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Dramatic Publishing

PEGORA THE WITCH



By
CAROL LYNN WRIGHT

PEGORA THE WITCH

The premier production of this dramatization was performed by the Brigham Young University Theatre in Provo, Utah.

Comedy. By Carol Lynn Wright. Cast: 6m., 10w., plus extras. Here is a play of sheer frou-frou, intentionally frivolous and deliciously original. Pegora, an apprentice witch, has a flaw in her nature—she cannot help doing good. When the head witch, Mother Martacloy, learns that Pegora has made a contribution to the Orphaned Children's Home, she orders the unfortunate misfit stripped of her broom. Pegora begs for one last chance, and Mother Martacloy grants it on condition that Pegora kidnap, one by one, the seven princesses of a neighboring kingdom. Through a series of highly amusing blunders, she actually succeeds in this despite the king's elaborate precautions. But she is finally outwitted by the court jester, and rescued from the clutches of Mother Martacloy. *Two sets. Fairy tale costumes. Approximate running time: 45 minutes. Optional music score available. Code: PE1.*

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In the order of their appearance)

PEGORA
MOTHER MARTACLOY
KING AUGUST
QUEEN JUNE
JESTER
PRINCESS MONDAY
PRINCESS TUESDAY
PRINCESS WEDNESDAY
PRINCESS THURSDAY
PRINCESS FRIDAY
PRINCESS SATURDAY
PRINCESS SUNDAY
THOPPLEBROCK
QUIG
QUAG
QUAGFLAGAR
WITCH ATTENDANTS
PALACE GUARDS

SCENES

Scene One . . . Witch Mountain, a Sunday evening.
Scene Two . . . The Courtyard, the following Monday.
Scene Three . . . The Courtyard, the following Tuesday.
Scene Four . . . The Courtyard, the following Saturday.
Scene Five . . . The Courtyard, the following Sunday.
Scene Six . . . Witch Mountain, evening of the same day,
reverting then to the Courtyard.

The premiere production of *Pegora The Witch* was presented in February, 1963, by the Theatre Department of Brigham Young University, at Provo, Utah, under the direction of Max C. Golightly.

Original music was composed for this production, and copy of the piano score is available from the publisher, upon request.

PEGORA THE WITCH

SCENE ONE

The setting is Pegora's hut on Witch Mountain. It is furnished scantily and as one might expect of a witch's tastes, except that on a small table is a vase with a large bunch of roses, and tacked on a wall is an embroidered sampler reading, "Home, Sweet Home." As music fades, Pegora comes hopping in through a door that goes to an inner room. She is dressed all in black, except for a pair of red leotards and a red ribbon that trims her flat and drooping hat. She wears thick-heeled shoes, a long-sleeved dress that comes just above her knees, and a flowered apron. Her cheeks are a bright pink. In general, she looks more like somebody's maiden aunt than a real witch. She has a pigeon-toed walk that becomes a hop on every third or fourth step. She holds a dust cloth and broom, and scampers about the room, dusting and straightening things.

PEGORA. What foul luck that on this day should Mother Martacloy choose to call. My little home is in a wretched state. Dust—dust—cobwebs—dust. Ah—ah—choo! And when I think why she is coming it makes me shiver and shudder and quiver and shake. No doubt she'll call for full account of all my deeds since last we met—concluding, then, as first she guessed, that I'm not good enough to be a first-class witch. I mean bad enough. I mean—*witchy* enough to be a witch. Egad, I try! In faith, I try my best to practice evil and resist all good. What can I help that flaw within my nature, then, that brings but goodness from my wicked schemes?

(Ceremonial music is heard).

Egad, they're here! Up, heart, show not the point of fear!

(In sweeps Mother Martacloy, dressed in long, black gown, cloak, and tall hat. With her are six attendants, goblin-like. One carries a large book and elaborate quill pen).

MOTHER MARTACLOY *(Raising hands high above her head.)* All hail, Pegora, rank of third degree in powers of high witch-craft and base wizardry!

ATTENDANTS. All hail!

PEGORA. All hail, our Mother Martacloy, most high of all in powers of the night—first in glory and in honor of our kind—all hail! Uh—would you like some muffins? Blueberry. I just this minute . . .

MOTHER MARTACLOY *(In disgust.)* Uuugggghhhhh!

(Attendants giggle).

You know not why I have come here, Pegora. But give ear now to my words, and you shall know the great displeasure that directs me here to reprimand and most severely punish.

PEGORA. Egad!

MOTHER MARTACLOY. How long have you been a third-class witch, Pegora?

PEGORA. Three years.

MOTHER MARTACLOY. And how long ago should you have been promoted?

PEGORA. Two years.

MOTHER MARTACLOY (*To attendants*). Turn to the accounts of Witch Pegora.

