



"Captivatingly simple, disturbingly evocative and richly transgressive, 'Secret' is a journey into fantasy and nightmares framed as a dream—though the identity of the dreamer is one of its odder twists. It's a theatrical feast of compelling interplays between set, lights, costumes and sound."

—SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

Mary Zimmerman's *The Secret in the Wings* adapts a group of lesser-known fairy tales to create a theatrical work that sets their dark mystery against her signature wit and horror. The framing story concerns a child and the frightening babysitter with whom her parents leave her. As the babysitter reads from a book, the characters in each of the tales materialize, with each tale breaking off just at its bleakest moment before giving way to the next one. The central tale is told without interruption, after which each previous tale successively resumed, with each looming disaster averted. As in Zimmerman's other productions, here she uses costumes, props, sets, and lighting to brilliant effect, creating images and feelings that render the fairy tales in all their elemental and enduring power.



MARY ZIMMERMAN's credits as an adapter and a director include *Metamorphoses*, *The Arabian Nights*, *The Odyssey*, *Journey to the West*, *Eleven Rooms of Proust*, *The Jungle Book*, *The White Snake*, *War of the Invisible World*, *Argonautika*, and *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*. Her work has been produced at the Lookingglass Theatre and Goodman Theatre of Chicago; on Broadway at the Circle in the Square; in New York at Second Stage, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and the Manhattan Theatre Club; at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles; and at the McCarter, Berkeley Repertory, and Seattle Repertory as well as many other theaters around the country and abroad. She has also directed at the Metropolitan Opera. Zimmerman is the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship and won a Tony Award for her direction of *Metamorphoses*. She is a professor of performance studies at Northwestern University.

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Drama

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ZIMMERMAN



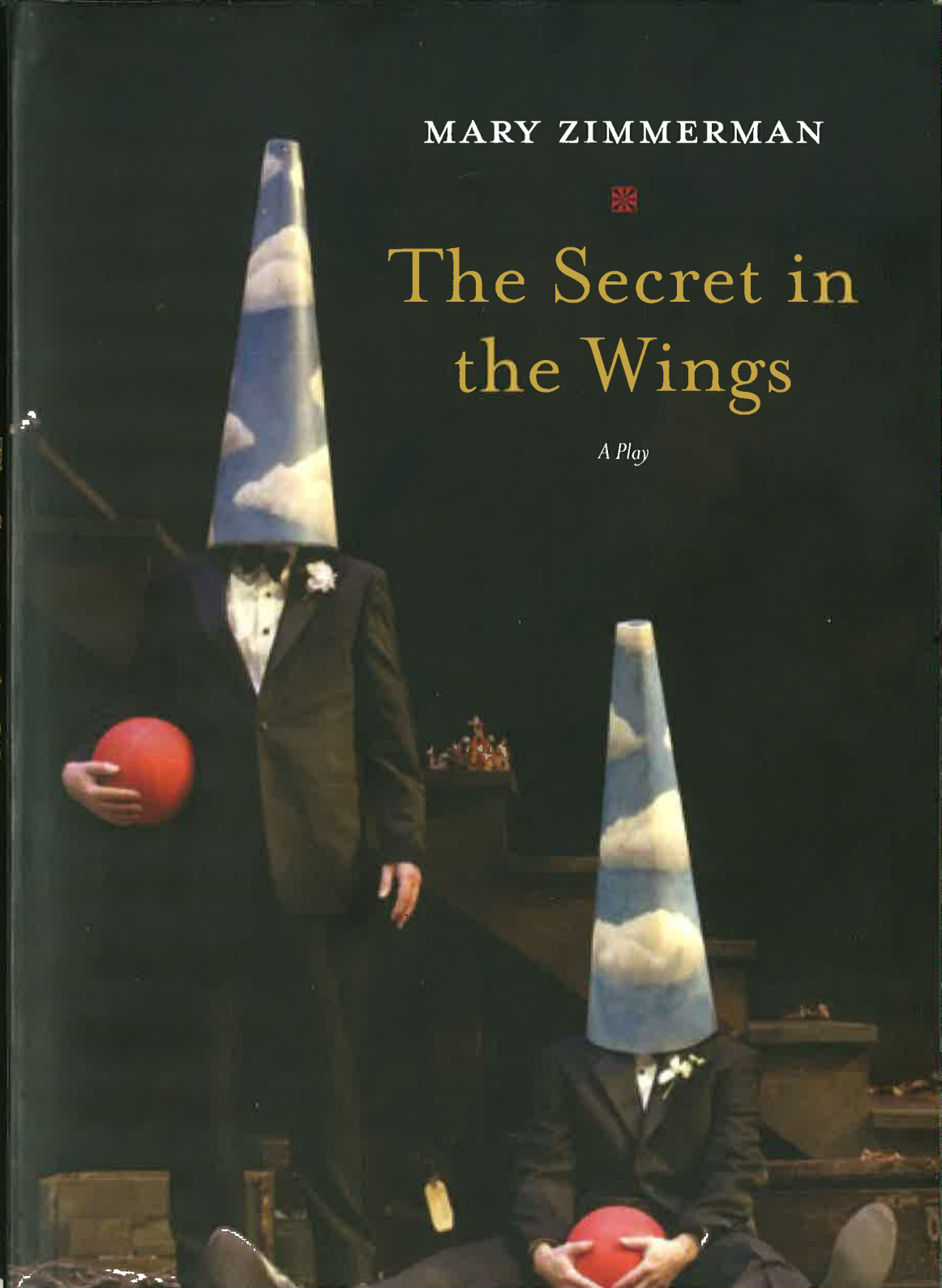
The Secret in the Wings

MARY ZIMMERMAN



The Secret in the Wings

A Play



Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us act, just once, with beauty and courage. Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, something helpless that wants our love.

—Rainer Maria Rilke

A NOTE ON THE PLAY

The Secret in the Wings is inspired by several fairy tales, many of them little known today. The structure of the play is as follows: each tale is told in two parts. The first half of each story is interrupted by the first half of the next story and so on until we reach the central story, "Seven Swans, or Silent for Seven Years," which is told without interruption. After that, the second half of each story unfolds in the reverse of the original order. The play "fans in" to the central story, and then "fans out" again. The exception is "Stolen Pennies," which is told in several brief, interspersed fragments.

The framing story of the play is an updated version of Charles Perrault's familiar classic "Beauty and the Beast," in which a merchant steals a rose from a monster, and for his crime his young daughter is compelled to go live with the beast. Each night the beast asks his captive if she will marry him; each night she denies him. Yet every night she dreams of a prince who tells her, "Do not trust your eyes." At the end of a year the beast wins her love despite his terrifying appearance, and at the moment she kisses him, he is transformed into the prince of her dreams. This is the tale that best illustrates what G. K. Chesterton described as the most profound lesson of fairy tales: that you must love a thing before it is lovable.

CHARACTERS

Opening: Left in the Forest

Mother
Father
Heidi
Mr. Fitzpatrick (Tony)

The Three Blind Queens

Three Princes
Three Queens
Ambassador
Nursemaid
Son of the Third Blind Queen

Stolen Pennies

Child
Papa
Mama
Other Children
Stranger

The Princess Who Wouldn't Laugh

Royal Dancing Couples
Princess Who Won't Laugh
Father of the Princess
Three Suitors
Three Ladies-in-Waiting

The Three Snake Leaves

Snake-Leaves Princess
Three Singers
Boy
Sea Captain
Boy's Servant
Father of Snake-Leaves Princess

Allerleira

Two Men
Allerleira
Allerleira's Companions (Laura,
Louise, and Heidi)
Allerleira's Father
Allerleira's Father's Attendant
King
Second King
King's Attendant

Seven Swans, or Silent for Seven Years

Father of Seven Sons
Sons
Daughter
Andrew
King of *Silent for Seven Years*
Evil Mother

OPENING: LEFT IN THE FOREST

[In a basement. There is a thunderstorm outside. MOTHER and FATHER are dressed in elaborate finery. HEIDI is in her nightgown, crouched under a floor lamp. At no point do her parents ever touch her.]

MOTHER:
So you see, sweetheart—

HEIDI:
Where? You're going where?

[FATHER laughs.]

MOTHER:
To dinner, darling, dinner!

HEIDI:
But you did that already.

[FATHER laughs.]

MOTHER:
That was last night, Heidi—

FATHER:
Last night!

MOTHER:
That was a dinner *party*—

FATHER:
That was a dinner party—

MOTHER:
A dinner *party*, darling, where everybody—

FATHER:
With dancing!

MOTHER:
Everybody was dancing!

FATHER:
It was *much different*!

HEIDI:
It isn't different!

MOTHER [*confidentially, to FATHER*]:
Huzz buzz buzz buzz

FATHER:
Buzz huzzbuzz buzz buzz

HEIDI [*in distress*]:
What?

MOTHER:
We're going to eat lots of beautiful things,

FATHER:
and bring you back some—

MOTHER:
—some of each!

[HEIDI *starts to hyperventilate.*]

FATHER:
Frog legs—

MOTHER:
And tilapia à la Tiepolo—

FATHER:
Liver and lamingtons

MOTHER:
With onions,

FATHER:
Delicious goose pâté—

MOTHER:
And blackened red-winged blackbird wings—

FATHER:
And an orange-roughy smoothie!

