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Family Plays

Twelve Dancing Princesses

Fairy tale by
I.E. CLARK



Twelve Dancing Princesses

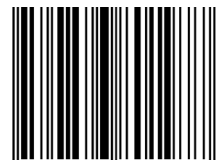
Fairy tale. By I.E. Clark. Cast Size: 2m., 14w., 2 extras. The plot revolves around the twelve beautiful but highly independent daughters of the king. They mysteriously wear out their shoes every night. Where do they go? What do they do? How do they get out of the castle? Nobody knows—and the king is willing to pay dearly to find out. In fact, the man who discovers the secret will receive not only a kingdom to rule, but his choice of the princesses in marriage. Many adventurers have tried to win the reward, only to end up on the Horrible Headsman's chopping block. Then along comes Brand, a young soldier who is supremely confident of his ability to solve any problem—but even he discovers that he urgently needs help. And it comes from the most delightful Fairy Godmother ever to cross a stage, an absent-minded Fairy Godmother in tennis shoes. This play is designed so that dancing and singing may be included as an integral part of the plot: or it may be staged as a straight play without music. Each character has an important role so that this play is a dream-come-true for those with many actresses but few actors. Not just a children's play, *Twelve Dancing Princesses* will delight audiences of all ages. It has been successfully produced by numerous community, university and high-school theatres throughout North America. A director's script is available containing drawings of costumes and set, suggestions for background music, and details on all technical aspects of staging and discussion of characterization, plot and theme. It also contains melody and guitar accompaniment for the songs included in the playbook. The director's script is based on a professional performance at the Casa Mañana Playhouse. *Set: the two sets may be very simple (virtually a bare stage) or as elaborate as your designer can make them. Costumes: fairy land attire. Approximate running time: 60 to 90 minutes, depending on the amount of music and dancing. Code: TS3.*

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ISBN-13 978-0-88680-197-7



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A 2-Act Dramatization of the Grimms Fairy Tale

by

I. E. CLARK

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311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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I.E. CLARK

Printed in the United States of America
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(TWELVE DANCING PRINCESSES)

ISBN: 978-0-88680-197-7

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TWELVE DANCING PRINCESSES

First produced at the Casa Mañana Playhouse, Fort Worth, Texas, during the month of February, 1969. Sharon Bengé was executive director; LeeAnne Cogdill, director; Cheri Ellis, costume designer; Bob Kalbfleisch, scenic designer; Wayne Soulant, choreographer; and Diane Tomlinson, lighting designer. The cast was as follows:

The Princesses in descending order of age:

CHRISTINA, *the oldest*.....Brenda Wentworth
ELSA, *the motherly one*.....Cyndi Brighton
INGA, *loves fun; not too bright*....Sandra Sundberg
PRUDENCE, *the thrifty one*.....Taleesa Van Tassel
HILDA, *loves her nap*.....Annette Durand
ANGELA, *likes men*.....Melanie Mitchell
HEIDI, *the yummy one*.....Pamela Putnam
MONICA, *the sarcastic one*.....Debbie Washburn
VALERIE, *the best dancer*.....Sheila Womack
GERTRUDE, *the copycat*.....Becky Richardson
LISA, *collects hats*.....Jennifer Schroeder
PENELOPE, *the youngest*.....Brenda McGuffee

Other members of the cast:

BRAND, *a young soldier*.....Doug Cummins
FAIRY GODMOTHER.....Elizabeth Knetsar
OLGA, *servant to the Princesses*...Lois Goldthwaite
DEMON PRINCE.....James Coppedge
†HORRIBLE HEADSMAN.....Jeff Ward
†WAITRESS.....Lois Goldthwaite
*†DEVIL'S AIDES...David Abrams, Carol Richardson

Setting: *Act I—Courtyard of the Castle*
Act II—The Demon Palace

†Non-speaking roles

*The Devil's Helpers in the Casa Mañana production handled props and scene changes. The roles may be omitted.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Twelve beautiful princesses who wear out their shoes every night!—where do they go, what do they do? The man who finds the answers to these questions will receive a kingdom of his own—and his choice of the princesses to be his queen. Many men sought the answer, only to lose their heads at the executioner's block. But Brand, a handsome young soldier, is confident that he can succeed. In spite of the fact that he is brave and strong, Brand finds that he desperately needs the help of a frail, forgetful old lady—a Fairy Godmother who appears every time “a golden wish untarnished by greed or jealousy” flies through the whatchacallit.

