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Dramatic Publishing

The Flying Prince

By
Aurand Harris



The Flying Prince

Fairy tale. By Aurand Harris. Based on the stories told by Vikramaditya of Ujjain, a hero of India. Cast: 8m., 6w., plus extras. The Flying Prince is a lyrical play of enchantment and a colorful, high adventure into an exotic land. In the golden age of India, a princess is kidnapped by a bandit as she journeys to marry her prince. To rescue her, the prince petitions the gods to allow him to become a bird, and his wish is granted. Leaving his own body, he soars over mountains, saves the princess, and carries her to his Golden Palace. However, in his absence, a crafty servant takes possession of the royal body and acts as the prince. A dramatic climax is reached as the real prince outwits both the wicked servant and the evil bandit. A helpful property man and Oriental song and dance offer imaginative and theatrical solutions to staging. Simple set pieces. Regal and peasant costumes of ancient India. Approximate running time: 45 minutes. Code: FB6.



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Dramatic Publishing Company

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FOREWORD

THE FLYING PRINCE by Aurand Harris is a folk tale of India well chosen for Western dramatic treatment. The author has successfully captured the idiom and spirit of the Indian fairy tale on which it is based. Its manner is simple and compelling; as a play it is lively and humorous. To the American audience, it provides a delightful excursion into the realm of Indian legends and folklore.

It is enjoyable by persons of all ages and can be played both by children and adults. Its fantasy should expand our imaginations and lead us to new appreciations of and curiosity about unfamiliar cultural traditions.

PAUL C. SHERBERT,
Executive Director
The Asia Society
New York City, N.Y.

Dedicated
to
Fort Wayne Youtheatre
Fort Wayne, Indiana
in
celebration of their
Fiftieth Anniversay

The Flying Prince

CAST

ACHARYA..... a Wise Man
VIKRAM..... a Prince
PANDU.....Servant to Prince
MANORAMA..... a Princess
URMILA..... her Maid-in-Waiting
BADRI..... a Bandit
SAKE.....a Warrior
HARI..... Guard to Princess
RAVI..... Guard to Princess
SUJATA..... Serving Maidens
SUCHARITA.....
UJJALA.....
MONKEY
GUARDS..... of Vikram's palace
WARRIORS, STREET PROCESSION, WEDDING
GUESTS

SCENES

The time is long ago. The place is ancient India. The scenes are on a mountain road, in the Great Palace of the City of Ujjain, on a mountain peak, and in a bandit's cave.

The Flying Prince

ACT I SCENE 1.

(There is melodic music of ancient India. A loud gong announces the beginning of the play. Acharya appears through the center of the Main Curtains.)

ACHARYA. (*He is a Wise Man, old, with a white beard and a white turban. He is not feeble, but moves with dignity and energy. He wears a long dhoti with a white silk throw over his shoulder. Being a great story teller, he speaks with lyrical beauty and dramatic vitality. He raises his hand to bless the audience.*) May the gods on the snowy peaks of the Himalayas bless you. (*Bows*) I am old and grave. But the story I tell is of a Prince young and brave, who lived in the great City of Ujjain in the great country of India. Far away and long ago was this golden day. We must on a journey go—travel back—to once upon an ancient time. (*Gong. Property Man enters*) This is the Property Man. His duties he will do, and set each scene on the stage for you to view. (*Property Man bows*) Hear now and behold. To you I bow. The tapestry of our story we unfold. (*He bows. Gong*) It is the Prince's wedding day. Bells are ringing in the golden towers. Bells are singing the happy hours. Make way! It is a royal holiday day. (*Property Man pulls imaginary bell ropes, long ropes, high ropes, heavy ropes, and enjoying it all. Bells are heard ringing. Vikram and Padu enter at L and stand in a circle of light. Vikram is a handsome young Prince. He wears a colorful long dhoti of silk, a loose collarless silk blouse with tight sleeves. On his arms are many royal bracelets. A throw is draped over one shoulder, knotted and hanging on the side. His shoes are richly embroidered. Pandu is a servant of the Prince. He*

