

Acting Edition

THE PRINCESS CAPERS

A COMEDY BY **TARYN TEMPLE**

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*To Jennifer Van Bruggen Hamilton and Bethany Dunham,
my brave theater camp directors who gave me the freedom to write.*

Cast of Characters

NARRATORS 1-3

WITCH

HANSEL

GRETEL

WAITRESSES 1-2

CUSTOMER 1

BEARS 1-3

SNOW

CINDY

BIRDS

BEAUTY

FLORINE

BRIAR ROSE

DELUSIA (Pronounced “de-LOOJ-ya” like “delusion”)

MINIONS 1-5

ENTROPY

ETERNITY

RUMPEL STILTSKIN

DANCERS

GOLDIE

BIG WOLF

TREES 1-10

LITTLE RED

GOLDILOCKS

JACK

JILL

EXTRAS

PRINCE

Time

Long, long ago

Place

A land far, far away

Production Notes

The locations in the play can be easily created with a few basic set pieces and lighting changes.

Aside from Snow, Cindy, Beauty, Florine, Briar Rose, and Delusia, the gender of all other characters can be changed (i.e. the waitresses can be waiters, etc.) or can be played by a person of the opposite gender wearing a wig and a dress, a boy's costume with a hat, a prince's costume, etc. For a small cast, double-casting is essential, and the director may cut roles at her or his discretion. After they speak, the Narrators may either exit or quickly put on costumes and join the scene that is happening onstage. For a larger cast you can include additional actors as extras as often as possible—just because they don't have a speaking line doesn't mean they can't enter and exit as additional customers in the coffee shop, dancers in the aerobics studio, and trees or animals in the forest. You may introduce fun characters, costuming, and pantomime among these non-speaking characters as long as it doesn't detract from the main action of the scene.

The director may make cuts for time as necessary. All cultural references in the script may be updated as needed.

Acknowledgments

The Princess Capers was first performed at Topeka Civic Theatre & Academy Summer Camp in Topeka, Kansas on June 28, 2013 under the title *After Happily Ever After*. The cast and staff were as follows:

BEAUTY	Hanna Allen
SNOW	Ann Beall
CINDY.....	Elle Bray
NARRATOR 2	Morgan Hottman
FLORINE	Maddie Jacques
WAITER 2, MINION 4, TREE, JACK	Logan Matzke
MINION 1, TREE 2	Allison Ortega
MINION 2, TREE 9	Hannah Page
HANSEL, MINION 5, TREES 3 & 8	Dominic Palmieri
CUSTOMER 1, MINION, TREES 1 & 10	Ava Reedy
NARRATOR 1	Kinsley Searles
DELUSIA (as DEMENTIA), TREE 5	Olivia Stephens
GRETEL, MINION, TREE 6, JILL	Lilli Stires
WAITRESS 1, MINION, TREE 7, LITTLE RED	Madison Sugg
NARRATOR 3	Anna Taddiken
WITCH, MINION 3, TREE 4	Olivia Talbert
BIRDS	Ethan Thomas
BRIAR ROSE	Mia Weiler
MINION, BIG WOLF, PRINCE	Christian Yee
Director	Taryn Temple
Assistant Director	Christian Mullen
Choreographer	Shannan Muñoz
Choreographer	Abby Price
Puppet Designer	Mary Williams



The Princess Capers, Topeka Civic Theatre, Topeka, Kansas (2013).
Photo: Ken Price.

THE PRINCESS CAPERS

by Taryn Temple

ACT I

(Lights come up on the interior of a coffee shop. The set can be elaborate or simply suggested with a few tables and chairs and a tub for dishes. NARRATORS 1, 2, and 3 enter and spread out evenly across the stage.)

NARRATOR 1. *(Grandly:)* Once upon a time . . .

(NARRATOR 1 and 3 look at NARRATOR 2, who is frozen in fear at seeing the audience. Her eyes widen in panic. She tries desperately to remember her line, then looks helplessly at NARRATOR 1.)

NARRATOR 1. *(Stage whisper:)* In a land far, far away!

(NARRATOR 2 shakes her head desperately and shrugs—she couldn't hear NARRATOR 1. She turns to NARRATOR 3.)

NARRATOR 3. *(Still a stage whisper:)* In a land far, far away!

(NARRATOR 2 still didn't hear. She desperately gestures at both NARRATORS 1 and 3 to whisper the line again.)

NARRATORS 1 & 3. IN A LAND FAR, FAR AWAY!

NARRATOR 2. *(Loudly:)* In the band Fart Fart Okay!

