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# THE BEAUTY OF THE DREAMING WOOD

A play for children  
based on the legend of the Sleeping Beauty

by

**Marion Jonson**



**The Dramatic Publishing Company**  
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# THE BEAUTY OF THE DREAMING WOOD

A Play in Two Acts  
For Nine Men and Eleven Women, Extras

## CHARACTERS

ROCKFORD, Court Chamberlain  
DUKE OF GITTELWALD\*  
DUCHESS OF GITTELWALD  
MARQUIS OF ALABASTER\*  
MARQUISE OF ALABASTER  
TRUMPETER  
HERALD  
ROYAL GOVERNESS  
KING, Rupert the 44th  
QUEEN, Margaretha Marianne  
SATANIA, wicked fairy  
BARON MONTROSE\*\*  
BARONESS MONTROSE\*\*  
HONORÉ, a Prince  
ADDLEWALD, \*son of the Duke of Gittelwald  
HARALDABORE, \*son of the Marquis of Alabaster  
MARGARETHA  
MARIANNE }  
MATILDA } fairies  
MEHITABLE }  
McGEE  
BEAUTY  
Extras ad lib: MAIDS and PAGES of the COURT

\*The fathers can be doubled with their sons, if desired.

\*\*Can be cut.

### SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

<b>ACT I, Scene 1</b>	<b>The Christening Day</b>
<b>Scene 2</b>	<b>Sixteen years later</b>
<b>ACT II, Scene 1</b>	<b>A moment later</b>
<b>Scene 2</b>	<b>The sleep of dreams</b>

The *BEAUTY OF THE DREAMING WOOD* was first produced at Ohio University under the direction of William B. Birner in 1967.

## ACT ONE

**SCENE:** *The throne room in the Palace of King Rupert the Forty-Fourth.*

**AT RISE:** *ROCKFORD, the Court Chamberlain, stands beside the cradle supervising preparations for the Christening of the Princess. He is a very tall man, in his mid-thirties, who thoroughly enjoys managing the Royal Court and the Royal Household with a sort of efficient joy. To his left on the steps below him stands the TRUMPETER and to his right the HERALD. Both are quite young. There is an air of joyous excitement over all as PAGES and MAIDS criss-cross the stage on errands, hurrying in time to the music that floods in from the garden. ROCKFORD watches, smiling and marking the beat of the music with his staff of office, pointing occasionally the placing of a chair or ornament. He is in his shirt sleeves, his coat and wig tossed across the arm of the King's throne. As he pulls a huge gold watch from his pocket, the DUKE OF GITTELWALD rushes on from left, consulting his own gold watch and with his other hand clutching his long velvet cloak over one shoulder, letting it trail behind him as he ploughs straight across stage towards right, followed by the DUCHESS. Startled, the TRUMPETER gives a short toot and the DUKE, without stopping, waves his hand, dismissing it.*

**DUKE.** I'm not here yet! (*The HERALD and TRUMPETER look at ROCKFORD who winks and signals them not to notice.*)

**DUCHESS** (*making futile, duck-like dives at the DUKE's coat*). Reginald! Pick up your cloak...you're getting it all dusty! (*The DUKE makes no answer but a grunt and they exit R without pausing.*)

*(From the garden L, the MARQUISE of ALABASTER rushes on, pulling the MARQUIS behind her as she heads directly down and across stage toward the right. Her wig is slightly askew.)*

**MARQUISE.** Really, Egbert, I don't see why you can't organize yourself better! You'll never have time to comb your beard before the Christening starts!

**MARQUIS** (*amiably*). Not my christening. You get your wig organized and leave my beard alone! (*The MARQUIS drops his hand and grabs for her wig as they proceed on across and out R without pause.*)

*(The BARON and BARONESS DE MONTROSE race in side by side from the garden R and straight on D to follow the MARQUIS, etc. out, the BARON pausing only long enough to doff his coronet happily to ROCKFORD as he passes him.)*

**ROCKFORD** (*seeing the TRUMPETER nervously examining his trumpet and wetting his lips*). Go ahead. Try it...(*The TRUMPETER and HERALD pull themselves up proudly. The TRUMPETER gives a happy blast. ROCKFORD nods to the HERALD.*)