MOTHER:
All sorts of things

FATHER:
All sorts of—

MOTHER:
All *sorts* of things!

FATHER:
Things!

HEIDI:
Who's going to stay with me?

MOTHER:
Well now, that's an *extra*

FATHER:
Extra

MOTHER:
Extra surprise.

FATHER:
Our neighbor.

HEIDI:
Mrs. Fish?

FATHER:
Our neighbor to the left.

HEIDI:
The ogre?

FATHER:
Mr. Fitzpatrick!

HEIDI:
Mr. Fitzpatrick the ogre?

[MR. FITZPATRICK, *unobserved*, starts *very slowly* down the stairs, one step at a time. First we see his feet, then his long, spotted tail. Then his dirty sleeveless T-shirt. Finally we see he is carrying a book and smoking a cigarette.]

FATHER:
Not ogre, Heidi, *neighbor*.

HEIDI:
The ogre's going to stay with me?

MOTHER:
Mr. Fitzpatrick's not an ogre!

HEIDI:
He has a tail!

FATHER:
Oh goodness.

MOTHER:
For goodness sake!

FATHER:
Mr. Fitzpatrick does not have—

MOTHER:
He doesn't have a tail—

HEIDI:
A tail! He has a tail!

FATHER:
Now look—

[*He produces a rose from his jacket.*]

MOTHER:
Look what your father's brought you—

FATHER:
What I've brought you.

HEIDI:
Where did you get that?

FATHER:
Why, from Mr. Fitzpatrick—

HEIDI:
From the ogre's garden?

MOTHER:
From *Mr. Fitzpatrick's* garden.

FATHER:
On my way back from asking him—

HEIDI:
Did you ask him for that rose?

MOTHER:
No, no—

HEIDI [*high alarm*]:
You didn't ask him?

FATHER:
No, no, I asked—

HEIDI:
You stole the ogre's rose?

MOTHER:
Mr. Fitzpatrick's not an ogre—

FATHER:
Mr. Fitzpatrick's not an ogre—

MOTHER:
He's our *neighbor*.

FATHER:
He's our *neighbor*.

MOTHER:

And I'm sure he doesn't mi—

HEIDI:

You stole the ogre's rose and now he's coming over?

[HEIDI runs back and forth. FATHER looks at his watch.]

FATHER [*confidentially to MOTHER*]:

Huzz buzzabuzz buzz buzz

HEIDI:

What are you saying?

FATHER:

Here's Mr. Fitzpatrick now!

[MR. FITZPATRICK arrives at the bottom of the stairs.]

Mr. Fitzpatrick, you've met my wife, Tracy?

[*Long pause.*]

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Enchanted.

FATHER:

And my daughter, Heidi.

[*Another.*]

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Charmed.

[*Awkwardness.*]

FATHER:

You've brought along a book, I see.

HEIDI:

He has a tail!

[MR. FITZPATRICK looks at HEIDI, then at the rose.]

FATHER:

You're noticing the . . . um . . . yes, it is one of your—well, I mean one of many . . . um. Yes. Well, you don't mind?

MOTHER:

My husband, on his way back from asking—

FATHER:

Yes, on my way back, I . . . you don't mind?

[*Infinitely long pause.*]

You see, Heidi—

MOTHER:

Our daughter, Heidi—

FATHER:

Had an idea that

MOTHER:

Thought that you might mind.

FATHER:

Out of all those roses, it's absurd ...

MOTHER:

Just this one little,

FATHER:

This single rose.

[Pause. FATHER looks at his watch again.]

Oh! Look at the time!

MOTHER:

Oh gosh, the time.

FATHER:

We'd best be going. I had no idea it was so late.

MOTHER:

Time just flies by.

FATHER:

It just flies.

[Slight pause.]

MOTHER:

Don't you find that so, Mr. Fitzpatrick? That time just flies by?

[Pause. MR. FITZPATRICK is staring at HEIDI.]

FATHER:

Well, there's food in the um ... in the icebox and there's um ... well, there's matches for ... any kind of emergency, or should I say ... umm ...

MOTHER:

Honey?

FATHER:

Mnn?

MOTHER [whispering]:

The traffic.

FATHER:

Oh! The traffic!

MOTHER [apologetically, to MR. FITZPATRICK]:

The traffic will be terrible.

FATHER:

Just terrible. A real ... mess.

MOTHER:

A terrible mess.

[Pause. MR. FITZPATRICK is staring at HEIDI.]

FATHER:

And parking!

MOTHER:
Oh, the parking!

FATHER:
Just terrible. Just a, just a—

MOTHER:
—a *nightmare*. Just such a—

FATHER:
Like oh! Like you would not believe!

[*Pause.*]

MOTHER:
Well, okay, then, we're going.

FATHER:
Yes.

MOTHER:
Well, bye-bye now!

FATHER:
Good-bye!

MOTHER:
Bye-bye!

[*They exit quickly up the stairs. Silence.*]

MR. FITZPATRICK [*very slowly*]:
Heidi, will you marry me?

HEIDI:
I know what you are, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

MR. FITZPATRICK:
Will you marry me?

HEIDI:
No, Mr. Fitzpatrick. I can *see*.

[*Pause.*]

MR. FITZPATRICK [*rather sadly*]:
I have a tail.

HEIDI:
I know.

MR. FITZPATRICK:
You wanna hear it?

[*HEIDI nods. MR. FITZPATRICK opens his book.*]

Once upon a time—

THE THREE BLIND QUEENS: PART ONE

[*MR. FITZPATRICK and HEIDI exit through the wardrobe. THREE PRINCES come forward each carrying a chair. Perhaps they have*

been waiting in the shadows below the stairs the whole time. As they speak, they perform a little series of illustrative gestures demonstrating their daily tasks, sometimes standing, sometimes sitting on their chairs. Text that shares the same line on the page is meant to be spoken simultaneously. The centered, capitalized text is meant to be spoken simultaneously by all three.]

FIRST PRINCE:

Once upon a
time

There were

SECOND PRINCE:

Once upon a
time

—————THREE—————

sons of a king

But the king

Like the queen

The king was dead.

They were on their own

—————AND THE NURSEMAID RAN THE HOUSE—————

The three king's sons

THIRD PRINCE:

Once upon a
time

But the king was
dead

One had fair hair

One had silver hair

One had hardly any
hair

The three king's sons

Lived their lives

Happily

Getting up in the
morning

And combing their hair

They lived their
lives

Greeting the day

Were happily living
their lives.

Shaking hands

—————GOING ABOUT ALL THEIR PRINCELY TASKS—————

Visiting their horses
and their charioteers

Buying up paintings
and eating food

Looking at things

And looking away

SEARCHING FOR THEIR KEYS AND TYING UP

—————THEIR SHOES AND THEIR TIES—————

And making interesting comments

AND CHECKING THE MAIL

FOR INTERESTING NEWS

AND FEELING BIG THINGS ABOUT

—————A LOT OF DIFFERENT THINGS—————

And seeing a bit of dust on the floor

—————AND PICKING IT UP—————

Then

All of a sudden

One day

They knew

—————IT WAS TIME TO GET MARRIED—————

THREE QUEENS:

They had three portraits of three girls they liked.

[The AMBASSADOR enters through the utility closet. He wears a ceremonial sash and top hat.]

SECOND PRINCE:

And they said to their ambassador

THIRD PRINCE:

Go all over the world and find three girls to match these portraits and bring them back for us to marry!

AMBASSADOR:

The ambassador embarked upon his task, found three fishermen's daughters who resembled the portraits, dressed them up as princesses, and showed them to the king's sons, who said—

THREE PRINCES:

Yes, we will marry them.

PRINCES AND QUEENS:

We all like one another

THREE PRINCES:

We will get married!

[The QUEENS move down to join the PRINCES.]

AMBASSADOR:

Now, oh, what joy and celebration, what celebration and joy! What joyous celebration came over everyone! Everybody was celebrating, everyone felt joy, everybody was eating cakes and staying up late and dressing up and posing for portraits and celebrating and dancing for joy, for joy. And everyone included everyone except for one.

[All the joy stops as the door of the wardrobe slowly creaks open. The NURSEMAID steps out, crosses the stage, and heads up the stairs. She is stirring something in a bucket. She gives it several stirs between each phrase of her line.]

NURSEMAID:

The nursemaid.

Was not.

Celebrating.

At all.

[The NURSEMAID continues up the stairs out of sight as the PRINCES and their new QUEENS come back to life. As the PRINCES go about their daily tasks, the QUEENS wander away and put blindfolds on.]

FIRST PRINCE:

SECOND PRINCE:

THIRD PRINCE:

Life went on as before

The three king's sons

Lived their lives

They lived their
lives

Happily

Were happily living
their lives.

Getting up in the
morning

Greeting the day

Shaking hands

And combing their hair

——GOING ABOUT ALL THEIR PRINCELY TASKS——

Visiting their horses
and their charioteers

Buying paintings
and eating food

Looking at things

And looking away

SEARCHING FOR THEIR KEYS AND TYING UP

——THEIR SHOES AND THEIR TIES——

And making interesting comments

AND CHECKING THE MAIL FOR
INTERESTING NEWS

AND FEELING BIG THINGS ABOUT

——A LOT OF DIFFERENT THINGS——

and seeing a bit of dust on the floor

AND PICKING IT UP.

