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Dramatic Publishing



Hoppily Ever After

A One-act Play for Children

By
MARY AHL



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(HOPPLY EVER AFTER)

HOPPILY EVER AFTER

or

THE PRINCE AND THE FROG PRINCESS

A One Act Comedy
For Five Men and Five Women

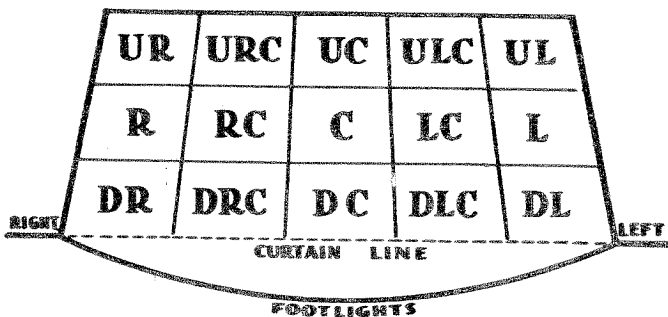
CHARACTERS

THE KING of Modgnik
THE QUEEN his wife
ALEXANDER The Crown Prince
ENGELBERT a younger brother
HUMPERDINCK another younger brother
THE SOLDIER and Master of Ceremonies
PRISCILLA a giggler and Princess-to-be
LADY COSELL also a Princess-to-be
FRANCINE the Frog Princess
FROGMOTHER. Francine's Fairy Frogmother

Time: Once upon a time.

Place: The Kingdom of Modgnik.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

hoppily ever after

SCENE: A typical fairyland scene. The castle may be as detailed as desired or it may be simply a drawing of a castle sketched crudely with crayons, with towers and turrets and three window openings. There is a small cafe table and chairs upstage R. Downstage R, is the corner of a pond with a few rushes outlined in green, growing from the edge. Downstage L are the thrones of the KING and QUEEN. They may be simply armchairs with rich draperies spread over them.

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: The KING and QUEEN are seated. The QUEEN has some needlework in her hands; the KING is reading a scroll. ALEXANDER, the Crown Prince, is stretched out C on the floor with a book. Behind him stand his younger brothers, ENGELBERT and HUMPERDINCK, facing each other, glowering, fists clenched. The KING'S SOLDIER stands at attention at the side of the KING. All are frozen in position except the SOLDIER who steps forward and speaks.

SOLDIER (booming it out). Announcing the premiere performance of the play, Hoppily Ever After. This fairy tale took place long ago in the fair kingdom of Modgnik where the King and Queen lived with the Crown Prince, Alexander

and his younger brothers princes Engelbert and Humperdinck. I am, well, I'm a soldier, herald, guard, page and the only time keeper in the kingdom. I'm also the handsomest man in the entire country. (Twirls his mustache.) But enough talk -- let's get on with the play. (Toots his horn eight times.) Eight o'clock and all is well. But is it? (At the sound of the horn, everyone starts moving. The KING and QUEEN resume their occupations and pantomime conversation. ALEXANDER turns over and stretches. ENGELBERT and HUMPERDINCK threaten each other with clenched fists as soon as the SOLDIER stops speaking.)

ENGELBERT. It is not yours. It's mine. You stole my silver pencil! You know I can't do my arithmetic without it!

HUMPERDINCK. I did not steal it. I only borrowed it.

ENGELBERT. Aha! You took it! I'll break every bone in your body!

HUMPERDINCK. Wait! I borrowed it but I gave it to Alexander.

ENGELBERT (turning on him). Then I'll break every bone in his body! Alexander!

ALEXANDER (calmly). Come on, cut it out. You know I wouldn't take it and if you lay a finger on me I'll pulverize you.

QUEEN (feebly). Now boys, don't fight.

KING (echoing her). Stop it, boys!

ENGELBERT (turning back to HUMPERDINCK). Oh, all right! You still have it then! Give it back!

HUMPERDINCK. I won't. I get to use it too. That's only fair!

ENGELBERT. Then -- fight! (ENGELBERT slaps HUMPERDINCK and they start sparring with each other.)

ALEXANDER (bored). All the people there are in the world and I had to get you two as brothers. (He rises and separates them by pulling at their necks.) Give whatever you took back to Engelbert, Humperdinck. (HUMPERDINCK shakes his head "no.") If you don't I'll get Mother to stop your allowance!