(They do. Mother Martacloy carries a large file, with which she occasionally files her nails).

And now, Pegora, listen to the findings of our high committee on reports, statistics, and evaluations.

1ST ATTENDANT. Average score of witches of the third degree in contribution to the total sum—ninety-eight percent!

2ND ATTENDANT (*Taking book, which is passed in turn to each*). Average score of Witch Pegora figured in the same account—three percent!

MOTHER MARTACLOY. And now, Pegora's scores in categories A,B,C, and D.

3RD ATTENDANT. Foulnesses of weather, storms and fogs, hurricanes and floods—five percent!

4TH ATTENDANT. Sighs drawn forth from broken-hearted lovers, separated by some treacherous spell—two percent!

5TH ATTENDANT. Plague and scourges, death and sickness, sundry sorts of misery—four percent!

6TH ATTENDANT. Hexes cast on churches, governments, and all that seek to do good works—*minus* two percent!

PEGORA. Egad!

6TH ATTENDANT. Due, it seems, to a recent contribution to the Orphaned Children's Home.

MOTHER MARTACLOY. For shame! He that filches from us our bad name robs us of that which cannot be replaced.

ATTENDANTS. Disgraced! Disgraced! Disgraced!

MOTHER MARTACLOY. The name of a witch was something which
Brought shudders and shivers
And flutters and quivers to all.
But when Pegora joined the corps
A treacherous, wrecherous
Tragedy started to fall.

ATTENDANTS. You're bleaching the bad name of witch.
Our name that was once black as pitch
Is beginning to gray,
And Pegora must pay
By leaving the ranks of the witch!

MOTHER MARTACLOY. A witch must beware and take excellent care
Of the name that her forebearers
Faithfully left in her trust.
Though awarded by Hecate,
She quickly can wreck it,
Allowing her magical mischief
To wither and rust.

ATTENDANTS. You're blotting the bad name of witch.
In our horrors you're putting a hitch.
You've committed a treason
And that is the reason
You're leaving the ranks of the witch!

MOTHER MARTACLOY. Your goodness is galling, your pureness
appalling;
You bathe in benevolence,
Cultivate gladness for gloom.
And so for deceiving, you now must be leaving.
Pegora, turn in your broom.

ATTENDANTS. You're blurring the bad name of witch.
You're tearing the title of which
We have always been proud
And that can't be allowed;
So you're leaving the ranks of the witch!

MOTHER MARTACLOY. Stand up now, and receive what judgment you
deserve. And stop blubbering! Tears do ill-befit a witch. Now
stripped of powers, banished henceforth, you shall dwell . . .

PEGORA. But hear me first! I pray you, Mother Martacloy, to give
me leave for one more chance. I try! I swear I do—I try!

(Attendants and Mother Martacloy react appropriately during the following).

For years I have sought—
Have had only one thought:
In this world to carve my niche—
To found my fame
And create a name—
As a witch!

But somehow it
Just doesn't fit;
In my dreams there's one small hitch.
My pitiful plight
Is that I can't quite
Be a witch!

As a child I'd speak to play the wolf
Whenever we'd pretend.
I'd growl at poor Red Riding Hood,
With the woodsman I'd contend,
I'd battle bravely for the wrong—
But when we'd reach the end,

I'd see poor Grandma lying there
With ruffled cap on head,
And quivering hand
And tear in eye
And trembling chin
And painful sigh;
My plot would sink and before I could think
I'd tuck her back in bed!

And when we'd play the beanstalk tale,
I'd speak to be the giant.
I'd strut about and storm and stamp
Be dangerous, defiant—
But when the ending came around,
My plot was much too pliant.

I'd see Jack standing brave and true,
More brave than any other,
With noble heart
And gallant goal
And fearless eye
And sterling soul;
I'd fill his hat with golden eggs
And send him home to Mother!

And thus it's been,
I just never win;
With blunder my record is rich.
But it's not that I
Don't earnestly try
To be a witch!

Please, Mother Martacloy, just one more chance!

MOTHER MARTACLOY. (*She beckons attendants to her, and they hold short conference with occasional exclamations and gestures*). Hear, then, oh, miserable misfit, the one last opportunity that shall be yours to prove your worth. And if you fail—no more! But if you do perform this deed, a great promotion shall be yours—from third-class witch to first!

PEGORA (*Eagerly*). What is the task?

MOTHER MARTACLOY. 'Tis this. As well you know, in yonder castle live a king and queen with seven daughters—named, each princess, for the day on which she was born. Now hear! Your task will be to kidnap each upon the day her named is called . . .

PEGORA. Kidnap each?

MOTHER MARTACLOY. Yes, kidnap each. Then bring them here, each at a time, until exactly one week hence, at sunset of the seventh day, the youngest, Sunday, makes complete the key that frees you from this shame. And if you do succeed in this, the daughters shall be given you as subjects in your work.