The Brothers Grimm told the story of the “Twelve Dancing Princesses” in three pages. I. E. Clark has dramatized it in two acts, giving each of the 12 princesses a distinctive personality of her own and creating the most delightful Fairy Godmother in all of Fairyland.

This play is designed so that dancing and singing may be included as an integral part of the plot; or it may be staged as a straight play without music.

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The ‘*Stage Magic*’ Production Script for The Twelve Dancing Princesses gives sketches for costumes as designed by Casa Mañana’s Cheri Ellis and detailed stage directions as developed by LeeAnne Cogdill as she directed the show for the famed Fort Worth theatre. The Production Script also includes a discussion of characterization, suggestions for setting, a list of props, suggestions for background music, and melody and guitar accompaniment for the songs included in this script. The Production Script may be ordered from

I. E. CLARK PUBLICATIONS

Twelve Dancing Princesses

[*At rise: Arrayed around the courtyard of a royal castle are 12 beautiful PRINCESSES, brushing their hair, admiring themselves in mirrors, conversing, and whatever else princesses do on a pleasant summer afternoon in their own private garden. This happy scene is suddenly interrupted by a protesting PRISONER being dragged through the garden by the HORRIBLE HEADSMAN. The PRISONER shouts "No! no!" as he is led offstage. There is a piercing scream...and then silence. Strangely enough, this activity seems to have little effect on the princesses, although one or two show signs of remorse.*]

CHRISTINA. [*The First Princess—she is the oldest*]
There goes another meddler.

[*Each Princess should rise as she speaks, or in some other way make herself noticeable so that the audience can identify the speaker and quickly begin to distinguish among the 12 girls.*]

PENELOPE. [*The Twelfth Princess—she is the youngest*]
Oh, the poor thing.

CHRISTINA. Remember, Penelope, if he had minded his own business—instead of snooping into ours—he'd still have his head.

ANGELA. [*The Sixth Princess—she likes men*] It was such a cute head.

LISA. [*The Eleventh Princess—she collects things*] I gave the executioner a gold coin to bring me that funny little hat the fellow was wearing.

GERTRUDE. [*The Tenth Princess—a copycat*] But I also gave the executioner a coin to bring me the hat!

LISA. Well, you'll just have to do without it, Gertrude. I'm making a collection of hats worn by those—er—what do you call them, Christina?

CHRISTINA. Meddlers.

LISA. Worn by those meddlers.

GERTRUDE. Well I don't care, Lisa—this one matches my bedspread. I intend to have it!

LISA. No, you won't!

GERTRUDE. Yes, I will!

LISA. No you won't!

GERTRUDE. Yes I will!

[*Realizing that the debate won't be won by the loudest voice, the two Princesses decide to try physical tactics like pulling hair, clawing, and other ladylike types of combat.*]

CHRISTINA. Girls!—Gertrude, Lisa!—stop it! If you're going to act like children, we'll leave you at home tonight and let Penelope go in your place.

PENELOPE. But, Christina, have you forgotten!

CHRISTINA. Forgotten...?

PENELOPE. Tonight I do go along—

ELSA. [*The Second Princess—the motherly one*] That's right—tomorrow is Penelope's birthday! [*Kissing Penelope*] Happy birthday, dear little sister!

PENELOPE. Thank you, Elsa.

MONICA. [*The Eighth Princess—the sarcastic one*] Oh joy!—she's come of age—finally!

VALERIE. [*The Ninth Princess—the expert dancer*] You're in for a big evening, Penelope dear. [*She pirouettes*]

HEIDI. [*The Seventh Princess—the yummy one*] Mmmm—yummy!

PENELOPE. Oh, Valerie, I can't wait—I thought this night would never come! Being the youngest is no fun.

CHRISTINA. Being the oldest has disadvantages, too.

INGA. [*The Third Princess—the fun-loving one; not too*]

bright] You're finally going to learn all our secrets, Penelope. [*With a blank look*] Gee—we've got so many secrets, I can't remember them all!

HEIDI. Oh, there's a yummy palace, and twelve—

CHRISTINA. Shhh, Heidi. You never know who might be listening. You can be sure there'll soon be another meddler around trying to learn our secrets.

[*OLGA, an aged servant, enters just in time to hear Christina's last sentence. Since the PRINCESSES are gathered around Penelope, they are not aware of her arrival. OLGA doesn't mean to overhear—but how can you help it?*]

OLGA. Your Royal Highness, wouldn't it be better to tell your secrets to your father the king...?

CHRISTINA. Olga! What do you mean by sneaking up behind us?