**HERALD** (*peering off R*). Uh...the Royal refreshment table!

*(TWO PAGES enter carrying a small table.)*

**ROCKFORD** (*indicating its placement*). Right...there! (*Nodding approval to the HERALD and TRUMPETER*) Good! Very good! You will both be excellent and this will be the best Christening the Court has ever seen! (*They grin and bow grandly to him. The TRUMPETER glances off and blasts again more loudly.*)

**HERALD** (*grinning*). The Royal Refreshments!

*(TWO MAIDS enter carrying trays of refreshments.)*

**ROCKFORD**. Right...precisely...there! (*He nods his approval as the MAIDS place the trays on the table. The TRUMPETER gives a really impressive blast and ROCKFORD and the HERALD both peer off R. Quickly, as the TRUMPETER starts to blow again.*) Not so loud! You'll wake her...(*The TRUMPETER tries again, soft and melodic.*)

**HERALD**. The Royal Infant! The Princess Margaretha Matilda Mehitable Marianne McGee!

*(The ROYAL GOVERNESS enters holding the baby who is dressed in blue and silver christening robes. She is followed by TWO PAGES, each carrying a blue velvet pillow, on the first of which is the baby's bottle and on the other an assortment of toys and small balloons. The GOVERNESS, a brisk, no-nonsense sort, wears a gold stethoscope around her neck. The Royal Infant gives a royal bellow and the GOVERNESS instantly*

*raises her eyebrows in shock and applies the stethoscope with a flourish, not noticing she has forgotten to adjust it in her ears.)*

ROCKFORD (*amused*). Beautiful lungs!

GOVERNESS (*shouting slightly over the baby's cries*). Of course, she has beautiful lungs! She is entirely the most beautiful...and healthy...baby ever born in this kingdom! Entirely. (*She tries to hush the baby, holding out a balloon which falls to the floor to the accompaniment of furious wails.*)

ROCKFORD. Perhaps her fairy godmothers will give her a somewhat sweeter disposition. That, of course, is not in your department.

GOVERNESS (*as the baby wails more loudly*). She has the most beautiful disposition in the whole of this kingdom! (*Briskly, to the baby.*) There now, do hush. Hush, I said. Oh dear, what shall I...where shall I...?

ROCKFORD (*extending his arms*). Right...precisely... just...here! (*As the GOVERNESS, more in desperation than hope, hands him the baby.*) What a little beauty she is! (*The baby subsides as ROCKFORD takes her in his arms and waltzes about the room with her, making up words to the tune the musicians are playing. Singing enthusiastically.*)...one...two...three...whoops...a-dee! Soon she'll talk, then she'll walk, then she'll dance on her toes!...hm, two...three...whoops...a-dee! She shall have music wherever she goes!

GOVERNESS. Rockford, really! I don't see how their Majesties could ever have thought you dignified enough to be Court Chamberlain!

ROCKFORD (*with a cocky grin*). I am dignified! When I wish to be. (*As he hands her the baby.*) And I should be an excellent father...if you wished me to be...

GOVERNESS. Rockford! (*He mounts the steps of the dais, giving an example of the most perfect dignity possible, quite ignoring the renewed howls of the baby. The GOVERNESS rocks her a bit frantically, then gives up and begins waltzing her about to the same tune, singing the words stiffly at first, then as she enjoys it more and more, letting her dignity come quite unglued.*) ...one, two...three...whoops...a-dee...Soon she'll talk, then she'll walk, then she'll dance on her toes!

*(The MAIDS and PAGES join in and, unannounced, the KING and QUEEN enter and also join in, the QUEEN moving to take the baby as the song ends.)*

GOVERNESS. ...hm, two...three...whoops...a-dee! She shall have laughter wherever she goes!

TRUMPETER (*as he becomes aware of the KING and QUEEN*). Ooooooh! (*He lets out a quick hoot.*)

HERALD (*hastily*). The Royal Parents! (*The KING holds up his hand, laughing.*)

ROCKFORD (*smiling warmly, he bows*). Your Majesties...

QUEEN (*excited and eager*). Rockford...are you sure all the Fairies have accepted our invitation to the Christening?

ROCKFORD (*his face going deadpan*). Yes, Your Majesty...all who were invited.