(laughs wickedly).

No greater pleasure comes to me than laying waste to future queens. But now—you'll do it?

PEGORA *(Aside)*. Egad! Me? Kidnap seven daughters?

(To Mother Martacloy).

But, Mother Martacloy, couldn't you ask a simpler task of me? And then when I'm a more experienced witch, I could perform this royal deed.

MOTHER MARTACLOY *(Resolutely)*. No, Pegora.

PEGORA. I could sprinkle soot on Reverend Rogers as he's going into church.

MOTHER MARTACLOY. No, Pegora!

PEGORA. I'll cut the buds off Widow Henry's favorite apple tree!

MOTHER MARTACLOY *(Sharply)*. The seven daughters, Pegora. Will you do it?

(Pegora starts to speak, hesitates).

Very well, Pegora.

(To attendants).

Come, And remember, no more chances, Pegora. Your broom.

(Broom is passed by attendants to the one closest the door).

PEGORA *(As they begin to leave)*. Wait—I'll do it. I will. I'll do it!

MOTHER MARTACLOY. Good!

(Broom is passed back to Pegora).

Remember now what I have said. And one week hence we shall return to see that all has been completed. Away!

(They exit ceremoniously to the same music with which they entered. As they leave, the curtain closes, leaving Pegora in front of it).

PEGORA. Egad, Pegora, you've done it now! Seven girls to kidnap 'ere the sun goes down on Sunday. One a day for seven days.

(With determination).

I'll do it. By Jove, I'll do it!

(With comical intensity).

Come now, all fiendish spirits, hideous helps to evil deeds. Blot out all that dire some good that doth restrain this will to act. From action to distraction—oh, that's very good! From action to distraction—Egad! I'll make it yet!

Dispell all douht—
I will not strike out
On this last and pivotal pitch;
The field is clear,
And I'll soon appear
As an A-grade, number one,
Positively, definitely,
Absolutely, genuinely,
Admirable, valuable,
Capital, First-Class Witch!

(Goes tripping into inner room and does—trip, that is).

Blithers!

(Gets up, dusts herself off, and continues).

SCENE TWO

The setting is a garden scene in the royal courtyard. In the center of the stage is the entrance to the castle, with three steps and a pillar on either side. Down left is a white garden bench. Around the stage are trees, shrubs, and potted flowers. Two guards march out of the castle and stand at either side of the entrance. They are followed by June and August.

AUGUST. Ah, splendid meal. Fit for a king!

(Takes her hand).

Heh, heh! Or a queen. But soon, I fear, we'll grow too round to longer sit upon our thrones.

JUNE *(Sitting on bench).* Oh, August, pray you do not tease. I swear, enough has this day brought to trouble me. I told you of the dream I had, wherein some monstrous danger crept upon our state.

AUGUST. Now, now, my love—be ruffled not.

JUNE. Believe me, August, I was so upset this morning that I cooked the oranges and juiced the eggs. I know not what my dream forecast, but—oh, it makes me shiver, truly.

AUGUST. Now, now, my love—be ruffled not. I'm sure 'twas nothing more than shadowings of mind. Less constant than the butterfly—

(Yawns).

—less real than children's fairy tales. Take note from me, and let but nothing trouble you.

(Falling asleep).

Be calm—like me—be calm. Zzzz. Zzzzzz.

JUNE *(Getting up and walking away).* Ohhhh, be calm, he says. Let nothing ruffle! Hummmph! Stuffed full of puddings and of cream puffs, he's content to let all worries pass. Well, I'll show him calmness.

(Carefully, she tiptoes behind bench, leans close to August, takes a deep breath, and utters a piercing shriek; then ducks behind bench).

AUGUST *(Swings feet up onto bench and covers head with arms, bellowing).* Help! Murder—ho—murder!

(June giggles).

What?

(August stands upright on bench, looking around).

How's this?

(Climbs down, straightens cloak and walks behind bench).

Well, well, well, what have we here?

(June has moved out the other way on hands and knees).

JUNE *(Getting up).* Now, calm, my lord; be ruffled not. 'Twas but a shadow of the mind. Be calm, my lord, be calm.

AUGUST. Confound it, wife! What would you do? Assassinate the king? Oh, my heart!

(Sits down).

But calm—but calm!

(June begins to laugh, then August chuckles, then they laugh together as June sits on bench beside August).

Ah, what is so rare as a day with June. But come—I know just what we need.

(Goes to entrance and calls, clapping his hands).

Ho, Jester! Come, call my Jester! We'd have some entertainment. And call my daughters to me—all!

(August returns to the bench. Light, bouncy music in. Jester enters with a somersault, leaps down the three stairs, and sits with legs crossed).

JESTER. And here's the Jester, good my lord,
In answer to your call.

