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There Be Dragons!

A PLAY FOR CHILDREN TO ACT IN



There Be Dragons!

A Play for Children to Act In

By

Steven Mead

Based on the book

The Paper Bag Princess

by Robert N. Munsch

705 South Aiken Ave, Apt 2

Pittsburgh, PA 15232

Phone: 314-239-5694 (mobile)

Email: steven.mead1776@gmail.com

Cast of Characters

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Elizabeth: | A beautiful, princess-in-training; destined to marry RONALD |
| Queen: | ELIZABETH’S mother; a queen with a past |
| Dragon: | A very busy, fire-breathing dragon |
| Prince Ronald: | A handsome, but stuck-up prince |
| Emmalina: | ELIZABETH’S sister |
| Ellora: | ELIZABETH’S youngest sister |
| King: | ELIZABETH’S father |
| Advisors: | The KING’s three advisors who always speak in unison |
| Nobility: | Various nobility—non speaking roles |
| Castle Workers: | Castle pages and wenches—non speaking roles |

Scene

In a castle and around the nearby countryside.

Time

A long time ago.

Synopsis of Scenes

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Scene 1 | ELIZABETH’S room in the castle | Present |
| Scene 2 | A large party out on the castle grounds. RONALD is taken captive | Same day |
| Scene 3 | ELIZABETH forms RONALD’S rescue party | Same day |
| Scene 4 | Dragon hunting | Same day |

ACT 1

Scene 1

SETTING: ELIZABETH’S room in the castle. There is an imaginary full-length mirror downstage.

ACTION: ELIZABETH and her two sisters are getting ready for a garden party. ELIZABETH is facing downstage as if looking in a full-length mirror, arranging her hair. Her sisters are clustered around her, with judging looks.

elizabeth

(referring to her hair)

What do you think? Is it me?

Ellora

Maybe. I’m unconvinced.

Emmalina

(EMMALINA disparagingly fingers ELIZABETH’S hair)

I’m convinced. It’s really you, Elizabeth—your hair looks awful.

elizabeth

(ELIZABETH makes an exasperated “humph” sound)

Thanks, Emmalina. Good thing that how one looks is not that important.

Emmalina

But don’t you want to look your best at the party so you can marry Ronald?

Elizabeth

(primps in front of the mirror)

He’s okay, I suppose. I don’t think he’s my type.

Emmalina

Well he’s my type. If you don’t want him, can I have him?

Ellora

What? Have him? You make him sound like a pet goldfish or a dessert or something. What if he doesn’t like you?

Emmalina

Bosh! What’s not to like about me? I’m a lovely girl. And he’s a lovely boy. In fact, we’d make a lovely pair!

ELIZABETH and ELLORA make faces at one another—they have heard EMMALINA’S good opinion of herself many times.

Queen

(breezing into the room)

A lovely pair indeed.

(to ELIZABETH)

Your hair looks lovely.

Elizabeth

Oh, Mother, you’re so near-sighted you wouldn’t know how good I look unless you were this close.

ELIZABETH holds her hands up about one foot apart. The QUEEN gets that close to her and squints at her. They laugh together.

Queen

Well, after thirty, a body has a mind of its own. Not even the Queen Mum is exempt.

(QUEEN primps in the mirror next to ELIZABETH, and then shrugs disappointedly)

Daughters, good looks are not everything. What is really important is that you have a mind of your own and a compassionate heart to guide it.

Emmalina

Well, *I* shall take care always to look lovely and choose a husband who has the good sense not to have his hair fall out when he is old.

Queen

Well, Emmalina, I thought so too once upon a time. Your father can’t help it. Not even the King is exempt. Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.

(to all her daughters)

You are all lovely in my eyes. Now come outside, the party’s starting.

(CURTAIN)

(END OF SCENE)

Act 1

Scene 2

SETTING: The castle grounds. A royal garden party is taking place.

ACTION: Enter CASTLE WORKERS and NOBILITY. There is a great hubbub of noise and activity: pages and wenches circulate with food and drink; there is the sound of minstrels and of harp and sackbut. Everyone is very merry. Tumblers precede the entrance of the KING and QUEEN who enter to great rejoicing—they are beloved by all.

**MUSIC: Don’t Blow Your Top.**

Ronald

(helps himself to food)

Swell party. Oh! I say, Elizabeth!

ELIZABETH and her sisters approach RONALD. EMMALINA looks upon RONALD with adoration.

Ronald

(melodramatic; pretends to great emotion at their approach)

O, that authentic moisture of mine eye,

O, that frenzied fire which in my cheek so glows. . .

Elizabeth

(matter of fact)

Oh. It’s you, Ronald. Do you always talk that way?

RONALD

Of course! I am a prince!

Emmalina

Isn’t he just lovely?

Ellora

(disgusted with EMMALINA)

Yes, just.

Ronald

Have you heard about the dragon running amok through the countryside?

(strikes a pose)

Even as the brutal worm, sharp by fast,

Tires his fangs on Hero’s sinew, flesh, and bone,

Shaking his wings, savaging all in haste. . .

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ELLORA | EMMALINA |
| Oh, stop it, Ronald; you’re trying to scare us. | Isn’t he wonderful! |

Ronald

(suddenly very afraid; points)

But!. . .But!. . .But! A Dragon!

DRAGON enters, roaring. Mayhem ensues. Much screaming. Props are upset; characters flee to the exits for their lives.

ALL

The dragon! The dragon!

DRAGON, after a suitable amount of mayhem, goes straight for RONALD and carries him offstage as he screams for help.

KING

What a mess! We should do something!

(pause; thinks)

Wait! I know. . .It’s coming to me. . .I shall. . .form a committee!