is impressed with his importance. Although he is a villain, his actions are always colored with broad comedy. He wears a plain long dhoti to his ankles, a throw over one shoulder, a flat turban on his head, and no shoes on his feet. He carries the royal crown. Bells stop) Prince Vikram, young and bold, outshines the sun, with jewels and gold. To the east he looks, searching far and wide. From the east will come his Princess bride. While his servant, Pandu, stands by—and looks at the royal crown, with a greedy eye. (Manorama and Urmila enter at R, and stand in a circle of light. Manorama is a beautiful Princess with dark silky hair hanging loose down her back. She wears a silk sari with a matching blouse, many bangles that jingle when she moves her arms, and other royal jewelry. She has a red spot on her forehead. She wears no shoes, but has anklets with bells. She has poise, grace and charm. Urmila, her Hand-Maiden, is becomingly dressed in a simple but rich sari, one bangle on each wrist, no shoes. Her dark hair is braided and knotted on her head. She wears a single flower in it. She is sweet, impulsive and affectionate. She carries an ornate jewel box) Over the mountain, a journey away. Princess Manorama, in silk and gold array, looks to the west where she will go on her wedding day; while Urmila, her friend and maid, happily brings the wedding jewels—beads, bangles and rings. But alas, upon their golden glory, a shadow will come to pass. (Property Man motions and lights dim out on Vikram, who exits with Pandu. Property Man motions and lights dim out on Manorama who exits with Urmila) On a dangerous adventure the Prince will go, and evil deed he must banish hence, in the ancient story of—The Flying Prince. (Gong. Acharya exits. Transition music. Main curtains open. Property Man, from property table at side, holds up sign: A MOUNTAIN PATH)

SCENE 2.

(A mountain path. Sake enters, cautiously, followed by Badri. They are mountain bandits. Both wear plain dhotis, shirts with sash, turbans and no shoes)

BADRI. (*He is cruel and powerful in body and in speech*) Do you see them? Does the Princess come upon the road?

SAKE. There is no one in sight. The road is lonely, like the sky on a starless night.

BADRI. We will stay. On this mountain path, the Princess will come on her way to wed the prince. (*Draws sword*) But, by this hand, I will stop her caravan! She shall be a bride for me, the famous bandit, Badri!

SAKE. A shadow grows on the road.

BADRI. It is the Princess. How many guards are there to slay?

SAKE. I cannot see. But they come this way.

BADRI. Draw your sword. Hide. Hide beside the tree. The tree! (*Badri points. Property Man quickly stands at L, where Badri pointed, holds painted tree top in front of his face, his body making the tree trunk. Badri and Sake hide at R and L of tree. Bells of the sedan chair jingle off R. Manorama is carried in R on a small golden sedan chair which is supported by two poles, held by two guards: Hari in front, and Ravi at the back. They wear dhotis, silk shirts, turbans, and no shoes. Urmila follows, carrying a jewel box. Manorama, wearing a veil, raises her hand. The Guards halt*) It is the Princess. See! She stops. Move not. Silent be.

URMILA. (*To Guards*) Stay. The Princess will rest before she journeys on her way. (*Guards put down sedan chair*)

MANORAMA. (*Lifts veil, steps out of chair, smiles radiantly*) Oh, how happy feels the sun as he smiles on

me today. (*Calls, excitedly*) Urmila, sweet Urmila. Open the jewel box. Let me hold and see the golden bangles the Prince has sent to me. (*Holds up dazzling bracelets from box*) With this golden token, the Prince his love has spoken. And the bird he sent in the golden cage. Bring it near. (*Guard gives small bird cage, hanging at the back of the chair, to Urmila*) Oh sing, my little bird, sing for me. Your sweet song I long to hear. (*Flute music, off, for the bird singing. She sings words to the tune*)

Coo-who-who

Hear my song;

Coo-who-who

Come, come along.

Oh, Urmila, let us away. Precious time we waste. We must no longer delay. Make haste! (*Lowers veil. Sits in chair*)

URMILA. (*Returns cage, gets jewel box, speaks to Guards*) Run! (*Guards pick up sedan chair*) Carry the Princess to her Prince before another hour is spun.

BADRI. Halt! No one passes on this path but me!

HARI. We journey to the City of Ujjain. Stand aside in the Prince's name.

BADRI. With sword in hand, on this mountain I command!

HHARI. (*Puts down chair. Draws sword*) By this arm, you shall not harm the Princess. She is in my care. Strike if you dare!

BADRI. Cowards like you cry and flee from me. I am the famous bandit, Badri!

HARI. Let us pass, in his name, the Prince of Ujjain!

BADRI. Sake, your sword spread! Strike! Let blood run red!

HARI. To arms, Ravi. You and I this evil will defy!
(*Music. Badri and Hari fight. Sake and Ravi fight*)

URMILA. Oh, Princess, he is the famous bandit, Badri. He will show no mercy on you or me. *(The fight grows wilder with shouts and blows. Ravi is disarmed and, frightened, runs off, calling)*

RAVI. Help! Help! Save the Princess from Badri!