QUEEN (*happily as she hands the baby back to the GOVERNESS*). Five Fairy godmothers...you will be the

luckiest baby in the whole world! (*The GOVERNESS moves up on to the dais with the baby.*)

HERALD. Five? But I thought there were...

ROCKFORD (*sharply*). Be quiet. Not another word.

TRUMPETER. But, sir, the weavers in the village and the country people all say there's another one, an evil Fairy they call Sata...(*The MAIDS and PAGES all nod as the GOVERNESS pops the baby protectively into the cradle.*)

KING (*cutting in quickly*). Never speak the name of the other Fairy in this Court! Above all, not now, on the happiest day of our lives!

GOVERNESS (*very distressed*). Oh, Your Majesty, don't say that!

QUEEN. It is...the very happiest...

GOVERNESS. It is bad luck to say so, Your Majesty. She...the other Fairy...will hear you and something quite dreadful may happen. (*The QUEEN looks at the KING, suddenly frightened.*)

ROCKFORD. Your Majesty, there is still time. Let me send a page with an invitation...

KING (*looking very young and stubborn*). No!

GOVERNESS. If you don't invite her, she may do something quite awful. (*There is a small wail from the cradle and the QUEEN is instantly beside it.*)

KING. Nonsense. I do not believe in the power of the evil Fairy. I have never invited her to anything...not my birthdays, nor my wedding...not to anything at all. And nothing dreadful has ever happened. Forget the other Fairy and nothing dreadful ever will happen! (*As the KING moves up to the QUEEN, there is a low drum roll as of distant thunder. The QUEEN rises.*)

QUEEN. Oh, no...not a thunderstorm today!

ROCKFORD (*nervously*). We had better begin the ceremonies, I think. If Your Majesties will go and prepare for your entrance?

QUEEN (*laughing*). Rockford, we're already here!

ROCKFORD (*smiling*). At a Royal Christening, you must enter properly. (*To the KING.*) As, sir, your father, and your grandfather and your great-grandfather-with-the-beard would expect you to do.

KING (*laughing*). Very well, Rockford. You are the Court Chamberlain. (*He reaches out his hand to the QUEEN and they start to run down the steps.*)

ROCKFORD. With dignity, Your Majesties! A Royal Christening is always a day for the greatest dignity. (*He dons his wig.*) It will please the Fairies.

QUEEN (*to the KING*). Then by all means, my dear! (*They exit R.*)

ROCKFORD (*motioning the HERALD and TRUMPETER to him*). Let's see you both...hmm, you'd better go comb your hair and straighten your collars. Quickly... (*To the MAIDS and PAGES.*) The rest of you, too... hurry now...

*(As they run off, ROCKFORD dons his velvet coat and is straightening his lace neckerchief when there is another low drum roll. Hurriedly he turns and looks out at the sky over the garden R. As he does, the bent figure of an OLD WOMAN appears at the garden entrance L and slips into the room. Huddled within a long cloak she walks very lame. As ROCKFORD turns back into the room she is standing C, watching him, smiling thinly.)*

SATANIA (*masking her voice as that of an old woman*).

It would be a shame to have a thunderstorm just now, wouldn't it?

ROCKFORD (*kindly*). Madame, I'm sorry but you will have to leave. The Royal Christening is about to begin.

SATANIA. That's why I came. They say all the Fairies in the kingdom will be here and I wanted to see them...

ROCKFORD. I'm sorry, but...(*He takes a step towards her.*)

SATANIA (*whimpering*). I've come so far and I'm so lame...

ROCKFORD. Madame, the Royal Christening is never attended by anyone except the King's Council and their wives and the Fairies themselves.

SATANIA (*tearfully*). I wanted to see the most powerful Fairy of all...(*Her voice suddenly whipping out.*) the great Fairy Satania...!

ROCKFORD (*frozen for a moment, then his voice harsh*). Never speak that name in this court! Leave now, at once!

SATANIA. Surely the Fairy Satania has been invited?