AND THEN ONE DAY

AND THEN ONE

——AND——

[The THREE PRINCES seem unable to complete the phrase or to go on with their tasks. Something is bothering them. They try again. Meanwhile, the THREE QUEENS have left them and are kneeling together, blindfolded.]

AND THEN ONE DAY

AND THEN ONE

——AND——

[The PRINCES slow to a stop. The NURSEMAID has reached the top of the stairs. The THREE PRINCES try one more time.]

——AND THEN ONE DAY——

NURSEMAID:

War broke out.

[The NURSEMAID turns her bucket over the edge of the stairs, dumping sand, stones, and toy soldiers on the floor below. Then she drops

the bucket itself. The bucket bounces, rolls around noisily a bit, then stops. Silence for a few moments. When the AMBASSADOR speaks, the THREE PRINCES go away, and the THREE QUEENS are left alone, kneeling in front of the AMBASSADOR, blindfolded.]

AMBASSADOR:

It was supposed to last seven days.

THREE QUEENS [*very softly*]:

Don't kill us.

AMBASSADOR:

It lasted seventeen years.

THREE QUEENS [*very softly*]:

Oh no, don't kill us.

AMBASSADOR:

The young men went off to the war, and left those three queens alone with the dreaded nursemaid.

THREE QUEENS [*glancing around fearfully*]:

Mother?

NURSEMAID:

Ambassador, I hate those three queens.

THREE QUEENS:

Father?

NURSEMAID:

I hate them with a passion.

THREE QUEENS:

Who's there?

NURSEMAID:

Take those three queens to the mountain—

THREE QUEENS:

Let us go back to fishing in the stream.

NURSEMAID:

And kill them there, and bring me back their eyes as proof that they are dead.

THREE QUEENS:

Don't kill us.

NURSEMAID:

We'll say they had an accident, and I will run the house again.

THREE QUEENS:

Oh no, don't kill us.

[They each remove two small round objects from their little wrist bags and offer them to the AMBASSADOR. They speak softly.]

See, we have torn our own eyes out.

Leave us on this mountainside.

We can live on the mountainside without our eyes.

Ambassador, we are no longer three,

[They gesture to their abdomens.]

Soon we will be six.

Take our eyes to the nursemaid and tell her we are dead.

[The THREE QUEENS start to sing as the AMBASSADOR collects their eyes into a mason jar. He takes them to the NURSEMAID, who is waiting at the top of the stairs. She feasts on them. As the THREE QUEENS sing, they give birth to three children, or three bundles of sticks, and climb up onto the mountainside of the basement stairs.]

SONG OF THE THREE BLIND QUEENS

FIRST QUEEN:

*I hear an army charging upon the land,
And the thunder of horses plunging, sand about their knees:
Arrogant, in black armour, behind them stand,
Disdaining the reins, with fluttering whips, the charioteers.*

*They cry unto the night their battle-name:
I moan in sleep when I hear afar their whirling laughter.
They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame,
Clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil.*

*They come shaking in triumph their long, green hair:
They come out of the sea and run shouting by the shore.
My heart, have you no wisdom thus to despair?
My love, my love, my love, why have you left me alone?*

[The FIRST AND SECOND QUEENS begin to chant the phrase "Give me something to eat," and the THIRD QUEEN answers each time, "No." This starts softly, under the AMBASSADOR's line below, but quickly accelerates and grows to a shout.]

AMBASSADOR:

Those three blind queens managed to live for a while on roots and herbs. But when their three sons were born, two of them chose to live on the bodies of their sons.

FIRST AND SECOND QUEENS:

GIVE ME SOMETHING TO EAT!

THIRD QUEEN:

NO!

FIRST AND SECOND QUEENS:

GIVE ME SOMETHING TO EAT!

THIRD QUEEN:

NO!

[The FIRST AND SECOND QUEENS tear apart their bundles, then turn to the THIRD QUEEN.]

FIRST AND SECOND QUEENS:

We've eaten up our own, now it's time for yours!

[Everyone holds still.]

STOLEN PENNIES: INTERLUDE

[A clock begins to strike twelve. A CHILD enters from the crawl space. She is frightened and looks around. She begins to scratch frantically at the floorboards. She runs back to the crawl space and disappears by the twelfth chime. Music. Transition: all the perform-

ers change clothes and ready themselves for the next story as needed. When they are almost ready, MR. FITZPATRICK enters above, carrying his book as always, and addresses HEIDI, who is nearly dressed to play a part in the next story.]

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Heidi, will you marry me?

HEIDI:

No, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

[MR. FITZPATRICK slowly sits, opens his book, and reads.]

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Once upon a time there was a princess who wouldn't laugh.

[Three ROYAL DANCING COUPLES come forward. The PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH threads her way through them, writing in her journal with a feather pen. She is followed by her doting father, the FATHER OF THE PRINCESS, carrying her chair.]

THE PRINCESS WHO WOULDN'T LAUGH: PART ONE

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH:

Darling Journal, today my idiot father held a ball in my honor. It was so stupid.

[She sits. The ROYAL DANCING COUPLES chant gleefully and dance madly.]

ROYAL DANCING COUPLES:

You gotta kick, open, side to side!

You gotta kick, open, side to side!

You gotta turn round, touch the ground,

Side to side!

[They continue to dance under the following.]

FATHER OF THE PRINCESS:

Princess, won't you have something to eat?

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH *[glumly]*:

There are people starving in the world.

FATHER OF THE PRINCESS:

Well . . . won't you dance with us a little?

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH:

There are people who are lame.

FATHER OF THE PRINCESS:

Won't you smile at least?

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH:

The world is terrible.

FATHER OF THE PRINCESS:

Oh princess, the world is perfectly delightful!

[The ROYAL DANCING COUPLES stop dancing and jump into their partners' arms. They are maddeningly cheerful.]

ROYAL DANCING COUPLES:

It's perfectly delightful!

FATHER OF THE PRINCESS:

Won't you give a little smile?

ROYAL DANCING COUPLES:

It's just delightful!

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH [*writing in her journal*]:

So I told them:

[*She addresses the* ROYAL DANCING COUPLES.]

I wouldn't smile for all the gold in the mountains, I wouldn't laugh for all the treasure in the sea. Not if you fastened every star in the sky into the hems of all my gowns. Not if the muses themselves came to sing to me, nor if the philosophers and poets of the world were to write for me. You can take the charm of the ocean and the plains and the meadows in springtime, and you can take the sound of the larks and the sparrows and the scent of the grass and shove it all in a box. This kingdom will blacken and crumble and everything in it will wither and die and everyone here and their children and their children's children and their children's children's dogs and cats and goldfish and fuzzy little rabbits will be cold and buried and rotten and decomposing with maggots crawling out of their eyes before I consent to laugh, because I know what the world is really like.

FATHER OF THE PRINCESS:

Oh,

FATHER OF THE PRINCESS AND ROYAL DANCING COUPLES:

You don't mean that!

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH [*writing in her journal*]:

Everybody said. So then my stupid father goes

FATHER OF THE PRINCESS:

I know!

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH AND HER FATHER:

Let's have a contest!

FATHER OF THE PRINCESS:

Whoever can make my daughter laugh, or even smile, she may wed.

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH:

Whatever. Like I am so totally, totally sure. So I go: Agreed.

[*The* ROYAL DANCING COUPLES *disperse. The three men become the* SUITORS, *preening on the side; the three ladies become three* LADIES-IN-WAITING.]

But if a suitor tries to make me laugh and doesn't succeed, we cut off his head.

FATHER OF THE PRINCESS:

Well, sounds fair enough to me!

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH:

So now they're coming, like I can hardly wait.

[*She closes her journal.* FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING, *standing up on the stairs, announces* SUITOR NUMBER ONE.]

FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:
Suitor Number One: Sir Andrew.

[SUITOR NUMBER ONE *enters. This section of the play is improvised, and the performers may do whatever they want. The following descriptions are only suggestions. The LADY-IN-WAITING should use each of the performers' real names in her introductions.*]

SUITOR NUMBER ONE [*entering and blowing a big kiss to the* PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH]:
Good evening! Great to be here!

[SUITOR NUMBER ONE *enthusiastically, but very awkwardly, tells some jokes along the lines of "Why was six afraid of seven? Because seven eight nine." The FATHER OF THE PRINCESS does his best to laugh generously at everything, but the PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH is immovable. When she has heard enough, she interrupts.*]

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH:
Thank you, thanks a lot. Thanks for coming in.

[*The two other LADIES-IN-WAITING pull SUITOR NUMBER ONE off to the side. The FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING places a cone painted like the sky over his head. One of the other LADIES-IN-WAITING drops a red ball on the ground. Blindly, SUITOR NUMBER ONE gropes around for the red ball, catches it, and goes off to sit, beheaded, on the ground.*]

FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:
Suitor Number Two: Herr Schmidt.

SUITOR NUMBER TWO [*coming forward*]:
Greetings from your future husband!