HARI. *(He bravely fights both Badri and Sake. He is overcome and is wounded)* Oh, I am wounded. Princess—Princess, flee! *(He falls. Music stops)*

BADRI. The Princess belongs to me! Sake, you the serving-maid may take. She—there—who quakes and trembles and is only passing fair. She is yours. I—I will take the Princess with the raven hair.

MANORAMA. No! I am promised to the Prince of Ujjain. *(Holds out golden bangles)*

BADRI. *(Knocks the bangles away)* The Prince you will never see. On the mountain, my bride you will be. *(To Sake)* Sake, take your prize. To the cave! Away! *(Sake pulls Urmila off L)* And I will take the royal jewel that I have won today! *(He sweeps Manorama up over his shoulder and laughs triumphantly. She kicks, pounds on his back, and cries for help, as he carries her off L)*

HARI. *(Moves and sits up)* The Princess—she is gone! Here—what do I find? *(Picks up bangles)* Her golden bangles left behind. Badri has stolen her away. *(Rises)* I must go. The Prince must know of this evil deed. *(Starts, but leg is injured)* My leg—it does bleed. Oh, tree, give me of your branches a helping hand—so I may walk and stand. *(Property Man, hidden behind tree top, extends his arm, handing Hari a stick, which Hari takes)* I must to the palace go, ring the bell, and to the Prince my fearful message tell. Oh, tree, hear me, help me. As I, through the forest go, echo my cry, so all will know: The Princess has been stolen. The Princess has been stolen. *(Property Man extends his head from left of tree and mouths the words which are echoed from off-stage: The Princess has*

been stolen) The Princess has been stolen, taken far away. (*Property Man extends head from right of tree and mouths the words which are echoed from off-stage: Taken far away*) The Princess has been stolen, stolen on her wedding day. (*Property Man lowers tree and extends head above it and mouths the words which are echoed off-stage: Stolen on her wedding day*) (*Hari exits. Sedan chair is taken off. Property Man puts tree on property table and takes sign which he holds up: IN THE PALACE. Transition music*)

SCENE 3.

(A room inside the royal palace. A golden door is at the back)

PANDU. (*Enters, holding Vikram's crown*) Attend! Attend! (*He claps his hands. Three Serving Maidens enter. They wear silk flowing saris*) Maidens enter. Maidens bow. In the name of Prince Vikram your duties I proclaim. Into this royal chamber you will bring the Princess. In this royal chamber you will sing to the Princess. Her maidens you will be. These are the orders from the Prince—and from me.

1 MAID. Oh, Pandu, how funny you are when you walk and talk like the Prince.

2 MAID. You act as if YOU wore the crown.

PANDU. Ah, IF I wore a crown—

3 MAID. Shall we bow and call you "Prince Pandu"?

PANDU. (*Already living the part*) Oh, If I wore a crown—

2 MAID. If you wore a crown . . . ?

1 MAID. Stop. Take care. Your foolish greed will bring you trouble.

3 MAID. Beware. A greedy mind, like a bubble, bursts with too much air.

PANDU. If I wore a crown—I will. I will.

3 MAID. Oh, no, Pandu. Do not do it. I fear for you.
(*Pandu puts crown above his head*)

1 MAID. Do not wear it. Do not dare!

PANDU. (*Crown on head, comically imitates royalty*) If I wore a crown what a handsome prince I would be. If I wore a crown—YOU would bow to me. (*He points at maidens who laugh and bow mockingly*)

2 MAID. Bow to you?

PANDU. With the royal bow and arrows I would hunt from dawn to dusk. (*He mimes shooting. Maidens react*) Zing! One elephant tusk. Zing! One tiger by the tree. Zing! One giant chimpanzee.

3 MAID. What else would you do, Prince Pandu?

PANDU. I would have peacock feathers, fanning me, cooling all the air. I would have dancing maidens, whirling and swirling, with lotus blossoms in their hair. (*Maidens, enjoying the fun, pose in dance position*) I would have music play at my command. Lutes and flutes, when I clapped my hand. (*He claps hands, and he sings a rhythm. Maidens, with ankle bells tinkling, dance*) Oh, zing-aling-sing, a-ding, ding, etc. (*Dance ends*) If I wore a crown, the world would be mine! If I wore a crown—(*Three gong sounds. He stops abruptly. All freeze*)

2 MAID. It is the Prince.

PANDU. The Prince?

3 MAID. He comes this way.

PANDU. (*He takes off crown. Maidens line up*) Quick! Attend! Without delay! (*Announces*) His Highness, Prince Vikram comes. Make way.

