

Royal Romp for a Dragon

A skit for two players and some audience volunteers

By Anne Lemay (c.2004)

In which a Princess who would rather be a dragon meets a dragon who would rather be a princess, with literary references and interesting results ...

Cast of Characters

in order of appearance

Jester, a court comedian with a mission

Princess Penelope, an atypical royal

Dragona, a dragon with a mission

Fairy Godmother (or Wizard/Fairy Godfather)

Miss Muffet, a helpful librarian

Time: Once Upon a Recent Future Time

Setting: A Wishing Well in the Woods near the Royal Palace of Readalot

At Rise: Jester crosses the stage carrying a sign that states the time and setting.

Jester: (stopping at center stage to speak to audience)

A Wishing Well in the Woods. The perfect setting for “Once Upon a Time” and dragons, dreams and daring deeds, don’t you think? Daring deeds ... that sounds scary, but not as scary as *(stage whisper)* d-d-d-dragons! I hope we don’t see any of them around here! *(starts to exit, but stops)*

Oh, and I’m supposed to tell you that the Royal Fax Machine is working. *(exits)*

(Princess Penelope enters carrying a sword and a royal fax.)

Princess:

I can’t believe it! How could they do this to me! *(looks at fax before repeating)*

How could they DO this to me!!! *(reads aloud from scroll)* “The King and Queen of Readalot request the honor of your attendance at a ball to present their daughter, the Princess Penelope.

Wear your favorite princess dress, as proper attire is required.” *(waves arms and spins around as she says -)*Aaaargh! They’ll make me wear a flimsy long dress and high-heeled slippers! I’ll trip; I know I will. And a crown, they’ll make me wear a crown, too! *(waves arms and spins around as she again says -)*Aaaargh! *(stops to reflect)* But wait a minute! Maybe I can hide my sword in that long skirt ... and if things get too boring, I can whip it out and say, “Knights, take cover!” *(pauses to brandish her sword)* Oh, dear. That sounds kind of lame, doesn’t it? I wonder what a dragon would say ... Oh, my! Perhaps a dragon wouldn’t SAY anything!

Perhaps a dragon would just breathe - as in, breathe fire ... *(pretends to breathe fire)*

Haaaaaaah! THAT would feel so good. I wish I were a dragon instead of a stupid princess!

(Fairy Godmother jingles bell – brrrrrrring!)

Princess:

What was that? *(looks at wishing well)* Hmm. It can't be. It can't be a real wishing well.

(Dragona makes offstage noise)

Princess:

Oh, my goodness! Someone's coming, and I'm not supposed to be here! I'd better hide.

(tiptoes behind well and hides)

(Jester crosses the stage with a sign that reads "Enter: The Dragon" and stops at center)

Jester:

I'm wondering ... maybe dragons aren't as scary as princesses. See what you think ...

(Jester exits)

(Dragona, wearing veils and jewelry, enters.)

Dragona:

Aaargh! *(does same motion with hands/arms as Princess Penelope)* I can't believe it! How can they DO this to me? *(reads aloud from scroll)* "The Dragons of Readalot require the presence of Dragona the Dragon at a joust to eliminate all knights. No accoutrements allowed." *(waves arms and spins around and says -)* No accoutrements! They'll take away my veils and my jewels! And my claws! Jousting will ruin my claws! *(looks at hand claws)* I just had them done in a new color, too! What good is being a dragon, anyway? Who wants to go around fighting knights and dodging swishing swords? I wish they would let me wear a beautiful, long, flimsy skirt! And a diamond tiara! That would be so wonderful! I could go to the ball and dance all night! Oh, I wish I were a princess instead of a stupid dragon!

(Fairy Godmother jingles bell – brrrrrrring!)

Dragona:

What was that? *(looks at wishing well)* Oh, it can't be ... *(pause)* Can it? A real wishing well?

(Dragona tiptoes around the wishing well.)

Dragona AND Princess Penelope: *(in unison as they startle each other)*

AAAAAArgh!!! *(wave arms in unison as each drops her scroll)*

Princess Penelope:

What are YOU doing here?

Dragona:

What are YOU doing here?

Dragona AND Princess Penelope:

Well!

(They straighten/brush themselves off in unison, then each mistakenly picks up the wrong scroll)

Princess Penelope:

Ah – you won't tell anyone that you saw me here, will you?

Dragona:

How can I tell? I don't even know who you are. But I do like your necklace.

Princess Penelope:

Thank you. For what it's worth, you happen to be speaking to Her Royal Highness, the Princess Penelope of Readalot.

Dragona:

Dragona the Dragon of Readalot here.

(Dragona reaches out to touch Princess Penelope's arm)

Princess Penelope:

What are you doing?

Dragona:

Sorry. I just wanted to see if you're a real princess.