[*He pretends to trip and falls on the floor. He jumps up and dusts himself off and points to the floor.*]

King, you ought to get that fixed!

[*The FATHER OF THE PRINCESS plays along, laughing genially. SUITOR NUMBER TWO now introduces himself and improvises a series of self-narrated "interpretive dances" with titles made up every night, including, perhaps, "Walking Through the Garden of Whispers" or "Too Many People Standing in a Row." All of them are atrocious. The FATHER OF THE PRINCESS is puzzled.*]

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH:
Uh huh, thanks. Bye-bye now.

[SUITOR NUMBER TWO *meets the same fate as his predecessor.*]

FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:
Suitor Number Five Hundred Sixty-Eight: Señor Dave.

[SUITOR NUMBER FIVE HUNDRED SIXTY-EIGHT *introduces himself and does his best to amuse the PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH by doing various ill-advised imitations of animals—a lizard, a chicken, and so on. The FATHER OF THE PRINCESS finds him absolutely hilarious.*]

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH:
Great. We'll be in touch.

[SUITOR NUMBER FIVE HUNDRED SIXTY-EIGHT *meets the same fate as the others.*]

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH:
Next.

FATHER OF THE PRINCESS:
Darling, I'm afraid we've run out.

[Music. Transition. The performers may change their clothes on stage, readying themselves for the next story. Just as they are ready, the music ends. MR. FITZPATRICK stands.]

MR. FITZPATRICK:
Heidi, will you marry me?

HEIDI:
No, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

[MR. FITZPATRICK exits.]

THE THREE SNAKE LEAVES: PART ONE

[This story is sung. The action is as described in the lyrics and accomplished through the use of empty picture frames, a little plastic castle, a bucket, a toy boat, a newspaper folded into a captain's hat, etc. In addition to the various characters in the story, all of whom sing, there are three principal SINGERS; the FIRST is male, the SECOND and THIRD female.]

[Music. The SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS comes forward with attendants. She holds a picture frame to frame herself. Another frame held by other performers "pictures" a little castle.]

FIRST SINGER:
*There was a place that bordered the sea,
And there was a princess there,
Who seemed to hold all of joy
In her mouth, her hands, her hair.*

There was promise in every glance of her eye.

[The SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS looks over her shoulder at a BOY.]

FIRST SINGER AND BOY:
She held promise everywhere.

ENTIRE COMPANY:
*But inside her mind was a darker place,
So dark no one could see.
That's where she lived and called it day,
And from there she spoke her decree,
Decree,
From there she spoke her decree.*

SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS:
*Whoever I marry must take an oath
To lie with me in my grave.
If I die first he must come with me,
Alive with me to my grave,
And there reside until he too dies
Beside me in my grave,
My grave,
Beside me in my grave.*

*For that is the only true love, true love,
For that is the only true love.*

ENTIRE COMPANY:

*For that is the only true love, true love,
That is the only true love.*

THIRD SINGER:

*A horror spread everywhere,
And yet there was one boy who said:*

BOY:

*Whatever happens, whatever may be,
That is the one I must wed,
Must wed,
That is the one I must wed.*

[The BOY picks up the SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS, and they go to the altar.]

ENTIRE COMPANY:

*Where are you going, my love, my love?
Don't ever go there without me.
Where are you going, my love, my love?
Don't ever go there without me.*

[The BOY and the SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS marry.]

FIRST SINGER:

*He swore an oath before the world:
They wed and were happy a year.*

FIRST AND SECOND SINGERS:

*But you can guess what happened next,
Exactly what you would fear,*

*Would fear,
Exactly what you would fear.*

[Musical interlude. The SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS falls ill and dies. She is carried down by the BOY into a tomb. A bit of bread on a board and a cracked teacup are placed beside him.]

ENTIRE COMPANY:

*They took him alive, along with his wife,
To the darkest and deepest of tombs,
With four glasses of wine, a loaf of bread,
And all his young life and his love,
His love,
All his young life and his love.*

[A toy rubber rat on a stiff wire makes his way through the room, snatching the bread as he passes by.]

*Where are you going, my love, my love?
Don't ever go there without me.
Where are you going, my love, my love?
Don't ever go there without me.*

FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD SINGERS:

*One night near death he lay in the tomb.
The wine was gone and the bread;
Into the chamber through the gloom,
Vile and seeking the dead,*

[A snake, comprised of a dryer venting hose attached to two dowels, comes through the crawl space into the room.]

ENTIRE COMPANY:

*A long white snake slithered in,
A snake came slithering in.*

*[The BOY cuts the snake in half. Another snake enters, then quickly
departs.]*

SECOND AND THIRD SINGERS:

*No sooner had he halved the snake,
Than another appeared in the room,
Took one look, then slithered away,
But soon came back again,
Again,
But soon came back again.*

[The second snake reenters, carrying three leaves in its mouth.]

FIRST SINGER:

He carried three leaves in his mouth—

SECOND SINGER:

One copper, one silver, one gold.

FIRST SINGER:

*He lay them down on the wound of his mate,
And suddenly she was whole,
Was whole,*

ENTIRE COMPANY:

The serpent was suddenly whole.

*[The two halves of the first snake are joined together and the two
snakes slither off happily, leaving the three leaves behind.]*

*Where are you going, my love, my love?
Don't ever go there without me.
Where are you going, my love, my love?
Don't ever go there without me.*

*[The BOY picks up the leaves and looks toward the SNAKE-LEAVES
PRINCESS. Music ends.]*

*[Transition. Music. Some performers change their clothes onstage,
shift things around to be ready for the next story. Music ends. MR.
FITZPATRICK enters from the utility closet.]*

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Heidi, will you marry me?

HEIDI:

No, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

[MR. FITZPATRICK exits, sadly.]

ALLERLEIRA: PART ONE

TWO MEN:

*Once upon a time there lived a king and a queen. The queen had
short, yellow hair and so did their daughter, whose name was
Allerleira. One day, the queen sickened and died. Who would be the
king's new bride?*

[ALLERLEIRA and her three little girl COMPANIONS all wearing little cardigans come forward and throw stones on the ground. They then simultaneously skip to pick them up, hopscotch fashion. After a couple of rounds of this, one of the COMPANIONS (later LOUISE) lifts her skirt and shows her underwear to the others. They all giggle and then begin their chant. This is vigorous, playful, loud, rhythmic, and accompanied by their childish, homemade, illustrative, and emphatic choreography. Throughout all of it, ALLERLEIRA'S FATHER makes a circuit of the entire space, moving very slowly, in mourning.]

ALLERLEIRA'S COMPANIONS [*pointing to ALLERLEIRA*]:
Allerleira, Allerleira, as pretty as your mother—
Little Allerleira, can't tell one from the other.
Search the world all over, and you'll never find another,
To be the lover of the husband of Allerleira's mother.

[*The COMPANIONS execute two chassés.*]

Chassé right! Chassé left!

Al-ler-leir-a's mo-ther lay on her deathbed
A-sighing and a-crying. She said:

[ALLERLEIRA casts herself on the ground to play the role of her own mother. She coughs to indicate illness.]

ALLERLEIRA:

Oh, my dear king, I know I must be dying!

ALLERLEIRA AND HER COMPANIONS:

Though my short and yellow hair seems so death-defying.
Look at me, my husband, so you'll know that I'm not lying.

ALLERLEIRA [*imitating her mother*]:
Now everybody knows that I am irreplaceable

ONE COMPANION [*also in the voice of the mother*]:
But if you should remarry,
there's something here that you should know

ALLERLEIRA [*continuing to imitate her mother*]:
She must be as pretty as me and that's impossible

ALLERLEIRA AND HER COMPANIONS:

But still you must find her, and marry her; now go, now go!

Cartwheel!

[*Everyone cartwheels, then gathers for a quick round of a marvelously intricate, much-practiced clapping game, as they chant the following quite rapidly.*]

ALLERLEIRA AND HER COMPANIONS [*clapping together*]:
Allerleira, Allerleira, as pretty as your mother—
Little Allerleira, can't tell one from the other.
Search the world all over, and you'll never find another,
To be the lover of the husband of Allerleira's mother!

[*They shout gleefully and jump up and down in celebration of their clapping game. Then they notice their socks have fallen down.*]

Oh.

[*They pull their socks up, then dance and skip as they chant the following.*]

Step kick, red, blue, green, turn!

One, two-three, four, five, six, seven-eight, nine, home!

[The COMPANIONS fall on the ground and drum the floor under the following in a slightly quieter and more sedate manner. ALLERLEIRA'S FATHER has arrived at a chair and sits, his crowned head in his hands.]

COMPANIONS:

When speaking this our dying queen—she really wasn't thinking
About their daughter Allerleira as a bride for the widowed king.

The daughter for the father? Oh no, you must be dreaming!

He hasn't even seen her, he's preoccupied with grieving!

He hasn't even seen her, he's preoccupied with grieving!

He hasn't even seen her, he's preoccupied with grieving!

[The COMPANIONS lie on the floor and sing an old Marlene Dietrich number, "Falling in Love Again," quite softly, as ALLERLEIRA dances dreamily by herself. ALLERLEIRA'S FATHER looks up from his mourning and seems to notice his daughter. He moves toward her.]