(NARRATOR 3 reacts in disgust as NARRATOR 1 runs across the stage to step in front of NARRATOR 2.)

NARRATOR 1. In a land far, far away!

NARRATOR 3. Actually, far is a relative term. I mean, to me Uzbekistan is far away, but if I were an astronaut Uzbekistan would seem close compared to the moon or Mars . . .

NARRATOR 1. *(Interrupts, stage whisper:)* You are not helping! Just say your line!

NARRATOR 3. *(Sighs, nonplussed:)* A long, long time ago . . . *(Pauses.)* Come to think of it, it wasn't that long ago, comparatively speaking. There were no dinosaurs roaming around and it was after the Neolithic period. People lived in agrarian societies with domesticated animals . . .

NARRATOR 1. *(Interrupts:)* There lived five beautiful princesses. *(Looks at NARRATOR 2, who still doesn't know her line. She sighs with*

frustration and continues:) Now these five beautiful princesses had lived lives of daring and adventure, but their journeys all ended when they found their Prince Charmings. With their true loves by their side the princesses soon discovered that everyone expected them to simply settle down and keep castle.

NARRATOR 3. Don't you mean keep house?

NARRATOR 1. They're princesses. They live in castles. Duh.

NARRATOR 3. Wait, you're telling me that all the princesses from the fairy tales all lived in the same land at the same time? That's impossible! They would have to . . .

NARRATOR 1. *(Interrupting:)* Look, would you quit getting all technical about things and just say your lines correctly!

NARRATOR 3. I would say my lines correctly if Narrator 2 would give me the right cue!

(They both glare at NARRATOR 2, who looks chagrined.)

NARRATOR 1. Anyway. The princesses realized they wanted more than passive lives of tranquility within the castle walls.

NARRATOR 3. Yes, they yearned for daring and adventure! They dreamed of slaying nasty villains and ugly witches and pirates and grizzly bears!

NARRATOR 1. Pirates and grizzly bears?

NARRATOR 3. The princesses craved sword fights and bloodshed and pestilence and guts and vomit and snot and belly-button lint and . . .

NARRATOR 1. *(Claps her hand over NARRATOR 3's mouth:)* That is not how the story goes!

NARRATOR 3. *(Peeling NARRATOR 1's hand off of her mouth:)* Well, that's how it should go! Get your hands off me. You are stifling my creativity. I can't ask questions, I can't even contribute to the story.

NARRATOR 1. Stop being such a drama queen.

NARRATOR 3. *(Gasps:)* Well. I refuse to work under these conditions. Good luck without me.

(NARRATOR 3 storms offstage.)

NARRATOR 1. Now I'm completely lost. Whose line is it?

(NARRATOR 2 raises her hand eagerly.)

NARRATOR 1. Oh, good! At last! Say your line!

(NARRATOR 2 gets very excited. She prepares herself to speak, opens her mouth, then realizes she's forgotten her line again. Her shoulders slump in dejection.)

NARRATOR 1. That's it, I give up. This is ridiculous. I should never have auditioned for this play!

(NARRATOR 1 exits, leaving NARRATOR 2 alone onstage. She smiles embarrassedly at the audience for a bit until suddenly her face lights up.)

NARRATOR 2. So one afternoon the five princesses met for tea at Old King Cole's Coffee Shop to discuss their situation.

(NARRATOR 2 bows, looking extremely proud of herself, and skips offstage. Through the next several lines the WAITRESSES and coffee shop patrons, including CUSTOMER 1 and the THREE BEARS, enter and sit around the stage.)

WITCH. *(Entering with HANSEL and GRETTEL:)* Hansel, Gretel, you've been running me ragged all day. Now I'm going to put my feet up and have a nice mug of witch's brew. You two are going to sit quietly and behave yourselves or so help me, I will dip your fingers in my brew and eat them right here and now. I don't care how skinny you both are!

HANSEL. Nah, nah, you'll never be able to fatten us up if you can't catch us!

(HANSEL kicks WITCH in the shin, grabs GRETTEL's hand and scurries inside the shop. They sit at a table and start making ugly faces at each other, WITCH following wearily behind.)

WAITRESS 1. Quite a crowd we've got in here today.

WAITRESS 2. Yes, and those two children over there are going to be a handful, I can just tell.

(HANSEL pulls GRETTEL's hair which makes GRETTEL furious. She jumps down and chases HANSEL around the table, both of them screaming.)

WAITRESS 2. Delightful.

WAITRESS 1. *(Gesturing toward the children.)* And that's what comes from having an evil stepmother.