Princess Penelope:

(with dry humor)

Yes, I slept on twenty mattresses last night, and couldn't sleep a wink. It seems there was a pea under the bottom mattress.

Dragona:

Oh, I read that one too. It's by Hans Christian Andersen.

Princess Penelope:

Little does he know how unfortunate we are.

Dragona:

Why unfortunate? You have it made! You get to set fashion trends and wear jewels and party all night and dance with handsome princes and lords and nobles – and everyone loves you!

Princess Penelope:

Loves me? Or loves the princess?

Dragona:

Oh. I see what you mean.

Princess Penelope:

Now, YOU have it made! A real dragon – guarding treasure, fighting in jousts, breathing fire – that’s the life I’d like!

Dragona:

Ahem. That’s a western dragon you’re describing. I’m an eastern dragon.

Princess Penelope:

What’s the difference?

Dragona:

Well, for one thing, eastern dragons don’t breathe fire.

Princess Penelope:

Oh. That’s too bad. But still – you have gorgeous scales –AND you get to fight in jousts with knights. I’ll bet you win every time; why, there isn’t a mark on you. Even your claws are perfect, and I love that color!

Dragona:

Thank you. It’s new. But – well, I’ve actually never been in a joust.

Princess Penelope:

Never? Why not?

Dragona:

I shudder at the thought of such violence.

Princess Penelope:

That’s not violence! It’s a game of skill, and a testing ground for swordsmanship.

Dragona:

Hmmph! That’s what some people say! Have *you* ever been in a joust?

Princess Penelope:

No, but I’ve been dreaming of it all my life!

Dragona:

Suffice it to say that I prefer more intellectual pursuits. Also, I would much rather dress in fine silks and jewels and go to parties than get muddy and dodge spears and swords.

Princess Penelope:

Too bad we can’t switch.

(Fairy Godmother jingles bell – brrrrrrring! – then ENTERS)

Wizard/Fairy Godmother:
Switch pitch twitch stitch ...

Dragona:
And you are ... ?

Fairy Godmother:
Titch, titch, titch. I am your fairy godmother, of course.

Princess Penelope:
Fairy godmother? I have a fairy godmother? Does that mean you're going to turn me into a pumpkin and force me to go to the ball?

Fairy Godmother:
No, it doesn't mean that. YOU don't have a fairy godmother. I am Dragona's fairy godmother.

Dragona:
I have a fairy godmother?

Fairy Godmother:
That's right. And I am here to grant your wish, anything you like. Rich pitch switch.

Dragona:
Switch? Does that mean we can switch?

Fairy Godmother:
You already have. Check your invitations.

(Princess Penelope and Dragona check their invitations)

Princess Penelope and Dragona *(in unison)*:
I have yours!

Fairy Godmother:
You see?

Princess Penelope:
But – we still look the same.

Fairy Godmother:
Hmm, you're right.
(taps her wand on her chin)
Rich hitch itch. Aha! Let's try this:
Close your eyes, and click your heels three times, and dream.
(They do this as Fairy Godmother chants in a dreamy voice)

Dream of dragons ... Dream of daring deeds ... Dream of derring do ...
Dream, dream, dream ... DRAT!

(Princess Penelope and Dragona open their eyes and look at Fairy Godmother.)

Dragona:
What?

Princess Penelope:
What's wrong?

Fairy Godmother:
You should have transformed by now.

Dragona:
Does this mean I don't get my pumpkin coach?

Princess Penelope:
Does this mean that I don't get to joust?

Fairy Godmother:
This means that we need help!

Dragona:
Help?

Princess Penelope:
(yelling)
Help!!!! Help!!!!

Dragona:
(to Princess Penelope)
Good idea!

Dragona AND Princess Penelope:
(in unison)
HELP!!! HELP!!!

Fairy Godmother:
Hush! Be quiet, both of you!
Titch, titch, titch ... Do you want to a horde of knights to come running to rescue you?

Dragona:
What kind of help do we need, then?

Fairy Godmother:
Research.

Princess Penelope:
Research?

Dragona:
(to Princess Penelope)
It's an intellectual pursuit!

Princess Penelope:
I knew that!

Fairy Godmother:
Research! We must go to the Readalot Library.

Dragona:
Isn't that the one that's open 24 hours?

Fairy Godmother:
In your dreams! No library is open 24 hours.

Dragona:
Sorry.

Princess Penelope:
How will research help?

Fairy Godmother:
It may be that my spells are not up to date.

Dragona:
Then onward to the library!

Princess Penelope:
(brandishes her sword)
To the library – ho!

Fairy Godmother:
(as all exit)
Titch, titch, titch ... Yes, hurry, hurry, my dears ... move along, now, to the library ...

Scene 2

Jester crosses the stage with a sign that reads “The Readalot Library” and a small table or snack tray and leaves it at center.

Miss Muffet:

(enters with an armload of books)

So many books! So little time! So much to do! No time to read!