HUMPERDINCK. All of it?

ALEXANDER. Every cent.

HUMPERDINCK. Not even coke money?

ALEXANDER. Nothing.

HUMPERDINCK. You're mean. I should have been the Crown Prince. I'll show you! Well -- (Hands the pencil to ENGELBERT.)

ENGELBERT (takes it and hugs it to him). It's probably broken! (Examines it.) Yes, here's a scratch! You'll pay for this! (Turns on HUMPERDINCK again.)

KING. Enough!

HUMPERDINCK. The scratch was there when I borrowed it. (He is retreating.)

ALEXANDER. Oh, brother!

QUEEN. I can't stand all this argument. (Waves her needlework helplessly.)

KING (yelling it). Out! Get out! All of you! (The brothers exit, ENGELBERT still examining his pencil; HUMPERDINCK playing with his yo-yo, and ALEXANDER reading a booklet he has taken from his pocket.)

QUEEN. Dear, we really must do something about our boys. They fight more every day.

KING. I realize that! What they need are wives. Then they can fight quietly at home. I shall send them throughout the kingdom to search for brides.

QUEEN. Be realistic, dear. What beautiful young

lady in her right mind would marry one of our sons? Besides, if you send them out by themselves they'll just get lost.

KING. That shows it's a good idea.

QUEEN. It is, dear. But, smart as you are, you should think of something more original.

KING. Right, my Queen. With my intelligence, that will be easy. (He frowns and concentrates forefingers to brows. Suddenly he gets an idea.) I know. I've got it.

QUEEN. What, dearest?

KING. You'll see. Soldier, call my sons!

SOLDIER. Yes, your majesty. (He steps forward and sounds the message as if he were paging them on an intercom.) Calling Crown Prince Alexander, Princes Engelbert and Humperdinck. You are wanted at your father's throne, you are wanted at your father's throne.

(All three SONS enter in the order they were called, bowing first to their father and then kissing their mother's hand.)

KING (rising and speaking with great importance). I have called you before me to announce my plans for your marriages. At nine o'clock sharp you shall each take your bow and shoot an arrow as far as you can in any direction you like. Where the arrow falls, you will find your bride.

ALEXANDER (to himself). Of all the idiotic ideas, this one takes the gold plated medal.

SOLDIER (intoning).

Five to nine,
Five to nine,
Get your arrows
But don't take mine!

KING. Hurry sons, get going! (The PRINCES exit to pick up bows and arrows at different spots offstage. They reenter quickly and arrange themselves back to back center stage so that each can shoot in a different direction.)

QUEEN. Dear, I don't think this idea is going to work.

KING. Of course it is. It's my idea.

SOLDIER. Nine o'clock and all is well, for the moment.

KING. Ready, aim, shoot! (Each PRINCE shoots an arrow offstage into the curtains.) Now go, follow your arrows and find your true loves.

QUEEN. Don't get lost, boys. Remember, back by lunchtime. (The three PRINCES exit, following their arrows. The KING and QUEEN remain on their thrones and begin sewing, reading, or other pantomimed actions.)

(PRISCILLA walks onto the foot of the stage, and places an arrow in front of her feet.)

PRISCILLA. Well this arrow must mean something and I intend to find out what's in it for me. (Giggles and fluffs her hair.)

(ENGELBERT enters, searching, from downstage L, humming.)

ENGELBERT (sings).

Where, oh where, has my arrow gone?

Oh where, oh where can it be?

Ah, here it is, here it is,

At the feet of a lovely lady!

(Stands gazing at her awestruck. PRISCILLA just giggles in response.) You are a wonder to

behold. Your beauty is like the radiance of the dawn. (PRISCILLA giggles again.) Allow me to introduce myself. I am Prince Engelbert of the kingdom of Modgnik. And may I ask who you are, who I am blessed to have standing by my arrow?

PRISCILLA (amid giggles). I am Priscilla, Princess-Would-Be.

ENGELBERT (dropping to his knees and taking her hand). My beautiful princess, will you marry me?

PRISCILLA. Yes. (She giggles again.)

ENGELBERT (offering his hand). Then come back with me to my kingdom. (They exit hand in hand, together downstage R.)