VIKRAM. (*Enters, motions to bowing Maidens*) Dismissed. (*Maidens, exit bowing*) Oh, Pandu, today the City sings with joy—and so do I! (*Lustily sings a phrase*)

Today the City dances with joy—and so do I! (*Dances, singing a phrase*)

PANDU. Your crown.

VIKRAM. (*Pandu puts crown on Vikram*) Yes. For the wedding I must be dressed. Place it straight. I must look my best. Today is the golden hour of my life. Today I take a wife! (*Pandu steps back and bows*) Go, Pandu. Give help. Give aid. Preparations for the Princess must be made. A hundred horsemen on parade. Elephants, with ropes of jewels for us to ride. She and I, side by side. Heralds in the street, marching to the beat of golden drums. A day of jubilee, a day of revelry! (*Commotion off*) What noise? What cries are these I hear?

PANDU. Footsteps, running in the hall. (*Commotion grows louder*) Coming near. It is your favorite monkey, chased by the guards.

VIKRAM. He was in your care. Pandu, your duties you do not do.

MONKEY. (*Enters, chased by Guards. Monkey chatters with comic monkey sounds for his dialogue*)

GUARDS. (*There can be two or more*)

Grab him!

Nab him by the nose!

This way.

That way.

There he goes!

Race him.

Chase him.

Pop him.

Stop him.

Where?

There!

Over here.

Fetch him.

Catch him by the ear.

Scold him.

Hold him.

Spot him.

I've got him, by the knee.

Let loose, you goose. You've got ME!

MONKEY. (*Monkey ends chase by running to Vikram and hugging his knees*)

GUARDS. (*See Prince, stop, and back off bowing*) The Prince! Your Highness!

MONKEY. (*Hugs Prince violently, chattering*)

VIKRAM. Hold. No more hugging. I insist. (*To Guards*) You have done your duty well. Dismissed. (*Guards bow out, followed by Pandu*) Now, little mischief maker, attend to what I say.

MONKEY. (*Shakes head, chattering*)

VIKRAM. (*Sternly*) Listen and obey!

MONKEY. (*Surprised, chatters questioningly*)

VIKRAM. You misbehave, run away. You only want to eat and play. (*Monkey turns away, sadly, agreeing with a chatter to each accusation*) You fight. You bite. You are impish, spoiled, and spunky. But—

MONKEY. (*Turns and chatters hopefully*)

VIKRAM. (*Smiles and holds out arms*) But—you are my favorite monkey!

MONKEY. (*Suddenly happy, runs to him, chattering*)

VIKRAM. Now show me what I have taught you. Show me how you will sing and dance when you meet and greet the Princess.

MONKEY. (*Shakes head, chattering "No"*)

VIKRAM. (*Begins simple song and steps*) Remember. Step . . . (*Does*) Smile . . . (*Does*) Bow slow . . . (*Does*) (*Monkey joins and imitates him in "singing" and steps*)

Step . . . *(They do)* Smile . . . *(They do)* Bow Low . . .
(They do) Well done, my little friend. *(Claps hands)*

MONKEY. *(Claps hands and chatters. Gong. Acharya enters)*

VIKRAM. Acharya! My friend, my learned teacher,
Namasthe.

ACHARYA. *(Hands above Vikram's head, blesses him)*
Shanti, shanti. *(Monkey imitates Vikram's bowing and chatters. Acharya turns to him and with amusement blesses Monkey)* Shanti, shanti.

VIKRAM. You are here. My circle of happiness is complete. This is the day you have prepared me for.

ACHARYA. I have taught you what a Prince should know. The use of weapons, the meaning of the stars—

VIKRAM. To read a book! To play the lute!

ACHARYA. Is that all?

VIKRAM. *(Seriously)* I have learned that anger can be overcome by love, and evil overcome by good. *(Excited)* Oh, Acharya, will the gods, as the prophets say, give me my father's sword, on this my wedding day?

ACHARYA. *(Motions and Property Man gives him a beautiful sword)* It is said: The day Prince Vikram proves worthy to be wed, he will reign as King of Ujjain, and the sword will be his. *(Holds sword up)* It is a magic sword.

VIKRAM. May I touch it?

MONKEY. *(Imitating Vikram in reaching, and chatters)*

ACHARYA. No. It is not a toy. It is a gift from the gods, my boy. With this sword, all battles you can win, but only if—that for which you fight—is right.

VIKRAM. Today is my wedding day. Today the sword will be mine!

ACHARYA. Stay! The gods may yet plan a quest, a final test, for you. *(Property Man puts sword back on table)*