(Places her pile of books on table at center and picks up the top one.)

Look at this one:

It’s about a cat whose daring deeds win a fortune for his master. I could use a cat like that.

And look at this ... about a girl who uses up all her matches on dreams one cold winter night, and has nothing left to sell.

And look at these books about dragons: *Dr. Ernest Drake’s Dragonology, The Book of Dragons, Dragon Rider, My Favorite Dragon* ...but hark! What light from yonder window breaks?

Patrons!

(Fairy Godmother, Dragona, and Princess Penelope enter)

Princess Penelope:

Greetings, fair librarian! We come on a quest.

Miss Muffet:

Is this an assignment for school? Do you have a note from your teacher?

Fairy Godmother:

Titch, titch, titch, nothing like that! We need information on spelling.

Miss Muffet:

Hmm, I’m not sure that we have many books about spelling. A dictionary might help, but you often have to know the spelling before you look it up.

Dragona:

Not spelling! Spells.

Miss Muffet:

Spells what? Are you sure your teacher didn’t give you a written assignment?

Princess Penelope:

This isn’t about an assignment. It’s about a career choice!

Miss Muffet:

Oh, career choices! You’ll find careers in the business section in the main room. Is there a particular career in which you have an interest?

Princess Penelope:
Knighthood. Jousting. Festivals. Dragon-hunting.
(*to Dragona*) Oops, sorry! Not your kind of dragon. I meant hunting fire-breathing dragons.

Fairy Godmother:
Hmmp. It isn't a career we need here but a spell.

Miss Muffet:
Nice internal rhyme.

Fairy Godmother:
Thank you.

Miss Muffet:
What are you trying to spell?

Fairy Godmother:
Switch pitch! Switching wells ... wishing wells ...
Where can we find information on wishing wells?

Miss Muffet:
Would that be wishing wells as a fundraiser, wishing wells for a baby shower, or just your general, garden-variety wishing wells?

Fairy Godmother:
The latter.

Miss Muffet:
Wishing wells ... Let's consult the Storyteller's Sourcebook.
(*She pulls it from the bottom of her pile of books and opens it*)
Wind, wing, wisdom ... hmm, here's "wish" but no "wishing well."
Let's try "well."
(*turns back a few pages*)
Wedding, weeds, weeping ... "well." Here it is.
Hmmm. There's "enchanted well" but no "wishing well."

Fairy Godmother:
I would say a wishing well is enchanted, wouldn't you?

Dragona and Princess Penelope:
Absolutely.

Miss Muffet:
Well, this enchanted well turns a woman into a tiger.
I'm not sure that's what you're looking for.

Dragona:

Ouch, perhaps not. You see, Princess Penelope and I inadvertently switched scrolls at the wishing well, which should have caused us to switch roles as well.

Princess Penelope:

But as you can see, it didn't work.

Miss Muffet:

What makes you think it didn't work?

Princess Penelope:

Well – look at us!

Miss Muffet:

Appearances can be deceiving. Are you sure it didn't work?

Fairy Godmother:

Titch, titch, titch. That's a switch I hadn't thought of.

Dragona:

Then how are we to know?

Miss Muffet:

You say you switched scrolls at the well? What was in the scrolls?

Dragona:

Invitations!

Princess Penelope:

Royal decrees!

Miss Muffet:

You could try using the scrolls for their intended purpose, and see what happens.

Fairy Godmother:

Twitch switch! What a spellbinding thought!

Princess Penelope:

So we didn't have to come to the library after all!

Dragona:

But I'm glad we did! It's a neat place.

Miss Muffet:

We work hard to serve you.

Dragona:

Now that we're here, what else can we do?

Miss Muffet:

There's always a lot to do at the library. There are books, and magazines, and various types of media to use and borrow, and computers with Internet access, and – best of all – a reading program every summer.

Princess Penelope:

Why is that the best?

Miss Muffet:

It's the best because you can read whatever you like, whenever you like, and the more you read the more you succeed at winning our reading incentives.

Fairy Godmother:

Titch stitch rich - Reading incentives?

Dragona:

You mean prizes?

Miss Muffet:

Exactly.

Princess Penelope:

It's like winning a joust! And I can read about them, too, and about dragons, and deeds of derring do ...

Dragona:

And I can read about fashion design, and the history of everything, and princess stories! Wait! Do we have time for all of this before we use our scrolls?

Princess Penelope:

Oh, there's always time when it comes to reading. Read a little here, read a little there ...

Fairy Godmother:

Read on the way there and back again. Switch pitch - that reminds me of a hobbit I once knew! I can read about him!

Dragona:

How do we get started?

Miss Muffet:

Follow me to the desk, and I'll give you everything you need.

Princess Penelope:
(brandishing her sword)
To the desk – to the reading program – ho!

