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A ONE-ACT PLAY IN SIX SCENES

Three Spinning Fairies

by

MIRIAM BISKIN

adapted from the story by
the Brothers Grimm



**THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY
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THREE SPINNING FAIRIES
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THREE SPINNING FAIRIES

A Play For Children

For Three Men and Six Women

CHARACTERS

NARRATOR

BELINDA

BELINDA'S MOTHER

QUEEN

PRINCE MONTMORENCY

LIPPY

THUMBSEY

FOOTSEY

MINISTER

BELINDA JR.

PLACE: *A Faraway Kingdom.*

TIME: *Once Before a Time.*

Three Spinning Fairies

NARRATOR(offstage). Once before a time in a faraway kingdom, there lived a lazy girl named Belinda who wanted to spend all of her time chasing butterflies in the sun. Not like you! You couldn't possibly even imagine anyone who would rather play tag than practice the piano or who would prefer going on a picnic to staying at home to work on arithmetic. No--we don't know too much about that kind of person, do we?

But to get back to Belinda--she hated to dust and sweep and scrub. And most of all, she hated to spin--and in those days, spinning was important. Every girl had to learn to make flax into threads which could be woven into cloth which could be made into petticoats and dresses, pantaloons and shirts, pillow cases and sheets. But Belinda didn't care if the whole kingdom went shirtless and sheetless--and petticoatless. She only wanted to chase butterflies in the sun. Naturally, her mother was very, very upset.

Scene 1

(A Village Street. The action takes place in front of the curtain. **BELINDA** runs across the stage from R. She exits L, screaming, as her **MOTHER** chases her with a broomstick. The **MOTHER** pauses at C stage.)

MOTHER (shouting after **BELINDA**). Come back, you lazy girl. No one will ever want to marry you. Come back, I say----(**EXITS L**, after **BELINDA**.)

Scene 2

NARRATOR. This happened every day. On Monday, Belinda didn't learn to spin. On Tuesday, Belinda didn't learn to spin. On Wednesday, Belinda didn't learn to spin. On Thursday, Belinda didn't learn to spin and then--on Friday, it happened. Just as Belinda's mother chased her down the street, along came Her Royal Majesty, The Queen! (Roll of drums.)

(Screaming, **BELINDA** runs across the stage from stage R and **EXITS L**. She is followed by her **MOTHER**, who pauses at stage L. The **QUEEN ENTERS** and stands at stage R, unseen by the **MOTHER**.)

MOTHER. That lazy girl---- She's impossible. She's the worst girl in the whole kingdom.

QUEEN. My good woman, why was that child screaming?

MOTHER. Oh--er--ah--your Majesty--she is my daughter----

QUEEN. I didn't ask you who she was. I asked you why she was screaming. Did you beat her?

MOTHER. Your Majesty--I can explain.

QUEEN. Pray do----

MOTHER. Well----

QUEEN. I'm waiting.

MOTHER. Well----

QUEEN. I heard you say something about spinning.

MOTHER. Oh--yes--she loves to spin and I can't make her stop. I have to chase her outdoors to play.

QUEEN. Oh, I understand how she feels. I love the sound of spinning--that lovely hum of the wheel.

(QUEEN sings to the tune of "Three Blind Mice.")

QUEEN.

Hum--hum--hum--

Hum--hum--hum--

Hear how it hums,

Hum--hum--hum.

I love the sound of the spinning wheel,

The humming sound of the spinning wheel,

Hum--hum--hum.

Whir--whir--whir--

Whir--whir--whir--

Hear how it whirs,

Whir--whir--whir--

I love the whir of the spinning wheel,

The whirring sound of the spinning wheel,

Whir--whir--whir.

(MOTHER applauds as QUEEN bows to all sides.)

QUEEN. Ah, the memories I have of the days when my mother taught me to spin. Young girls are so different these days.

MOTHER. Not my Belinda.

QUEEN. She sounds like a real wonder, and I am going to take her home to the palace with me. There, she can work to her heart's content and be an example to all the lazy girls of the kingdom.

