeats and bread pudding. I made them for a poor princess who's feeling ill.

PAGE. Uh, I'm feeling ill?

PRINCESS ROSE. Here, you can have one. But just one.

PAGE *(devours a cake)*. Made these for a princess? Where is she? And is she perfect?

PRINCESS ROSE. I don't know that any princess is perfect. But her name is Princess Ivy and she lives just down the vale. I might mention that I am also—

PAGE. Down the vale. Here, I'll take these for you! *(PAGE exits, eating another cake.)*

PRINCESS ROSE *(smiles and sighs, looks up at the castle)*. Ahhh. If I lived there, they'd have a huge kitchen and I might not have to do all the cooking, but what I did cook, I'd cook for someone special. *(Sighs.)* Ahhh.

*(ROSE turns and exits. PAGE enters with PRINCESS IVY. He is walking beside her listening to her whine and complain.)*

PRINCESS IVY. There were supposed to be more cakes on the tray. She always brings more cakes. How come there aren't more cakes?

PAGE. Please, please, I'm only a simple Page. When you get to the castle there will be more cakes than you can imagine. *(They enter the DR archway and PAGE cries out.)* Hear ye! Hear ye! Princess Ivy is here to meet the Prince.

*(QUEEN enters with the WIZARD behind her.)*

PRINCE *(looks down and sighs, looks back away)*. Ahhh.

PRINCESS IVY *(walks up to the QUEEN)*. Oh, you must be the Queen. You're so pretty. I wish I could be just like you. I never had a mother that I can remember and I've been ever so, ever so lonely. *(Throws her arms around the QUEEN, almost in tears.)*

QUEEN. Oh, my, what an affectionate child. *(QUEEN nods to WIZARD and PAGE, who peels her off.)* Do you think you could be a perfect princess for my son the Prince?

PRINCESS IVY. Just tell me what to do. I'll be whatever you want, just as long as you feed me and clothe me and keep me from harm. Please, I've been alone so long I was beginning to think no one cared about me. *(She starts to cry and QUEEN comforts her, giving her a hug, which she returns quite strongly.)*

QUEEN. There, there, we care. *(Peeling her off again.)* Now, you just go on up those stairs and talk to the Prince and just as soon as he names the day, then you shall be my daughter. *(QUEEN nods to WIZARD who*

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*has been shaking his head no with the PAGE. Upon seeing the QUEEN, they both nod their heads.)*

PRINCESS IVY. I hope he'll like me. What if he doesn't like me?

PAGE. He isn't going to know if he likes you if you don't go up those steps.

WIZARD (*whispering*). I don't hold out much hope for this one, Page. (*QUEEN shoots them a look. IVY walks up the steps. PRINCE looks at her as she reaches his platform.*)

PRINCE (*sighs*). Ahhh. Who are you?

PRINCESS IVY. Oh, don't even say it. I knew it. I knew you wouldn't like me! No one likes me. I can't help it if I whine all the time. It's just that nothing ever goes right and I can't figure out why and then everyone makes fun of me and I want to be perfect, but I know I'm not and I wish I was and now you hate me and I give up... (*She goes back down the stairs, half in tears.*)

PRINCE. She didn't say one word about love. Ahhh. (*Turns away. PRINCESS IVY looks at the QUEEN and the WIZARD, bursts into tears.*)

PRINCESS IVY. He's terrible. He has no sympathy. I don't think anyone will ever marry him. Certainly not I!

QUEEN (*watching her exit in tears through archway DR*). What in the world was that all about?

WIZARD. Your Majesty, I suspect the boy told her that he wants to be left alone, and wanting to be alone means—

QUEEN. He doesn't love her.

PAGE. Still not a perfect princess? (*QUEEN and WIZARD shake their heads and turn to exit.*) I'm on my way!