CUSTOMER 1. *(Waving to the WAITRESSES:)* Excuse me, miss, no one has taken my order yet.

(Both WAITRESSES completely ignore him.)

(SNOW and CINDY enter. CINDY is followed by one or two puppeteers dressed in black with BIRD puppets on their hands, "flying" around CINDY or perching on furniture near her.)

SNOW. That new outfit is divine, Cindy. I wish I could sew that well!

CINDY. Sew? Goodness no, I haven't sewn anything since I made that disastrous ball gown my stepsisters ripped to shreds. My fairy godmother made this for me.

SNOW. I'm so jealous of your fairy godmother. All I got was a wicked stepmother that tried to poison me with an apple and seven jolly but inept dwarves. Do you think your fairy godmother could make a pretty frock for me?

CINDY. Sadly, no. She's gone.

SNOW. Gone?

CINDY. Yes, she told me, well, she sung me a song explaining that since I'd found my Prince Charming I didn't need her help any more. She warbled that there were other princesses that needed her now, and bibbity-bobbity-boo, she was gone.

SNOW. Have you tried weeping in the garden to get her back?

CINDY. Several times, but no luck.

WAITRESS 1. *(To WAITRESS 2:)* Oh my gosh! Did you see who just came in?!

WAITRESS 2. Yes. And do I care? No.

WAITRESS 1. How can you say that?! There are two princesses, two actual princesses, sitting right over there! I must go help them! What will I say? What if I drop something? What if I spill on them? What if I scald them with hot coffee? Oh my gosh, oh my gosh, oh my . . .

(She faints into the arms of WAITRESS 2, who tries to figure out what to do with her.)

CUSTOMER 1. Excuse me, ma'am, could I get some service over here, please?

(WAITRESS 2 shakes her head at him, gesturing toward WAITRESS 1 in her arms. She finally sets WAITRESS 1 down and kneels down beside her trying to wake her up but to no avail.)

WITCH. Please, pumpkin, how about a donut. Don't you want a delicious donut all covered in yummy sprinkles?

GRETEL. Father says we shouldn't eat donuts because they are high in sugars and saturated fats. You wouldn't happen to have a carrot stick or a delicious dish of Brussels sprouts, would you?

HANSEL. Mmmmm, Brussels sprouts! No, no, no, wait!

(WITCH looks hopeful.)

HANSEL. I want broccoli!

(WITCH drops her head to her hands in hopeless disgust.)

SNOW. My goodness, the service in this place is terrible! I don't see a waitress anywhere.

CINDY. No problem, I can take care of it. What would you like?

SNOW. Oh, um, just a cup of tea.

CINDY. I'll have the same.

(She turns to the BIRDS and whistles or chirps to them. The BIRDS fly off. Throughout the next several lines they deliver tea to CINDY and SNOW.)

CINDY. I must say, Snow, you are looking well. You don't look like you've aged a day since your Prince Charming kissed you in your coffin. *(If SNOW does not have black hair:)* And that new hair color suits you so well. Your raven-black hair always made you look so pale.

SNOW. Oh, stop. You're making my cheeks blush crimson.

BEAUTY. Yooo-hooo, ladies! We're finally here. I had a beast of a time waking up Briar Rose. That girl can nap!

FLORINE. *(Propping up a snoring BRIAR ROSE. With a French accent, if possible:)* I'm afraid you deedn't fully succeed, mon chéri.

(She giggles.)

BEAUTY. Oh well, prop her up here. Maybe she'll sleep herself out and join the conversation eventually.

FLORINE. You would sink after one hundred years of sleeping she would no longer be tired, but mon dieu, she sleeps on.

BEAUTY. Well, I spent plenty of years in an enchanted castle and you don't see me snoozin'.

CINDY. Beauty, your furniture talked to you. You had daily chats with a chest of drawers and a candlestick. A sleeping spell is much more difficult to overcome.

BEAUTY. Plus my rascally beast of a prince scared the living daylight out of me every few hours. That keeps a gal on her toes.

SNOW. (*Condescendingly:*) Oh, Beauty, you and your small-town, backwoods, colloquial charm.

(*BEAUTY bristles at this causing SNOW to hastily change the subject.*)

SNOW. So, how is your beast . . . I mean, prince anyway?

BEAUTY. Oh, he's charming as usual. How's your prince, Snow?

SNOW. Just charming. And yours, Cindy?

CINDY. He's charming, he's charming as always. Florine?

FLORINE. Très charmant.

(*She giggles.*)

(*WAITRESS 2 finally succeeds in waking up WAITRESS 1.*)

WAITRESS 2. All right, there we go, stand up. Now you can't pass out on me again! We are too busy and I can't take care of everyone by myself.