(LADY COSELL enters downstage L. There is an arrow lightly taped to her forehead. HUMPERDINCK enters from upstage R.)

HUMPERDINCK. Now where did my arrow go?
I'm sure I shot in this direction. Oh, arrow!
Arrow! Come to me!

LADY COSELL (pointing to the arrow on her head).
Is this what you're looking for?

HUMPERDINCK. Yes! And you are at the end of my arrow.

LADY COSELL (sarcastically). You noticed? Well, that's really brilliant.

HUMPERDINCK. I am Prince Humperdinck of the kingdom of Modgnik. I ask you, lady of the arrow, to be my wife.

LADY COSELL. I'm not the kind of girl who goes around marrying every man that asks her. I must know more about you first. How much money do you have?

HUMPERDINCK. Well, just what's left of my regular allowance, but when the king, my father dies, I shall have rooms and rooms full of gold.

LADY COSELL (practically). When your father dies, you say. How many brothers or sisters do you have?

HUMPERDINCK. No sisters.

LADY COSELL. No sisters. That's good. How many brothers?

HUMPERDINCK. Well -- you might say I have two. But I'm the only one that really counts and I'll share all my wealth with you, if you'll only marry me.

LADY COSELL (thoughtfully). Hmm, doesn't sound like a bad deal and I've always wanted to be a princess. Yes, I will marry you.

HUMPERDINCK. You have made me the happiest man in the world!

LADY COSELL. I'm glad you're happy. Make me happy by doing something about this arrow.

HUMPERDINCK. Certainly. (Yanks it free.)

LADY COSELL. Ouch!

HUMPERDINCK. There! There! Now come with me back to our kingdom. (Offers his hand, which LADY COSELL takes.)

LADY COSELL. Do you have some band-aids? And how about food? I've had no breakfast.

HUMPERDINCK. Mother said be sure and be home for lunch.

LADY COSELL (thoughtfully). The queen? How does she feel about this caper? I hope she understands I'll need a lot of new dresses. One has to live up to one's position in life. You see... (LADY COSELL talks herself across the stage and they exit.)

(ENGELBERT and PRISCILLA enter downstage L and pantomime their respects to the KING and QUEEN, then stand behind the throne.)

(Downstage R, FRANCINE, the frog, hops into her pond. She holds an arrow in her mouth. ALEXANDER enters from upstage R.)

ALEXANDER. I've been searching for hours and still can't find my arrow. I'm thirsty too. Ah, a pond! (He stoops, drinking from his cupped hand.)

FRANCINE (bringing him the arrow). Is this yours?

ALEXANDER. Thanks. (Takes arrow.) Who are you? That's a cute outfit you're wearing but I can't see you very well.

FRANCINE. I'm a frog. Your arrow came right to me.

ALEXANDER (jumping up as he realizes what that means). My arrow! And you're a frog girl!

FRANCINE. That's right. What's the matter?

ALEXANDER. My father has ordered that I follow this arrow to where it falls to find my true love. That means I must marry you.

FRANCINE. But that's wonderful! All my dreams are coming true. I've watched you for months and wished I could be a princess and marry you. I'll be a good wife and keep our pond clean and love you with all my heart.

ALEXANDER. But I can't marry you.

FRANCINE. Why not?

ALEXANDER. You're a frog. I can't marry a frog.

FRANCINE. I forgot about that. It could cause problems. But don't you think when there's real love things usually turn out all right?

ALEXANDER. But how can I love a frog? Don't

get me wrong. You're very nice and your outfit really sets you off. Green's always been my favorite color. But I can't marry you. I must go back to my father and see what he says.

(Starts exit.)

FRANCINE. Wait, don't go. Let's try to think of something... (He is gone and FRANCINE starts to cry.)

(Suddenly, in whirls her FAIRY FROGMOTHER. She is wearing green clogs and trips.)

FROGMOTHER. Drat these new shoes! But never mind. I've come to help. Don't cry, my darling frogchild.

FRANCINE. Who are you? (Dries her eyes on her tiny green handkerchief.)

FROGMOTHER. I'm your fairy frogmother. I've known you since you were a baby and you've always been a good little froggie. I saw what happened and I know how it must hurt you. But believe me, it's best this way. Forget about the prince. How would you like me to pop out a big handsome bullfrog just for you?