ROCKFORD. No! By the King's order, she has not! (*As ROCKFORD starts toward her, she scurries to the garden entrance, then as she reaches it, whirls back to face him, drawing herself tall and erect.*)

SATANIA (*her voice coldly vicious*). Send Satania an invitation, Rockford! (*Before he can move she whips a glittering black wand from under her cloak and downwards in one quick sweep. There is again the low drum roll and she is gone. As ROCKFORD starts to go after her, the first notes of the pompous Royal Entrance music sounds.*)

*(The HERALD and TRUMPETER race on to take their places, still smoothing their hair. ROCKFORD stops, uncertain, then takes his place at one side of the dais.)*

**HERALD.** His Majesty, King Rupert the Forty-fourth! Her Majesty, Queen Margaretha Marianne!

*(To the strains of the pompous music the KING and QUEEN enter, now wearing long velvet trains caught with gold clasps at their throats. When they have covered a short distance into the room, their faces very straight, they suddenly look at each other and burst out laughing. The KING bounds up onto the dais and looks out into the garden R.)*

**KING** *(claps his hands and the music stops).* Not all that much dignity! This is a day for celebration! The happiest day in the Queen's and my life! *(As the KING runs down the steps to the QUEEN, the music swings into a lilting waltz.)* Remember...?

**QUEEN.** Our wedding waltz...*(Quickly, they unclasp their trains, fling them up over the thrones and the KING swings the QUEEN into an exuberant, wide-swinging waltz. ROCKFORD shrugs, grabs the GOVERNESS and they join in. A burst of balloons goes up from the baby's cradle.)*

*(As the waltz finishes, there is the sound of a trumpet off and EVERYONE, including the freshly combed MAIDS and PAGES who have been returning during the dance, rush to take up their official positions. TWO PAGES hold up the KING's and QUEEN's trains for them to put on as they dash up the steps on to the dais.*

*Her own fastened, the QUEEN turns to the KING and fastens his as he lifts his chin. Then he takes a small box from his PAGE and turns to the QUEEN.)*

**KING.** You have given me the most beautiful daughter in the world...*(Smiling, he takes a jewelled necklace from the box and clasps it around the QUEEN's neck. They stand for a moment facing each other, very much in love, The TRUMPETER sounds the entrance of the first guests. They move apart and stand in front of their thrones.)*

**HERALD.** The Duke and Duchess of Gittelwald!

*(The DUKE and DUCHESS are entering.)*

**DUKE.** Ah, Your Majesties, a lovely day for the Christening, what? *(The DUCHESS simpers and stretches her neck to peer into the cradle as they mount the steps to greet the KING and QUEEN.)*

**KING.** We are honoured to have you with us, Your Grace. *(Bowing his head slightly to the DUCHESS.)* Both of you.

**DUKE** *(cocking his head to look into the cradle).* Hmmmm, she's going to have a long nose...just like her grandfather...*(He coos experimentally as the KING and QUEEN glare.)* But a beautiful baby...as babies go...

**QUEEN** *(only slightly mollified).* Thank you, Your Grace.

**DUKE** *(as the DUCHESS gurgles and pokes at the baby).* Ah...be needing a husband someday...too large a kingdom for a girl to run alone...never too soon to think about it...*(He hauls out a picture and hands it to the KING.)* May I present my son, Addlewald...

**QUEEN** (*pleasantly, looking at it briefly as the KING hands it to her*). A boy...as boys go. (*The KING glances at her, startled, as the HERALD smothers a snort of laughter. ROCKFORD pays no attention, his major concern throughout seems to be off L toward the garden and he brings his attention back to the ceremonies with difficulty. The TRUMPETER blows another entrance as the DUKE and DUCHESS go down the steps to take up their positions for the ceremony.*)

**HERALD**. The Marquis and Marquise of Alabaster!

*(They enter and hurry towards the cradle, the MARQUIS already holding out a picture.)*

**MARQUIS** (*as the MARQUISE repeats it a half-beat behind him*). Ah, Your Majesties, a beautiful day! Beautiful baby! (*Neither has yet taken time to look at the baby.*)

**KING**. We are honoured...

**MARQUISE** (*to the QUEEN*). So important to begin thinking about her future...

**MARQUIS** (*as the KING seems about to protest*). Get it all planned for them, you know...

**MARQUISE** (*breathlessly rushing in*). Gives them a sense of security...

**MARQUIS** (*with a flourish of the picture*). May I present my son, Haraldebore!

**MARQUISE** (*beaming*). And we can settle the betrothal right here, today!

**KING** (*finally getting in*). My daughter...

*(The TRUMPETER sounds another entrance as the BARON and BARONESS appear DR.)*