And also come your daughters now—
Your seven daughters—all!

(Jester somersaults to left of entrance. Girls appear one at a time, curtsey deeply to parents, and run to stage L. Jester changes body position as he announces each girl).

Monday—Tuesday—Wednesday—Thursday—Friday—Saturday—

(As Sunday appears, he gazes at her devotedly, with chin in hands, elbows on floor, and sighs deeply).

Sunday!

(She returns his smile, and forgetfully directs her curtsey to him).

AUGUST *(Annoyed)*. Harummmmmph!

SUNDAY *(Startled)*. Oh!

(She curtseys now to August, and runs to join her sisters, who are giggling).

AUGUST *(Sarcastically)*. And now, fine Jester, if you feel quite ready—
(June touches his shoulder, and he softens).

Uh—we'd like a little entertainment. A new song, if you please!

GIRLS. Yes, sing—sing! A new song, Jester! Sing!

(The girls scatter, some sitting on steps, some near bench, some standing. Jester picks up his mandolin and begins to sing, moving about the stage).

JESTER. There's a kingdom in a country fine
Beside an ocean blue,
Where there are many wonderful things,
Very strange, very odd, very true.
The air is sweeter and the gardens are neater,
And the trees are a deep greenish green;
And the stars are brighter and the rain falls lighter
Than any place that ever was seen.
The breezes are blowier, the streams are flowier,
The sun is a deep, goldish gold;
The birds are singier, the spring is springier
Than ever, ever, ever was told.

TUESDAY *(Running to behind August)*. The king is kingier . . .

THURSDAY *(Running to behind June)*. The queen is queenier . . .

MONDAY. The buds are buddier . . .

SATURDAY. The mud is muddier . . .

SUNDAY. The bells are ringier . . .

WEDNESDAY. The bees are stingier . . .

FRIDAY. And the princesses . . .

JESTER. Are nuisances!

GIRLS. Oh, no, Jester, no! Tell us about the princesses. Yes, tell us, Jester. Tell us!

JESTER. The princesses?

GIRLS. Yes!

JESTER. Well, I've only one thing to say about the princesses.

GIRLS. Yes?

JESTER. And this is really so.
There are seven, you know.

GIRLS. We know!

JESTER (*Bounding around the stage as he indicates each one*).
Monday's lovely, Tuesday's fair,
Wednesday's sweet, and Thursday's rare;
Friday's charming, Saturday's disarming—
And Sunday—Sunday—

(*He takes her hand and draws her up*).

Shall we dance?

(*Other music in. Jester and Sunday dance. Then the girls dance Monday with Tuesday, Wednesday with Thursday, Friday with Saturday. Soon Monday and Tuesday pull up August and June and start them dancing. After about fifteen seconds, music changes to witch music, and Pegora swoops in from stage L. All gasp and draw back in fear*).

PEGORA (*Counting the girls*). One, two, three, four, five, six, seven!
One today to open the week. Six to follow—each will I seek 'til
all are mine.

(*Aside*).

Egad! I'm doing splendidly!

(*Turns to them with outstretched arms*).

Potency of primal powers, paralyze these people now that stand
within my sight!

(*All jerk into statue-like positions and remain motionless*).

Egad—it works!

(*Waving arms*).

Monday, hear me! Break the spell and now draw near me!

(Monday approaches, hypnotized. Pegora lifts Monday's arms and they stay in position; pats her on head affectionately).

Dear child. Come!

(They exit, stage L. After about five seconds, all havoc breaks loose).

JUNE. She's gone! Monday's gone! My baby!

TUESDAY. I couldn't move!

THURSDAY. I felt as if I'd suddenly been turned to stone!

AUGUST *(Jumps on bench as all begin to speak at once)*. Silence!
Silence!

(All quiet).

Guards, come here. What do you know of this wild personage that thus sweeps down and with such powers steals away our eldest child?

1ST GUARD. Nothing, my lord.

2ND GUARD. Nor I. I've never seen her, sir, before today.

JESTER. I know, my lord, I know!

AUGUST. Well, speak. What is it you know?

JESTER. This was the witch Pegora, who lives far up on "Witch Mountain."

JUNE *(Beginning to cry)*. My baby!

AUGUST. Now, now. Which mountain did you say?

JESTER. "Witch Mountain."

AUGUST. That's what I'm asking, idiot! Which mountain? Oh—"Witch Mountain!"

JESTER. Yes, my lord. I saw her once before as I was hunting eagle nests. She lives alone up near the top. I saw her shelling nuts for chipmunks, and there were bluebirds perching on her hat. At the time, I thought, she doesn't talk or look or act so awfully dangerous.

JUNE. Not dangerous? A princess stealer?

(Cries again).

And she'll return to take them all. She said as much. My children!

(Gathers girls to her).