MOTHER (shouting). Belinda, come here----
Her Majesty wants you.

(**BELINDA** returns slowly and as her **MOTHER** waves good-bye, she and the **QUEEN** EXIT together.)

Scene 3

(The curtain opens, revealing a palace room. A golden spinning wheel and a golden stool stand C stage. Piles of flax lie on the floor. The **QUEEN** ENTERS, followed by **BELINDA**.)

QUEEN. I'm sure you will be happy here.

BELINDA (eyes cast down). Yes, your Majesty.

QUEEN. Your mother told me how much you love to spin----

BELINDA. She did? Oh, your Highness----- I don't----

QUEEN. You don't what?

BELINDA. I mean I do--oh--I don't know what I mean. (She begins to weep profusely.)

QUEEN. Now--now, my child--I quite understand.

BELINDA. You do?

QUEEN. Yes--your mother explained, and I have arranged matters so that no one will disturb you at your beloved work.

BELINDA. Oh, your Majesty--I don't know what to say. (She begins to weep again.)

QUEEN. Don't try to thank me. I'm really being quite selfish. I love the sound of the spinning wheel. (Smiling, she leads **BELINDA** to the stool.) But I just hate idlers! I hate them more than anything--except liars. Idlers and liars!

I could kill them all! (Her voice rises shrilly.)
Do you understand?

BELINDA. Oh, yes, your Majesty----

QUEEN. And when you finish, you shall have the
finest reward I can give you--you shall become
Prince Montmorency's bride.

BELINDA. Oh, your Majesty!

QUEEN. I've had such problems trying to find a
suitable bride for Montmorency. Last year,
I interviewed seventy-four princesses and not one
could spin. (BELINDA nods.) But I'm sure
that a young girl like you can't possibly imagine
what it is to have a problem.

BELINDA. That's what you think.

QUEEN. What?

BELINDA. I said--it certainly makes one think.

QUEEN. What an understanding child you are!
(She pats BELINDA on the head.) But don't let me
keep you from your spinning, dear little
daughter-in-law-to-be. (She EXITS, leaving
BELINDA staring dejectedly at the flax.)

Scene 4

(Spinning room in palace, four days later. As the
NARRATOR speaks, BELINDA pantomimes
unsuccessful efforts to use the spinning wheel.
She tries, fails, weeps.)

NARRATOR. Poor Belinda! She knew she could
never spin that flax into thread, not even if she
sat at the spinning wheel from morning to night
for three hundred years. Try as hard as she
might, all she got were snarls and tangles.

(The QUEEN ENTERS.)

QUEEN. Why, Belinda, what does this mean?

(She picks up the untouched flax.)

BELINDA. I don't know. I just can't work. (She weeps.)

QUEEN. You must be homesick. Do you miss your mother?

BELINDA. Oh, yes, I do miss my mother.

QUEEN. My poor child! Well, I won't be hard on you. I'll give you until tomorrow to finish.

BELINDA. Tomorrow?

QUEEN. And then you shall be betrothed to my Montmorency.

(ENTER the PRINCE MONTMORENCY, a handsome, rather simple fellow.)

MONTMORENCY. Did you call, Mother?

QUEEN. What a son! I just mention his name and he appears--such a treasure, the answer to any maiden's prayer. Isn't that right, Montmorency?

MONTMORENCY. Yes, mother. (BELINDA stares at the prince in awe.)

QUEEN. Say "hello" to Belinda, Montmorency.

MONTMORENCY. Hello, Belinda. (He is completely love-struck.)

QUEEN. Say "hello," Belinda.

BELINDA. Hello----

QUEEN (prompting her). Your Majesty.

BELINDA. Hello, your Majesty. (She curtsies at his feet.)

QUEEN. Belinda is a wonderful spinner and you always wanted to marry a wonderful spinner, didn't you, Montmorency?

MONTMORENCY (oblivious of what his mother is saying, staring at BELINDA). Yes, I always