COMPANIONS *[softly]*:

And then one day, he noticed her.

[The COMPANIONS race up the stairs followed by ALLERLEIRA, but her FATHER catches the hem of her dress. He lifts her off the stairs and carries her to a chair. She is amused. She stands on the chair as he gazes at her. Then, suddenly, he kneels and pulls out a ring box from his jacket. He opens the box and presents it to her. Puzzled, ALLERLEIRA peers into the box, and then laughs out loud at the joke. She starts to leave. He grabs her, which makes her laugh all the more. She starts to leave again, but he grabs her again. This accelerates until she realizes that she can't escape, and that her FATHER is still persisting with the ring. Suddenly, she shouts.]

ALLERLEIRA:

Not unless you give me a gown as deep as the sky!

[The ATTENDANT casts a dark-blue gown on the floor.]

Not unless you give me a gown as bright as the moon!

[The ATTENDANT enters and casts a silver gown on the floor.]

Not unless you give me a gown as radiant as the sun!

[The ATTENDANT casts a yellow gown on the floor. The COMPANIONS reenter. ALLERLEIRA'S FATHER leaves with the ATTENDANT. The COMPANIONS come forward with a suitcase and dress ALLERLEIRA in furs. They chant softly.]

COMPANIONS:

Who will be your lover, little Allerleira,
with the night
coming on?

Better run for cover, little Allerleira,
from your father
coming on.

Cover up in furs and run into the woods.
Hide there. Reside there, little Allerleira.
You were noticed
too soon,

You were noticed
too soon.

[Strange music. The COMPANIONS leave. ALLERLEIRA packs her gowns in the suitcase and heads toward the woods. It begins to snow. Strange tree-like figures enter from all corners: the stairs, the utility closet, the crawl space, the wardrobe. They surround ALLERLEIRA and take her off. The music ends. HEIDI enters from the wardrobe with a book and cardigan sweater. MR. FITZPATRICK appears from the trap.]

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Heidi, will you marry me?

HEIDI:

No, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

[HEIDI places the book and sweater on a chair. MR. FITZPATRICK comes up from the trap. He is not wearing his tail. He goes to the chair, puts on the sweater and a pair of glasses. He sits and opens the book. He is now FATHER OF SEVEN SONS.]

SEVEN SWANS, OR SILENT FOR SEVEN YEARS

FATHER OF SEVEN SONS *[reading by a lamp]*:

Once upon a time, there was a man with seven sons.

[Suddenly, with great, loud energy, seven sons come barreling down the stairs, shouting and playing tag. They swirl around wildly.]

FATHER OF SEVEN SONS *[shouting]*:

NOT IN THE HOUSE!

[The SONS quiet down. The DAUGHTER enters down the stairs politely. The children try to play Red Light/Green Light silently, but they can't quite restrain themselves.]

Once upon a time, there was a man with seven sons

[The DAUGHTER kisses the FATHER OF SEVEN SONS on the cheek.]

and one daughter.

[The SONS can't control themselves, and an argument breaks out over Red Light/Green Light. The children begin to get wild.]

FATHER OF SEVEN SONS:

I'M TRYING TO READ A BOOK!

[The SONS instantly quiet down, but then immediately start to look for a new game. They begin to pull out and arrange chairs.]

Once upon a time there was a man with seven sons

[The DAUGHTER kisses him on the cheek.]

and one daughter.

[The DAUGHTER sits and starts to sing. The children start to play musical chairs. This continues under the FATHER OF SEVEN SONS' following line, growing increasingly loud and out of control.]

FATHER OF SEVEN SONS:

Once upon a time, there was a man with seven sons and one daughter. The sons were young and loud, and one day they were younger and louder than usual. The father, losing patience, uttered this curse:

[The FATHER OF SEVEN SONS slams his book shut. The children notice and fall silent.]

Let me explain something to you:

[*The SONS sit down quietly. The DAUGHTER stands aside. The FATHER OF SEVEN SONS speaks in quiet, measured tones.*]

Every day I work hard.

I work hard every day.

Every day I leave my home and I go outside to work.

Very hard.

And why do I do this?

Because I love to work?

No. I do not love to work.

I leave my house every day and go outside to work because I have eight children.

Seven sons and a daughter.

But today it is snowing outside. The ground is hard, and because of this I can stay inside for one day. For one day I can stay inside and sit beside a lamp and open a book. And from my warm chair I can look outside at the lake and the wild white swans gliding on the lake, with the snow falling all about them. And I have this one day where I myself can feel silent and calm. Both inside and out. Silent and calm.

But you children wouldn't know anything about that feeling, would you?

No.

Do you know why?

Can anyone tell me why?

No.

[*One by one the SONS get up from their chairs and slowly sink to their knees, placing their heads on their arms on the seats of the chairs. They are sad. The FATHER OF SEVEN SONS continues.*]

I'll tell you why: Because you are too busy dashing around and making noise and never *ever ever* thinking of the other person.

What's in your heads?

What are you thinking?

What's wrong with you?

Why do you break everything and dash around everything?

Why can't you be silent like the swans upon the lake?

Because you're bad.

You're just bad.

And Andrew—

[*The FATHER OF SEVEN SONS looks at ANDREW. ANDREW looks up.*]

You are the worst of all.

I'm going back to my book now.

[*The SONS slowly get up and sit in their chairs.*]

Once upon a time, there was a man with seven sons and one daughter. The sons were young and loud, and one day they were younger and louder than usual. The father, losing patience, uttered this curse:

[*He slams his book shut.*]

I wish all my sons were swans.

And immediately—they are.

[The SONS begin to flap their arms in a panic. They turn into swans.]

They fly up through the snow, and are gone.

[The SONS fly away. The DAUGHTER comes forward and takes the book from the FATHER OF SEVEN SONS. He exits. She begins to read, as feathers fall from the pages.]

DAUGHTER:

The daughter went out into the courtyard and found the feathers her brothers had left behind. She ran off into the woods to search for them. All night she traveled and all next day. When evening fell she heard the rustle of wings, and seven swans settled down about her.

[The SONS come and roost, squatting on their chairs.]

They blew onto each other and resumed their human shape.

[The SONS sit on the chairs and cross their legs. They are sad.]

Oh my brothers! You are back!

ANDREW:

No, sweet sister, alas. We may only assume our human shape for a quarter of an hour at sunset every day.

DAUGHTER:

Oh my brothers, may I not rescue you?

ANOTHER SON:

No, the task would be too hard.

DAUGHTER:

What task, what is it? Surely I might do it.

ANDREW:

You must remain silent for seven years. Never speak a word, nor utter any sound, nor make any sign to say a thing, no matter what.

DAUGHTER:

My dear brothers—

ANDREW:

And that is not all.

ANOTHER SON:

You must knit us all seven jackets of aster flowers, never breaking a single flower.

ANDREW:

When the seven years have passed—if you have not said a word—when we have put on those garments, we will recover our human form.

[Slowly the SONS reach back with their arms, then turn into swans again.]

[Music. Time passes. In this section we see the following, all performed without language: Three SONS stay on the chairs, sometimes being swans, sometimes changing momentarily back into humans. Alternately, they lie on the stairs on their backs with their heads and arms hanging off into space, and slowly flap their wings. They repeat their actions. The DAUGHTER is discovered where she sits by the KING OF SILENT FOR SEVEN YEARS. He raises her up, takes

her home, and marries her. His EVIL MOTHER looks on disapprovingly. The DAUGHTER sneaks away, pulls a bucket of aster flowers from the crawl space and works on them for a moment, then hides them again. A swaddled baby drops in her arms from above. She goes to sleep with the baby. The EVIL MOTHER sneaks up, snatches the baby away, and replaces it with something grotesque. The EVIL MOTHER goes to the KING OF SILENT FOR SEVEN YEARS and in gestures tells him that the DAUGHTER has given birth to something horrible. Meanwhile, the DAUGHTER has hidden the horrible thing. The KING OF SILENT FOR SEVEN YEARS confronts the DAUGHTER, who cannot say a word in her defense. This entire sequence happens three times: he raises her up, takes her home; she works on the flowers, gives birth; the baby is switched; and he confronts her. During the entire sequence, someone drops flower petals, then dried leaves, then snowflakes onto the scene below. Mixed throughout the music are the following, or similar, phrases. They do not always fall exactly on the action they describe; they come and go and repeat several times. The sequence is fragmented, dreamlike.

Recorded phrases:

VOICE OF KING OF SILENT FOR SEVEN YEARS:

Hello, what is your name?

[This is repeated in various languages.]

Come be my bride.

Come live with me and be my bride.

VOICE OF EVIL MOTHER:

Who knows who she is?

MALE VOICE [*as though trying to describe a dream*]:
There was like a . . . a wicked stepmother, or mother, or . . .

FEMALE VOICE:

Spring turned to summer turned to fall turned to winter. Spring turned into summer into fall into winter.

VOICE OF EVIL MOTHER:

Why does she not speak?

MALE VOICE:

She gave birth.

It was stolen by . . . it was stolen somehow.

VOICE OF EVIL MOTHER:

She has eaten up your son.

She must be a witch.

VOICE OF KING OF SILENT FOR SEVEN YEARS:

It isn't possible.