OLGA. I wasn't sneaking, Your Highness. I was coming to say that the beds are ready for your highnesses's naps. [*LISA and GERTRUDE groan at the word "nap"*] But since you mentioned your secret, I felt it was my duty to remind you that your poor father, the king—

CHRISTINA. Our *poor* father the king should rejoice because his daughters are happy. Instead, he tries to discover what is making us happy so that he can put a stop to it.

PRUDENCE. [*The Fourth Princess—the thrifty one*] It's probably all those shoes our father worries about....

VALERIE. Oh, Prudence! Our father can afford to buy all the shoes in the world.

PRUDENCE. But a new pair for each of us—every day...?

INGA. I don't see why he cares what we do as long as it makes us happy.

OLGA. [*Speaking under her breath—but really hoping that she'll be heard*] Are you really happy? All of you? I wonder....

CHRISTINA. Silence, Olga! Speak only when you're spoken to.

OLGA. Your Royal Highness causes your father many tears....

CHRISTINA. [*Slaps Olga as she speaks; there is instantly a hint of remorse in her eyes for having struck the old woman, but she quickly smothers all signs of her inner feelings*] I said speak only when you're spoken to!

OLGA. But you spoke to me!

HILDA. [*The Fifth Princess—the sleepy one*] Sisters, if we don't hurry, we're going to miss our nap!

[*PRINCESSES begin exiting toward their quarters*]

VALERIE. All Hilda thinks about is taking naps. I'd rather dance.

INGA. But if we miss our nap, Valerie, we'll be too tired to have fun tonight when we get to the—

ANGELA. [*Nudges Inga and indicates with a gesture that she is about to give away part of the secret in front of Olga*] Hush, Inga—you'll spoil everything! [*Whispering*] My prince would just tear himself to hamburgers if anything went wrong with our plans.

PENELOPE. I'm so excited! But I hope another of those adventurers doesn't come...it's not right that they should lose their heads for our....

[*The PRINCESSES have left the stage and OLGA is alone.*]

OLGA. Already planning more mischief. I wonder where they go—and what they do. And how many more nice young men will lose their heads trying to discover the secret? [*Rubbing the spot where Christina slapped her*] And how many more times will I be beaten for merely opening my mouth! I wish there was a fairy godmother to protect lonely wanderers and helpless old servants....

FAIRY GODMOTHER. [*Running in as though she were being shoved*] Where—where—who—who—what—what—

OLGA. Who are you?

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Oh, drumsticks! I—uh—that is—. Did you make a wish?

OLGA. Well, I might have...

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Oh my—uh—that’s why I’m here—
—that is—uh—I think.

OLGA. What do you mean?

FAIRY GODMOTHER. [*Trying to quote from memory*]
“Whenever a—” uh—that is—“Whenever a—a—” [*she fishes
around in her handbag and brings out a book labeled Hand-
book for Fairy Godmothers. With much thumb-wetting and
page-turning, she finds the page she is looking for*] Oh—
where is it—“whenever whenever whenever—” uh—here it is—
“Whenever a golden wish untarnished by greed or jealousy
rises from the heart, the Fairy Godmother must appear.”
I’m—uh—that is—you wished for—uh—oh, drumsticks! I’m a
Fairy Godmother.

OLGA. Gracious! [*She isn’t sure whether to kneel, cross
herself, or run*] Can you really make wishes come true?

FAIRY GODMOTHER. I don’t—I never know—uh—that
is—[*referring to the book for help—*] it says here: “If it is a
pure wish—one which will bring good to someone and harm
to no one—the Fairy Godmother will do all in her power to
make the wish come true.” I—try—but—I never know—uh—
that is—I—. Yes.

OLGA. [*Making sure she is not overheard*] Well, I’m not
a bit surprised to see you. All kinds of strange things are
happening in this castle. His Majesty the King has twelve
daughters. They’re all beautiful to look at—but some are not
beautiful to listen to, for they think only of their own
pleasure.

FAIRY GODMOTHER. [*Sympathetically*] Tsk, tsk, tsk.

OLGA. The oldest princess—her name’s Christina—once
upon a time she was the gayest girl in the kingdom. Plans
were all made for her to marry a handsome knight named
Sir Darling, and she was so happy she nearly melted into
honeybutter.

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Really?

OLGA. But on the very day of the wedding, the hand-
some knight mysteriously disappeared—zip! zap!—just like

that! No one has the skimpiest notion of what happened to him...but since that time, Princess Christina has been cold and harsh—and she makes the other princesses do just as she pleases.

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Really? What does she make them do?