FRANCINE. Oh Fairy Frogmother, I don't want a bullfrog. I've fallen in love with the prince. I want to marry him.

FROGMOTHER. Francine, you are already attractive to him, but if he does not love you, you would only have a life of heartache and sorrow. No, first he must prove that he loves you as you are and then I will fix things to make you both happy.

FRANCINE. But how can I get him to love an ugly little frog like me?

FROGMOTHER. Don't worry. I'll help you with

that too. Goodbye, my frogchild. (FROG-MOTHER whirls back to where she came from.)
FRANCINE. Goodbye, Fairy Frogmother. (Lights down on the pond and up on the throne room.)

(HUMPERDINCK and LADY COSELL enter and pay their respects, then stand beside ENGELBERT and PRISCILLA. ALEXANDER enters alone.)

KING. Ah, Alexander. I see you have come back.
But where is your bride?

ALEXANDER. That's what I wanted to talk to you about, Dad.

KING. Speak, my son.

ALEXANDER. Could I just talk to you and Mother.
It's, ah, rather personal.

KING. Certainly. Engelbert and Humperdinck, take your fiances out to the garden to eat lunch or something. It must be twelve o'clock by now, isn't it, Soldier?

SOLDIER. Yes, sir! (He intones.) Twelve o'clock, noon, time to eat. (The two couples move to a table standing upstage. They pantomime conversation and PRISCILLA often giggles, while LADY COSELL merely looks condescending.)

KING. Now, son, what did you want to say?

ALEXANDER. Father, I do not want to marry the lady my arrow led me to.

KING. (rising indignantly). What! Disobey me?
Why?

ALEXANDER. My lady is, well, she's a frog. My arrow landed in a pond and a frog found it.

QUEEN (to the KING). I told you it was a dumb idea, but no, you wouldn't listen.

KING. My idea was not dumb. It just so happens that I planned exactly what to do in case a

End of Excerpt. Costume and property notes follow.

NOTES ON COSTUMES

KING: The King wears a purple robe with gold trim and a large gold crown. Later he wears an old fashioned nightshirt, cap and slippers.

QUEEN: She wears a long red gown, a small gold crown and jewels. Later she wears an old fashioned flowered nightgown, cap and slippers.

ALEXANDER: Alexander wears dark green shirt and trousers, or doublet and hose.

ENGELBERT & HUMPERDINCK: Like TweedleDum and Tweedle Dee, the two younger brothers are dressed identically, but in opposite colors. Later, Humperdinck wears a girl's dress, wig and high heels.

SOLDIER: He is dressed in a military uniform with a bit of gold braid trim. He has a long handle-bar mustache.

PRISCILLA: She is a frivolous blonde in a fetching peasant costume.

LADY COSELL: She is a stately brunette in a long but plain gown.

FRANCINE: She wears a green leotard and tights, green flippers over ballet shoes, green bathing cap or hood with a green gauze scarf attached to conceal her features. Large goggles could be attached to the cap or hood to look like "frog eyes." She also wears green mittens or gloves with the fingers connected slightly.

FAIRY FROGMOTHER: She is dressed the same as Francine except that she also has a green cape. Instead of the flippers, she is wearing green clogs.

PROPERTIES

GENERAL:

Two thrones, a table and four chairs.

PERSONAL:

KING: Scroll, sceptre.

QUEEN: A piece of needlework in progress, small piece of paper with "message" for Soldier.

SOLDIER: A horn or trumpet.

ALEXANDER: A book, small booklet in pocket, bow and arrow.

ENGELBERT: A silver pencil, bow and arrow.

HUMPERDINCK: A yo-yo, bow and arrow.

PRISCILLA: Arrow, yarn and knitting needles, a bread pan with a lump of dough in it, a large "diamond" ring.

LADY COSELL: Arrow, yarn and knitting needles, a neatly knitted small blanket, a loaf of bread that seems quite heavy, a large "diamond" ring.

FRANCINE: Arrow, tiny green handkerchief, yarn and knitting needles, a handsome large knitted blanket, a loaf of bread spread with orange marmalade, a large "diamond" ring.

FAIRY FROGMOTHER: Magic wand.