VOICE OF DAUGHTER:

I want, I want to tell you—

I am innocent.

VOICE OF EVIL MOTHER:

She has eaten up another son.

She has eaten up your son.

Why not destroy her?

FEMALE VOICE:

She never said a word.

[At the end of the third repetition of the sequence the KING OF SILENT FOR SEVEN YEARS confronts the DAUGHTER. The music ends, and he speaks out loud.]

KING OF SILENT FOR SEVEN YEARS:

I'm sorry.

FATHER OF SEVEN SONS *[reading]*:

Said the king. He sentenced the silent daughter to death for the destruction of her children. She could not say a word in her defense.

[Music. Everyone disperses. The EVIL MOTHER comes to grab the DAUGHTER and drag her up the stairs. The DAUGHTER's bucket of flowers now contains seven white jackets, one missing a sleeve.]

Now it happened that the day set for her execution was the last day of the seventh year of her silence. All the jackets of aster flowers were finished but one, which was lacking one sleeve. The wicked mother-in-law came to drag her away, and take her up, up to the scaffolding where she was to die. Then all of a sudden, in the last yellow rays of the setting sun, there was a great rustle of wings overhead. It was her brothers.

[The SONS rush forward, wildly flapping their wings. The sound of the wings is made by each SON holding a tie and snapping it back and forth very quickly. The DAUGHTER tosses down their jackets one by one. As each puts on his jacket, he transforms back into a person. The music is melancholy. The SONS put their ties around their necks. They pick up briefcases. They look at their watches. Now they are

normal, grown men. But remnants of their former wildness remain. They take white feathers from their pockets. They kneel and open their briefcases and hide their feathers there. Only ANDREW does not change back all the way. His jacket is missing a sleeve, and his one arm continues to flap wildly. All his brothers leave him, going up the stairs. He remains, flapping his wing. The music ends. In the silence, ANDREW continues to flap his one arm, staring at the FATHER OF SEVEN SONS.]

FATHER OF SEVEN SONS:

For the rest of his life, one arm remained a wing.

[ANDREW continues to flap his wing, staring at his father. Then he stops.]

STOLEN PENNIES: INTERLUDE TWO

[A clock begins to strike twelve. A CHILD enters from the crawl space. She is frightened and looks around. She begins to scratch frantically at the floorboards. She runs back to the crawl space and disappears by the twelfth chime.]

[Music. Transition. LAURA, a little girl dressed as one of ALLERLEIRA'S COMPANIONS, enters.]

ALLERLEIRA: CONCLUSION

LAURA:

Come on, come on!

[Two other little girls, LOUISE and HEIDI, dressed as ALLERLEIRA'S COMPANIONS, come from the utility closet.]

Okay. So, anyway, so there she is.

[LAURA, HEIDI, and LOUISE sit down on the ground under a floor lamp. They share candy cigarettes. As LAURA tells her story, the action she narrates is played out by the other performers. The girls are oblivious to the other performers, but the other performers sometimes acknowledge the girls. The girls mostly speak very rapidly, as young girls do.]

HEIDI:
Uh-huh.

LAURA:
There she is asleep in the woods covered all up in furs.

[ALLERLEIRA appears, lost in the woods with her suitcase.]

HEIDI:
Like fur coats?

LAURA:
Right. Like that. Fur from every single animal in the kingdom. And so she's sleeping—or like she's lost and—

LOUISE:
What happened to—?

LAURA [rather meanly]:
Just wait, Louise. If you could just wait just one single second—

HEIDI:
Yeah, wait, Louise.

LAURA:
I could go on.

LOUISE:
So go on.

LAURA:
I am, *okay*? Okay. So then the king who owns the woods comes by

[A KING, played by the same performer who played ALLERLEIRA'S FATHER, enters.]

with—he's hunting—with his dogs—and he finds her and he says,

KING:
Will you—

HEIDI:
Wait a minute. This is her father the king who finds her?

[The KING hesitates, looks over at the girls.]

LAURA:
No, it's a different one.

LOUISE:
It's the same one.

[The KING is listening to this, uncertain what to do.]

LAURA:

No, it's a different one 'cause of what happened, Louise.

[A SECOND KING approaches as if to take the first KING's place. But they are uncertain. They wait to see what LAURA says.]

HEIDI:

What happened?

LAURA:

I don't want to say yet. It's the end of the story.

LOUISE:

They got married.

LAURA:

S-H, U-T, U-P, Louise.

HEIDI:

Yeah, shut up, Louise.

LOUISE:

I heard it was the king who owns the woods that's her father.

LAURA:

No, it is not the same king her father who finds her, Louise, because she ran away. AWAY.

HEIDI:

It's not the same one, Louise.

[The SECOND KING readies himself to step into the story.]

LOUISE:

Okay, let's say maybe he's not the same one but he looks exactly like the father.

[It is decided. The first KING/ALLERLEIRA'S FATHER steps in. The SECOND KING graciously departs.]

LAURA *[fed up]*:

If you want. Anyway, um ...

HEIDI *[coaxing LAURA's memory]*:

She ran away from her father ...

LAURA:

That's right.

[The KING addresses ALLERLEIRA.]

KING:

Will you come to my castle with me?

LOUISE *[suddenly, looking towards the corner of the basement]*:

Wait a minute—

ALLERLEIRA *[to the KING]*:

Yes.

LOUISE:

Did you hear something?

HEIDI:

What?

KING [*to ALLERLEIRA*]:
Where are your parents?

LAURA:
It's nothing. Ignore her.

ALLERLEIRA [*to the KING*]:
Dead. My parents are both dead.

HEIDI:
What?

LAURA:
It's nothing. She always thinks she hears her dad calling her.

KING [*to ALLERLEIRA*]:
Come to my castle and work in my kitchen.

LAURA:
So anyway, this other king says blah, blah, I'll take you to my castle and you can work in the kitchen—'cause he didn't know she's a princess and she looks—

HEIDI:
Guess how long since I washed my hair? One week.

LAURA:
Eeewwww.

LOUISE:
Go on. Ignore her.

HEIDI:
S-H, U-T, U-P, Louise.

[*The KING'S ATTENDANT, played by the same performer who played ALLERLEIRA'S FATHER'S ATTENDANT, comes forward and holds an old screen door upright. The KING leads ALLERLEIRA to the door. She enters, and he stands aside.*]

LAURA:
So they go to the castle and she works for the cook who is really mean and stupid and ugly and she's shut up there and works there and then . . . um . . . they're going to have a ball—the king is. Oh, and oh! She makes a soup. Or, wait.

LOUISE [*suddenly*]:
Be quiet.

LAURA [*sing-songy*]:
He's not calling you.

HEIDI [*like LAURA*]:
Because he hates you.

LAURA:
Anyway, she's . . . she lives in the, um, castle in a little teeny room and she wears her ugly normal clothes but every Sunday she goes to the little teeny room and she takes out all her princess dresses because she misses them.

[*ALLERLEIRA takes out one of her gowns and puts it on. The KING approaches the door and looks through the keyhole.*]

HEIDI:

Hey, Louise, lift up your skirt.

LAURA:

Heidi!

HEIDI:

Lift up your skirt, Louise.

[Pause. ALLERLEIRA looks at herself in a mirror she has propped against the suitcase. The KING watches her. The pace of the girls' exchanges slows.]

Lift up your skirt!

LOUISE:

I don't feel like it.

HEIDI:

C'mon.

LOUISE:

No.

HEIDI:

Why not?

LOUISE:

Because it's stupid.

HEIDI:

You're stupid.

LAURA:

Shut up, Heidi.

LOUISE:

I think I hear my father calling me.

LAURA:

He is not. Anyway, listen: So she tries on her first dress and it's like the sky and she puts it on and she feels pretty.

[ALLERLEIRA takes off her first gown and puts on a second. The KING watches.]

LOUISE:

No, that's not it.

LAURA:

What now?

HEIDI:

Laura, I heard something too.

LAURA:

No you didn't. *Be quiet*, you did *not*. And then the next Sunday she puts on her dress that's like the moon. But what she doesn't know is that the king—

HEIDI:

Laura . . . ?

LAURA:

Has seen her.

HEIDI:

Laura, I think there's something in the corner.

[Pause.]

See him?

[The girls all peer into the far-off corner.]

LAURA:

No.

HEIDI:

In the corner.

LOUISE:

I don't like this room.

LAURA:

Heidi, that's your own shadow.

HEIDI:

I think it's an ogre.

LAURA:

It's your very own shadow, Heidi—from the lamp.

HEIDI:

Oh.

LAURA:

Here.

[LAURA turns off the lamp. When she does, a lamp comes on in the far corner, revealing the ogre, MR. FITZPATRICK, smoking a cigarette. LAURA doesn't look.]

Still see it?

HEIDI:

Yes!

LAURA:

Well, it isn't there!

[She turns the lamp back on. The lamp in the far corner goes off, obscuring MR. FITZPATRICK. (It is MR. FITZPATRICK who has turned his lamp on and off.)]

It was a shadow! So anyway, the king has been looking at her—

LOUISE [mocking HEIDI]:

An ogre, oooooo, there's an ogre in the corner.

LAURA:

Looking at her through the keyhole and

HEIDI [mocking LOUISE]:

Oooooo, my daddy's calling me. Oooooo, Daddy!