OLGA. That's what his Majesty wants to know. At night each princess places her shoes at the foot of her bed. And each morning the shoes are worn to specks and dust.

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Really?

OLGA. All except the shoes of the youngest—that's Penelope—hers aren't worn at all. No one has a wisp of an idea what happens during the night—or how the shoes get so frightfully tattered.

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Really?

OLGA. The poor old king is so worried about his daughters that he has offered a rich reward to any man who discovers the secret.

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Real—

BRAND. [*Striding in*] And I am here to claim that reward.

FAIRY GODMOTHER. [*She jumps*] Oh drumsticks!—uh—that is—you frightened me.

BRAND. Sorry, doll. I'm not here to frighten—but to pacify. Isn't it true that the man who can discover the secret of the twelve princesses can choose one for his bride?

OLGA. Yes—and receive a kingdom of his own.

BRAND. Are you the queen, sweetheart?

OLGA. [*Her clothing, her posture, everything about her shout loudly that she isn't. She is pleased at his words nevertheless.*] Oh, you—

BRAND. Well, you ought to be. Show me the way to the king.

OLGA. But if you fail...

BRAND. I know the penalty also. If I fail, my head will be removed from my body—in approximately the same way that I remove a beard from my face. Go tell the king that his

hero has arrived— [*pinching Olga's cheek*] and I might just choose you as my princess.

OLGA. You're such a nice young man—even nicer than the others. Such a handsome neck.

BRAND. I prefer it unpunctured. So I'll try hard to keep it that way. Go tell the king. Tell him that Brand has come to his rescue.

OLGA. What Brand?

BRAND. Not what Brand—Brand what. My last name is Ecks.

[*OLGA goes out in the direction of the king's quarters.*]

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Young man. I—I don't mean to intrude. But I—maybe—uh—that is, if I—. I believe I can help you.

BRAND. You? How could a nice old lady like you be any help to a strong, handsome young soldier like me?

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Well—you see—I'm a—uh—that is.... Oh, drumsticks! I'm a Fairy Godmother.

BRAND. Hey, that sounds like a great racket. [*Pause, as he waits expectantly*] Well...?

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Uh—well what?—

BRAND. Well, change me into a pumpkin or something.

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Uh—that is—why should I do that?

BRAND. Oh, I don't know. I thought that's the kind of thing you expect from an F. G.

FAIRY GODMOTHER. F. G.?

BRAND. Fairy Godmother.

F. G. Oh—uh—yes. Well, you see, I don't—uh—that is—I never know exactly what I'm going to do next. Or—or—or where I'll be.

BRAND. Well, I'll be!

F. G. Somebody makes a wish—and bzzzt—I'm there. Uh—you know—it's always such a surprise.

BRAND. To the person making the wish?

F. G. No, to me.

BRAND. Well, F. G., you're a sweet old doll, but I don't think I'll need your help just to find out where a bunch of cute chicks run off to when the sun hits the sack.

F. G. [*She hasn't heard him; a louder voice is speaking to her from within*] You—uh—that is—I think I'm supposed to tell you—that is—uh— [*to the inner voice*] how was that again? Oh—uh—. [*To Brand*] Don't drink anything!

BRAND. Don't drink anything! Come on, F. G., I'll die of thirst. That's worse than...you know— [*he runs a finger across his throat*].

F. G. What? Oh—uh—that is—don't drink anything the princesses offer you. And—and—watch out—uh—beware—

OLGA. [*Returning with a thin mattress rolled under her arm*] His Majesty is busy now, but I told him you want to try for the reward. [*She unrolls the mattress on the ground*] You're to sleep here in the courtyard, just outside the only door to the princesses' quarters.

[*The HORRIBLE HEADSMAN enters, steps to Brand, measures his neck, feels his neck muscles, exits.*]

BRAND. Who was that?

OLGA. Him? Oh— [*nervously*] That's the Horrible Headsman. Oh, Brand, are you sure you know what you're getting into?

BRAND. Ah, what's a neck! Just a chunk of flesh and bone that keeps your hat from tickling your shoulders. But don't worry, sweetheart; I like mine the way it is.

OLGA. Well, you'd better come in and have something to eat. It might be—

BRAND. My last meal? In that case, what would I like to have?...a hot fudge sundae—with walnuts; coconut cream pie; chocolate caramel cake, with thick icing; two scoops of passion fruit ice cream.... [*He and OLGA exit.*]

F. G. [*Running out after them*] Don't forget—uh—that is—the strawberry shortcake!

[*VALERIE dances gaily into the courtyard, with the other PRINCESSES following.*]