BEAR 1. (*Yelling to WAITRESS 2:*) Waitress, this coffee is too strong!

(*WAITRESS 2 takes the mug.*)

BEAR 2. This coffee is too weak!

(*WAITRESS 2 takes the mug.*)

BEAR 3. (*As if complaining:*) This coffee is just right!

(*WAITRESS 2 looks at BEAR 3 completely confused. BEAR 3 realizes what she's said, giggles cutely, smiles at WAITRESS 2, and happily takes a sip from her mug. WAITRESS 2 moves away, exasperated.*)

CUSTOMER 1. Excuse me, I haven't gotten to order yet.

WAITRESS 2. In a minute! (*To WAITRESS 1:*) Those three bears are driving me crazy! First their table was too big, then it was too small. Next the coffee was too hot, then too cold, now it's too weak or too strong . . . If they find one more thing to complain about I'm going to scream!

WAITRESS 1. (*Completely ignoring WAITRESS 2's rant:*) Okay, I can do this. I can serve the princesses. After all, they are people just like me. And there are only two of them. (*She straightens herself up, then looks toward the princess's table.*) Oh my goodness, now there are five! Five prin—

(*WAITRESS 1 faints onto WAITRESS 2's arms yet again.*)

CUSTOMER 1. All I want is a cup of coffee.

CUSTOMER 1. If someone would just bring me a cup of coffee!

(WAITRESS 1 stops beside the table of princesses holding her pad of paper as if to take their order, but she just gawks at them instead.)

CINDY. Uh, hello.

SNOW. Yes?

BEAUTY. Hiya, little lady.

FLORINE. Bonjour.

(She giggles.)

BRIAR ROSE. Snnnnrrrrkkkkxxxx.

(There is an awkward pause where the all PRINCESSES except BRIAR ROSE look at WAITRESS 1 but she continues to stare adoringly at them.)

CINDY. If you've come to take our order I'm afraid my dear little friends have already taken care of us.

(She gestures to her BIRDS, who are just returning with a cup of tea.)

SNOW. We're sorry if we overstepped our bounds, but we saw no one that could help us.

(With a huge smile, WAITRESS 1 curtsies and walks away as if in a daze.)

CUSTOMER 1. *(Waving his hands wildly:)* Hello! Hello! I need someone to wait on me!

(WAITRESS 1 doesn't even notice him.)

(GRETEL starts skipping slowly around the restaurant humming to herself. After every couple of steps she stops, rips off a chunk of bread, drops it, and starts to skip again. The BIRDS chirp to each other excitedly, then swoop behind her, picking up the pieces after she drops them.)

WITCH. Gretel, what are you doing? Gretel! Gretel, get back here this instant! Stop dropping bread crumbs all over the restaurant!

(GRETEL ignores her so WITCH has to get up and physically bring GRETEL back to the table. The WITCH throws the bread aside in disgust. The BIRDS land on it and devour it excitedly.)

WAITRESS 1. *(To WAITRESS 2:)* They talked to me! They actually looked at me and talked. To me. The princesses.

WAITRESS 2. Well, whoop dee doo.

WAITRESS 1. How can you be so callous? Five princesses spoke to me. This is the best day of my life.

WAITRESS 2. That is a sad commentary on your life.

WAITRESS 1. At least, I think they are all princesses. I'm not sure about that one. She looks like a princess but I have no idea who she is.

WAITRESS 2. That's Florine.

WAITRESS 1. Flower-ine?

WAITRESS 2. Florine. From "The Blue Bird."

WAITRESS 1. "The Blue Bird"?

WAITRESS 2. Good grief, did you pay any attention in French class?

WAITRESS 1. No. Why would I pay attention in French class? Does anyone actually speak French anymore?

WAITRESS 2. Well, she's from a French fairy tale. A wealthy man's wife died, leaving him as the sole guardian of their beautiful daughter. Eventually he married again but his new wife already had a daughter of her own from a previous marriage—

WAITRESS 1. Ohhh, the wicked stepsister schtick. Let me guess, the stepmother was evil and plotted to make Prince Charming fall in love with her own daughter instead of Florinda?

WAITRESS 2. Florine. It's Florine. And—

WAITRESS 1. And the wicked stepmother turned Chlorine into a blue bird and the prince came to rescue her—

WAITRESS 2. It's Florine, and it was the prince who got turned into a blue bird. When he—

WAITRESS 1. Whatever, there was a wicked stepfamily and enchantments and a Prince Charming and it all ended happily ever after, right?