LAURA:

He sees she's beautiful and he falls in love.

LOUISE:

That's the only way he saw her?

LAURA:

Yes.

LOUISE:

Through the keyhole?

LAURA:

Yes.

LOUISE:

And that made him fall in love?

LAURA:

That's what I'm telling you. She's trying on her third dress and he sees her looking like the sun—

HEIDI:

Let's dress up.

LAURA:

Let me finish. He sees her and so he tells the cook to have the girl make him a bowl of soup and when she does, her ring falls in. And so then he says he'll marry the girl whose finger fits the ring—because he already knows—

[ALLERLEIRA sees that the KING is by the door, looking at her. She isn't frightened.]

LOUISE:

Was it her mother's ring?

ALLERLEIRA [*gently, to the KING*]:

Come in.

LAURA:

I don't know.

LOUISE:

Maybe that's why it was too big.

[*The KING hesitates.*]

ALLERLEIRA:

Come in.

LAURA:

It wasn't too big. It fit.

LOUISE:

It fell off her hand into the soup.

ALLERLEIRA:

I know you're there.

LAURA:

Maybe she put it there on purpose.

LOUISE:

Why?

ALLERLEIRA:

Come in.

LAURA:

Maybe she saw he was spying.

[*The KING opens the door and enters.*]

HEIDI:

Maybe it was too big at first but then later on it fit.

[*The KING and ALLERLEIRA embrace. The girls are suddenly uncomfortable.*]

LAURA:

I don't know. Anyway, he tries the ring on all these others and it doesn't fit on any of them and then it fits on her and he marries her. The end. I'm going home.

HEIDI:

Me too, I'm going home.

[*LAURA and HEIDI run away. Music: the introduction to the Three Snake Leaves song. The scene is exactly as it was at the end of part one of the Three Snake Leaves story. The BOY is in the tomb, gazing at the dead SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS, holding the three leaves.*]

THE THREE SNAKE LEAVES: CONCLUSION

ENTIRE COMPANY:

*In the gloom there shone the three bright leaves—
One copper, one silver, one gold.
He lay them on her mouth and her eyes,
And suddenly she became whole*

Again.

And suddenly she became whole.

[*The SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS comes to life. Music interlude. The two happily run out of the tomb, but then the SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS seems to be distracted. She leaves the side of the BOY, who doesn't seem to notice.*]

*But a very great change had come over the girl.
She was not as she was before.
Her life had returned, but not her love—*

SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS:

She felt nothing for him anymore.

ENTIRE COMPANY:

*Her life surged back,
But her love drained away.*

SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS:

*She felt nothing for him anymore.
At all.*

ENTIRE COMPANY:

Nothing for him anymore.

*Where are you going, my love, my love?
Don't ever go there without me.
Where are you going, my love, my love?
Don't ever go there without me.*

[*A little boat approaches, and a SEA CAPTAIN.*]

FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD SINGERS:

*The two set out on a voyage.
He was happy; he stood on the deck.
But she made friends with the captain,
Charting another course.*

[The SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS goes off with the SEA CAPTAIN and plots with him.]

SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS:

*We'll send him to sleep, then let him slip
Into the bottomless sea,
The sea,
Into the blue-black sea.*

ENTIRE COMPANY:

*Where are you going, my love, my love?
Don't ever go there without me.
Where are you going, my love, my love?
Don't ever go there without me.*

[The BOY'S SERVANT witnesses the scene.]

*They tied up the boy and cut his throat,
Then flung him into the sea.*

BOY'S SERVANT:

*But his servant saw, and found a boat,
And rowed out to him with the leaves.*

ENTIRE COMPANY:

*For he had saved the treasure—
One copper, one silver, one gold.
He lay them upon his master,
And suddenly he became whole
Once more.
And suddenly he became whole.*

[The SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS and the SEA CAPTAIN present themselves to the FIRST SINGER, who now becomes the FATHER OF THE SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS.]

SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS:

*Father, O Father, a terrible thing—
A storm and waves on the sea.
My true love slipped, fell overboard,
And floated away from me.
But the captain was brave,
He came to my aid.
Now he should marry me,
I think
He should marry me.*

FATHER OF THE SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS:

*I know you are lying, my child.
They rowed up to shore at dawn:
The servant, your husband, and those three leaves
That saved you when you were gone.*

[During the following, the SNAKE-LEAVES PRINCESS, holding a little boat, steps into the center of the empty picture frame lying on the floor. She sinks to her knees as one of the others raises the frame,

parallel to the floor, as the sea rises to cover her. She lowers the little boat into a bucket as someone else pours water over her hands from a smaller bucket held above the picture frame.]

ENTIRE COMPANY:

*The king made a boat for his daughter,
But had it drilled full of holes.
He sent her out on the blue-black water,
And let the sea take its toll.
And as it went down to the tip of its mast,
The boy watched it from the shore
And thought,
And thought as he watched it from shore:*

*Where are you going, my love, my love?
Don't ever go there without me.
Where are you going, my love, my love?
Don't ever go there without me.*

*Tell me, was it a dream or love, my love?
Was it a dream or love?
Is there such a thing as love, true love,
Or is it only a dream?*

[Transition. Music. Everyone changes clothes and sets the next scene. A family comes in: PAPA, MAMA, and four CHILDREN. They sit on the staircase as though at the dinner table, with MAMA at the highest point and PAPA at the lowest and the CHILDREN in two rows in between. The female CHILDREN wear oversized white bows in their hair and someone hangs a small landscape painting on the wall behind them. They all have silverware they knock together as though eating.]

STOLEN PENNIES: CONCLUSION

CHILDREN:

Oh tell us! Tell us! Oh tell us!

[A STRANGER enters below in hat and coat.]

PAPA:

One day a man and his family were having dinner when a stranger who was passing by stopped to ask if he might stay awhile and break his journey. All was going well.

[The STRANGER does not actually join the family.]

CHILDREN:

What then?

PAPA:

The clock began to strike twelve.

[A clock begins to strike twelve. The CHILD enters from the crawl space. She is frightened and looks around. She begins to scratch frantically at the floorboards. She runs back to the crawl space and disappears by the twelfth chime. She is observed by the STRANGER but not by the family.]

STRANGER:

The visitor said nothing of what he had seen, for the family seemed to have noticed nothing at all.

CHILDREN:

What then? What then? What then?

PAPA:

The next day, when the clock once again began to strike twelve—

[A clock begins to strike twelve. The CHILD enters from the crawl space. She is frightened and looks around. She begins to scratch frantically at the floorboards. She runs back to the crawl space and disappears by the twelfth chime. Again, the family notices nothing.]

STRANGER:

May I ask—to whom does that beautiful child belong? The one that comes every day and scratches at the floor in the corner of the room? Every day at the same hour?

PAPA:

But the father replied that he had never seen her.

CHILDREN *[to the STRANGER]*:

What child? We've never seen her.

STRANGER:

But surely—she comes each day—?

MAMA, PAPA, AND CHILDREN:

We've never seen a thing.

[A clock begins to strike twelve. The CHILD enters from the crawl space. She is frightened and looks around. She begins to scratch frantically at the floorboards. Suddenly, she sees the STRANGER looking at her. She runs and hides in a corner. The STRANGER goes to the spot where she was scratching. He lifts the floorboards and looks underneath. He finds two pennies. He shows them to the family. MAMA stands, dropping her knife and fork to the floor far below.]

PAPA:

Mother?

MAMA:

It is my own dear child—

STRANGER:

Your own—?

MAMA:

who died a year ago. I gave her those two pennies to give to a poor man, but she must have thought—

CHILD *[to herself, greedily]*:

I can buy myself a biscuit with that.

MAMA:

And hidden the pennies away. In the cracks between the floorboards. Poor thing! She's had no rest. Her heart has had no rest at all!

[The STRANGER hands the pennies to PAPA, who passes them off behind the door to the utility closet.]

PAPA:

Immediately they gave the pennies to a poor man passing by.

[A clock begins to strike twelve. The CHILD comes forward, yawning. The STRANGER picks her up and lays her to rest beneath the floor.]

And she never came again.

[Music. Transition. The family disperses. MR. FITZPATRICK enters and goes toward the floorboards where the CHILD is buried. The PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH enters writing in her journal.]

THE PRINCESS WHO WOULDN'T LAUGH: CONCLUSION

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH:
Darling Journal,

MR. FITZPATRICK *[knocking on the floorboards]*:
Heidi?

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH:
I was thinking today about those horrible girls I used to hang out with. How rotten they were. How rotten the whole world is.

MR. FITZPATRICK:
Heidi?

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH:
I doubt that I shall ever laugh again.

[HEIDI emerges from the floorboards, still wearing her CHILD costume.]

HEIDI:
Mr. Fitzpatrick—

MR. FITZPATRICK:
Why won't you marry me?

[The PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH notices them.]

PRINCESS WHO WON'T LAUGH:
Marry you? *[She begins to giggle.]* Marry you?

[She is overcome by uncontrollable, wild laughter.]

Why would anyone ever marry you?

[She runs up the stairs shrieking with laughter.]

Darling Journal, I saw the funniest thing today!