(All exit following the librarian, then Jester crosses the stage, nose buried in a book, stopping at center and turning to reveal the sign on his butt: “The End.”)

*** The End ***

Production Notes

Stage

The action may take place on a proscenium stage or in a makeshift stage area on the same level as the audience. There should be at least two places to enter and exit. One of these may be through an aisle in the audience. Some of the lines may be delivered during such an exit to avoid long pauses or gaps in the action of the play. In place of the Jester character, a simple poster on an easel can state the time and place. If a stage is not used, the characters should enter and exit from a convenient door or from behind a curtain or screen. A makeshift screen may be made by hanging a full-sized sheet over a coat rack or standing chalkboard.

Props

Signs may be made out of posterboard or some other stiff cardboard, and may either be hand-lettered or printed in large, bold letters on a computer to be pasted onto the cardboard. Be sure that the letters are large enough and dark enough to be seen from a distance. The signs may be mounted on a stick for holding, but that isn’t necessary. If not mounted on a stick, the signs may be joined by metal rings (like the kind in looseleaf binders) and flipped as needed. Some silly signs may be included, which will provide an opportunity for the Jester to ham it up when he realizes the sign is wrong. The following messages must be included on the signs:

“Once Upon a Recent Future Time”

“Near a Wishing Well in the Woods”

“Enter: The Dragon”

“Readalot Library”

“The End” (this one should be small enough to hang from the back of Jester’s waist)

Sword for Princess Penelope may be made from oaktag or cardboard, covered with silver foil.

Scrolls (a.k.a. royal fax) may be made from any rolled up paper (with the character’s lines printed on it as a cheat sheet, if you like). Parchment would look old, but any paper will do.

Bell for the Fairy Godmother/Wizard may be any type of bell that rings or jingles.

Wand for the Fairy Godmother/Wizard may be made out of a wooden dowel or a piece of newspaper rolled up and painted or colored with markers. Star on the end is optional.

Books for Miss Muffet may be actual books from the library collection about heroic deeds and/or dragons, and the lines in the script may be changed to suit those titles.

Table or snack tray merely provides a convenient place to put the books during the scene.

Book for the Jester may be one of the titles Miss Muffet talked about (but a duplicate copy since they stay onstage until the end) or something that would draw a laugh from the audience.

Costumes

Jester may wear a jester's cap or any funny or medieval type hat. A special collar or tunic may also be worn, either in plain earth colors (such as brown or Robin Hood green) or many colors.

Princess Penelope does not dress like a typical princess, but does wear some sort of glittery necklace, and perhaps a tiny crown or tiara. Tie-on wrap-around skirt is optional. Anything "dragonlike" would be great, if possible.

Dragona may wear a dragon mask or hat made from a six-by-thirty inch piece of oaktag stapled just in front of the forehead. A dragon face may be glued on to the part that sticks out. If desired, paper scales may be glued down the back, and bracelets made with tissue or crepe paper streamers attached to the actor's wrists. Gauzy veils and/or shawls may be worn around the shoulders, and lots of jewelry.

Fairy Godmother (or Wizard) may wear a robe (a graduation robe will work) and/or a cape. If possible, the cape could be decorated with paper or foil stars. A tall cone-shaped hat may be made out of newspaper, with tissue streamers or a gauzy scarf attached to the end. This character carries a wand.

Miss Muffet should dress like a librarian and wear a name badge that reads "Miss Muffet – Readalot Library" on it.

Recruiting Volunteer Actors

Make the volunteer actors a part of the show! Volunteers may be recruited ahead of time by contacting the performance site (see below), or may be chosen on the spot from the audience. Introduce the volunteer actors to the audience before the show starts, saying something like,

"We wanted to do this show for you, but we didn't have enough people to act in it, but here are ____ and ____ who are willing to step in."

Transform them into the characters right then and there, by bringing out costumes and prop items from a special box or bag or trunk, appropriately decorated for the show. This will give the audience a chance to get their initial giggles out ahead of time so that the action moves more smoothly during the actual performance.

Kids love to see their teachers and especially the school principal take on a role, so if possible ask for your volunteers when you book the appointment. Send a copy of the script ahead of time, but let them know that they will be able to carry the script with them onstage and that the role will be easy and lots of fun.

Some tips to help your volunteer actors:

Highlight the part in the script to make it easy for them to find their lines.

Assign the smaller parts to volunteers.

Be ready to cue any missed lines or entrances – keeping in character, of course!

Invite someone in authority to play an unexpected part for surefire laughs

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For more information about performing skits and/or adapting them to your special needs, please refer to the author's book, *Dog Days & Winter Ways: Skits to Promote Reading All Year Long* (Highsmith Press, 1994), available through Barnes & Noble.com or by contacting the author at Franklin Township Library, 485 DeMott Lane, Somerset NJ 08873 (732-873-8700 x.103).