WAITRESS 2. I suppose . . .

WAITRESS 1. So she's a princess, too. And she talked to me!

WAITRESS 2. I give up.

(WAITRESS 2 goes back to work, leaving WAITRESS 1 in a happy daze. CUSTOMER 1 stands on his table yelling "Hey!" and waving his arms but no one notices.)

(FLORINE has started whistling, chirping, and giggling with Cindy's BIRDS. At first the other PRINCESSES look tolerant, but when it becomes clear she's flirting, SNOW intervenes.)

SNOW. Florine, you realize those are just birds, not princes in disguise.

FLORINE. Oui, I know. But zey are so beautiful, and zey remind me so of mon prince. I miss zee good old days.

(She sighs a sad giggle.)

BEAUTY. To be honest, I found myself talking to my footstool the other day. The enchantment has been gone for so long, yet I wished . . . well, it sounds foolish but I wanted my footstool to answer back.

CINDY. I wandered into the castle kitchen yesterday to try to help with the dishes, but they shooed me away, saying it wasn't work befitting a princess.

SNOW. I find myself in the fruit aisle of the grocery store taking one bite out of each apple, hoping desperately that one will be poisoned.

BEAUTY. And look at poor Briar Rose. Do you think she sleeps in order to recapture the bygone days of her enchanted life, too?

BRIAR ROSE. Scccchhheeeerrrrrkkkkkk.

CINDY. I'll take that as a yes. To tell you the truth, ladies, I'm just plain bored! This "happily ever after" isn't all it's cracked up to be!

(The other PRINCESSES ad-lib agreement: "I'm tired of being happy all the time." "My prince is so charming he gets on my nerves." "What I wouldn't give to cry just once." Etc.)

BEAUTY. Ladies, I want adventure again and I'm not afraid to say it! I want sword fights and bloodshed and pestilence and guts and vomit and snot and belly-button lint and . . .

NARRATOR 3. *(Popping out from behind the curtain, or standing up if she has become another character in the scene:)* Aha, I told you so!

NARRATOR 1. *(Also popping out from behind the curtain or standing up:)* Hush, this isn't our part!

NARRATOR 3. But I was right! She said she wanted sword fights and bloodshed and pestilence and guts and—

(NARRATOR 1 claps her hand over NARRATOR 3's mouth again and forces her offstage or to sit down.)

CINDY. Though I wouldn't have phrased it quite like that, Beauty, I agree. We need something that will take us out of our boring castles and back on the road to adventure!

FLORINE. Bravo!

(She giggles and claps.)

BRIAR ROSE. Shhhhhrrrrrrrrggggggggg.

CINDY. I'll take that as a yes, Rose. But what could it be?

GRETEL. Look, you mean old witch, I'm going to do some toe touches and you can't stop me!

WITCH. Nooooo!

HANSEL. Yeah, and I'm gonna do sit-ups to make my abdominal muscles tough and stringy!

WITCH. Stop, stop it, you infernal children!

(Suddenly there is an evil laugh and DELUSIA bursts into the room with several MINIONS. They quickly surround HANSEL and GRETEL, cackling excitedly. BRIAR ROSE wakes up when she hears the gasps of the other PRINCESSES and watches what unfolds. Music plays and DELUSIA and the MINIONS dance, compelling HANSEL and GRETEL to dance with them. Everyone in the store watches, confused and frightened. The music is a mash-up that takes them back through time: current hits to oldies to a waltz or foxtrot, etc. The dance the MINIONS do should be rehearsed and reflect the musical styles played in the mash-up. The MINIONS collect HANSEL and GRETEL's "youth" [could be a costume piece like a hat or a toy] and place it in a "Container of Youth." As the mash-up progresses HANSEL and GRETEL start moving more slowly and become noticeably older until the MINIONS hand them canes or walkers, wigs, an old-lady hat or beard, etc. The mash-up ends. DELUSIA and the MINIONS laugh diabolically as they quickly run out of the coffee shop.)

CINDY. What in heaven's name was that?

HANSEL. Excuse me, do you happen to have any prune juice?

GRETEL. Dear me, brother, look at the time. It's after 5 o'clock. It's past our bedtime!

HANSEL. Oh goodness, I hope we're not too late to catch *Dr. Phil!* *(Or replace Dr. Phil with another TV show popular among the older generation.)*

SNOW. What happened to those poor children?

WITCH. Ew, they've become old! Gross! I don't want to eat them now!

WAITRESS 2. Oh no, I was afraid of this.

BEAUTY. Young lady, what do you mean?

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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