[She exits. HEIDI and MR. FITZPATRICK look at each other. HEIDI exits and MR. FITZPATRICK sits center, in a chair by a lamp, holding his book. The THIRD BLIND QUEEN enters with her surviving SON, now grown. The FIRST BLIND QUEEN enters above. The SECOND BLIND QUEEN sits by the wardrobe below. The AMBASSADOR enters.]

THE THREE BLIND QUEENS: CONCLUSION

AMBASSADOR:
It was seventeen years later.

[Two of the PRINCES enter from the utility closet wearing gas masks and carrying little flags of their country.]

The princes were no longer young. And still at war.

[There is the sound of an air-raid siren. The FIRST BLIND QUEEN pours a bucket of sand from far above onto the ground. The two

PRINCES *come forward. One of them draws a line in the sand with a stick. They salute and then applaud. The FIRST BLIND QUEEN pours more sand, covering the line. This action repeats continually under the following.]*

The surviving son of those three blind queens was all grown up.

THIRD BLIND QUEEN:

Please, give me something to eat. There are no more roots and herbs. The fish are gone from the stream. The hunger will drive me mad. You must leave the mountainside and bring us something to eat.

AMBASSADOR:

For the first time in his life, the boy went down the mountainside. The path was rough and he was not. He was the sweetest of young men, having been brought up among only the gentlest creatures of the earth.

THIRD BLIND QUEEN:

Please hurry. The hunger will drive us all mad.

AMBASSADOR:

He knew nothing of the world. He lost his way. He wandered so far he lost sight of the mountain. At last he came to the edge of a great desert where he could see, shimmering on the horizon, a castle of black and white marble.

THIRD BLIND QUEEN:

Please hurry. The hunger will drive us mad.

AMBASSADOR:

Now this palace was built by the dreaded nursemaid, once she had stolen the riches of the princes. Everything there was under her

curse. Fearful and lonely and cursed. The young man didn't know this. He crossed the desert and entered the palace. There was an ogre there, sitting on a chair.

ALL BUT MR. FITZPATRICK:

Wounded.

[*Pause. MR. FITZPATRICK growls.*]

AMBASSADOR:

All around him, strewn across the tiled floor, was the treasure of the world: that is, apples and grapes and strawberries and such. The ogre couldn't reach them.

[*MR. FITZPATRICK growls.*]

There was water in pools and cups and fountains and buckets and urns, but the ogre couldn't reach them.

[*MR. FITZPATRICK growls.*]

In his simplicity the young man thought:

SON OF THE THIRD BLIND QUEEN:

Perhaps that sound is his stomach, growling like mine when I am hungry, as I am now, and my poor mother.

AMBASSADOR:

And without thinking at all

ALL BUT MR. FITZPATRICK:

He offered him an orange.

AMBASSADOR:
And when he did

ALL BUT MR. FITZPATRICK:
Something happened

AMBASSADOR:
And when it did

ALL BUT MR. FITZPATRICK:
The spell was broken

AMBASSADOR:
The palace dissolved. The nursemaid dissolved. And everything

FIRST PRINCE:
Everything

THIRD BLIND QUEEN:
Everything

SECOND PRINCE:
Everything

SON OF THE THIRD BLIND QUEEN:
Everything

SECOND BLIND QUEEN:
Everything

MR. FITZPATRICK:
Almost

FIRST BLIND QUEEN:
Everything

ALL BUT MR. FITZPATRICK:
Was restored.

[Music. Transition. The BLIND QUEENS and the PRINCES leave. MR. FITZPATRICK is alone. HEIDI appears in her nightgown at the top of the stairs, holding a blanket that trails behind her. She speaks tenderly to MR. FITZPATRICK.]

CONCLUSION

HEIDI:
Go on, Mr. Fitzpatrick, go on.

[He doesn't speak. HEIDI comes down the stairs and begins to cross slowly toward him. She never falters. He doesn't move. What he says to her is said at first out of shame and fear for her, and then gradually fear for himself.]

Go on, I know how it ends. I'll say it with you: "And she remembered what the prince inside her dream had said: 'Oh, never trust your eyes.'"

MR. FITZPATRICK:
Don't come near me, Heidi—

HEIDI:
'For they know not what they see.'

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Don't come near me, Heidi.

HEIDI:

'That which is most frightening'

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Don't come near me, Heidi—

HEIDI:

'Is only the most frightened.'

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Heidi, don't come near me.

HEIDI:

'This shadow on the ground—'

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Don't come near me, Heidi.

HEIDI:

'Embrace it, it is yours.'

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Heidi, don't come near—

HEIDI:

"That is what the prince had said inside her dream."

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Don't come near, Heidi.

[HEIDI keeps approaching, slowly. Her approach seems to put intense pressure on him.]

HEIDI:

"So she crossed over to the beast

MR. FITZPATRICK:

It will hurt, Heidi, you don't know—

HEIDI:

Lying wounded and growling on the ground,

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Heidi, how it hurts—

HEIDI:

Remembering the prince inside her dreams

MR. FITZPATRICK [*pleading*]:

It will hurt, Heidi, you don't know.

HEIDI:

Who said to her, 'Close your eyes,

[*She kneels in front of him.*]

MR. FITZPATRICK:

Heidi, how it hurts—

HEIDI:

'Embrace him and kiss him and he will be—'

MR. FITZPATRICK:

It will hurt, Heidi, you don't know—

[She kisses him on the cheek.]

HEIDI:

'Transformed.' "

[She throws her blanket around MR. FITZPATRICK's shoulders. It covers his tail.]

Tony?

MR. FITZPATRICK *[slowly, as if waking up]*:
Mother?

HEIDI:

Tony. You've fallen asleep.

[MR. FITZPATRICK is now a little boy, TONY. HEIDI is his mother.]

TONY:

Mother?

HEIDI:

Wake up, Tony, you were asleep. Why are you wearing your father's old glasses, you silly boy.

TONY:

I was reading this book.

HEIDI:

Aw, sweetheart, you can't read.

TONY:

I fell asleep.

HEIDI:

I know.

TONY:

And I dreamed . . . I was an ogre.

HEIDI:

An ogre?

TONY:

I dreamed I was already old, and Grandfather stole a rose from me, and you were, like . . . a little girl.

HEIDI:

What a funny dream.

TONY:

And there were different oceans . . . and kings . . . and birds.

HEIDI:

Let's go to bed. Listen: Once upon a time . . .

[HEIDI begins to whisper a story to TONY. The COMPANY comes out. Several members lie down on the floor underneath individual lamps while three others stand above them as if they are parents putting the children to bed. They put their hands on the lamp cords. As they do all this they speak quietly in unison, or we hear a recording of the following:]

COMPANY:

And they

And they

And they live—

And they lived

And they

And they

And they lived

And they lived hap—

And they lived happily

And they lived happily ever after.

FIRST PARENT:

Good night.

[She switches off her lamp.]

SECOND PARENT:

Good night.

[He switches off his lamp.]

THIRD PARENT:

Good night.

[She switches off her lamp.]

HEIDI:

Good night.

[She switches off the last lamp.]

A NOTE ON CASTING

In any production, the actual names of the actors performing the roles should be used for any proper name (with the exception of "Allerleira"). The names in this script are based on the cast of the 2003 production at Lookingglass Theatre in Chicago. Therefore, the ogre is Mr. Fitzpatrick and then Tony; whereas at Berkeley Repertory the ogre was called Mr. Donahue and then Chris, and Heidi was no longer Heidi, but Tiffany.

FIRST WOMAN (Tracy Walsh): Mother, First Blind Queen, Lady-in-Waiting, Singer, Allerleira, Son, Evil Mother ("Seven Swans"), one of the Children ("Stolen Pennies: Conclusion"), First Parent

SECOND WOMAN (Heidi Stillman): Heidi, Nursemaid, Child from the crawl space ("Stolen Pennies") Lady-in-Waiting, Snake-Leaves Princess, Allerleira's Companion, Son

THIRD WOMAN (Laura Eason): Second Blind Queen, First Lady-in-Waiting, Singer, Allerleira's Companion, Daughter, Laura, one of the Children ("Stolen Pennies: Conclusion")

FOURTH WOMAN (Louise Lamson): Third Blind Queen, Princess Who Won't Laugh, Allerleira's Companion, Son, Louise, Mama

FIRST MAN (Raymond Fox): Father, Ambassador, Father of the Princess, Boy's Servant ("The Three Snake Leaves"), Son, King of Silent for Seven Years, Second King ("Allerleira: Conclusion"), one of the Children ("Stolen Pennies: Conclusion")

SECOND MAN (Tony Fitzpatrick): Mr. Fitzpatrick, Father of Seven Sons

THIRD MAN (Phil Smith): Second Prince, Suitor Number Two: Herr Schmidt, Sea Captain, Allerleira's Father, Son, Stranger

FOURTH MAN (David Kersnar): First Prince, Suitor Number Five Hundred Sixty-Eight, Allerleira's Father's Attendant, Son, Papa

FIFTH MAN (Andy White): Third Prince, Suitor Number One: Sir Andrew, Boy, Andrew ("Seven Swans"), one of the Children ("Stolen Pennies"), Son of the Third Blind Queen

Appendix: Sheet Music