Advisors

An excellent suggestion, Sire!

QUEEN

Oh, Dear, that’s so. . .so, Unitarian of you!

ELIZABETH

A committee! A committee? If you want something said, ask a man. . .if you want something done, ask a woman. I’m going to get Ronald back. Who’s coming with me?

Her sisters raise their hands.

QUEEN

That’s my girls! I shall stay here and help the King set the castle and its folks to rights. Meanwhile, you be careful—dragons are cranky before meals. Oh, and Elizabeth. . .

(pulls her aside; privately; then sotto voce)

Remember: dragons like to show off. I should know.

Everyone helps clean up the mess DRAGON made, then exit.

(CURTAIN)

(END OF SCENE)

act 1

Scene 3

SETTING: At the castle gates.

ACTION: CASTLE WORKERS, NOBILITY, royalty enter and mill about excitedly waiting for the Dragon hunting expedition to set forth. ELIZABETH appears in a paper bag outfit, sword in hand. ADVISORS cluster around the sisters as they prepare for their ordeal. EMMALINA looks at ELIZABETH in disbelief.

ELIZaBETH

(to EMMALINA)

What? It’s the best I could do on short notice—the dragon crisped my party dress.

(beat; all business; to ADVISORS)

Sword?

Advisors

Chuck!

Emmalina

Lipstick? Check!

Ellora

Lipstick?

EMMalina

Well, you never know when you might need a touch—up.

Elizabeth

Rope?

Advisors

Chuck!

Elizabeth

(to ADVISORS)

Do you always talk that way? Say the same thing at the same time?

Advisors

Of course! We’re Advisors.

Ellora

Oh! Well that explains everything.

Elizabeth

Pail of water?

Advisors

Chuck!

Elizabeth

I’ll carry the sword. Emmalina, you carry the lipstick. Ellora, you get the pail of water. We’ll have to leave the rope behind. Let’s go!

CASTLE WORKERS and NOBILITY cheer as the girls heroically troop off. The stage clears except for the KING and QUEEN.

QUEEN

You sly fox—that nonsense about forming a committee. You knew that would strike Elizabeth like lightening, didn’t you?

KING

Mm-huh.

QUEEN

Do you think they are ready?

KING

We have taught children, but raised people. They have had fun enough; learned enough. Now it is time for them together, to change the world.

(beat)

Say, you don’t suppose that the dragon that blew through here was your old pet do you?

QUEEN

Priscilla? Couldn’t say. Spectacles have not been invented yet, and my eyesight is so fuzzy now, I cannot tell for sure.

(beat; indignant)

QUEEN (Cont.)

And she was no pet. She was my business partner at our chain of Autocrats Laundromats—she heated that water like nobody’s business—hence my meeting you. We lost touch after I ran off and married you.

KING

(musing)

Hmmmm. Well, if it is her, I expect her and Elizabeth to get along like a house a-fire.

They laugh together as they exit.

(curtain)

(end of scene)

ACT 1

Scene 4

SETTING: In the hills and dales just outside DRAGON’s lair. At DRAGON’s lair, there is a sign on the door reading: “Heroes turn back now!”

ACTION: The three sisters are exhausted after plodding forever.

Ellora

Stop! Please! I’m exhausted. How long have we been walking? This pail of water is so very heavy. I can’t take another step forward. You go on without me. I shan’t have any trouble finding my way back—the dragon left a clear trail of burned forest and horses’ teeth. Good luck! Farewell!

She dumps her pail of water and trudges away.

Elizabeth & Emmalina

Farewell! We must go on!

The two sisters walk arm-in-arm a bit farther when. . .

ELIZabeth

Look! A cave! With a door. This must be the place.

(to EMMALINA, doubting herself)

But I’m afraid! I can’t do this. All is lost!

EMMALINA

Elizabeth, you’re the bravest person I know. You can do this!

Elizabeth

(with renewed courage, bangs thunderously on the door of the cave)

Open the door!

DRAGON

(offstage)

Go away. I’m a very busy dragon! I’ve eaten a whole castle today. Are you from the castle? I will accept no complaints from royalty—dragons are just an occupational hazard. Castle-bashing is very respectable employment for a dragon you know. Much better than laundromats. Make an appointment and come back tomorrow!

ELIZABEth

But!. . .But. . .we’re not from the castle. We’re from the. . . the newspaper. Uh. . .we want to interview the world’s greatest dragon.

(pause—nothing happens; then slowly yells)

Let’s go then, Emmalina. This must not be the lair of the world’s greatest dragon.

DRAGOn

(sticks her head out the door)

Interview?

(comes on stage)

You’re a reporter? Say, you look awfully familiar.

(to EMMALINA)

Then who are you? The Photographer? My left side is my best.

Emmalina

(frightened; brandishes her lipstick)

I’m. . .I’m the lipstick consultant.

DRAGON

Oooh, clever girl. Good for you. You never know when you might need a touch—up. I prefer red myself.

Emmalina

Red is in this year.

ELIzabeth

Is it true you are the smartest and fiercest dragon in the whole world?

DRAGON

Hoh, yus, Honey.

Elizabeth

Is it true that you can burn up ten forests with your fiery breath?

DRAGON

Hoh, yes.

Emmalina

Let’s see a demonstration.

DRAGON takes a huge, deep breath and breathes out so much fire that she burns up *fifty* forests. ELIZABETH and EMMALINA nod, impressed.

Elizabeth

Fifty forests! Fantastic! Do it again—this will make good copy!

DRAGON does, then coughs and sputters, out of fire.

ELIZABETH

Dragon, is it true that you can fly around the world in just 10 seconds?

Dragon

Ooooh, why yes.

DRAGON flies around the world.

Elizabeth

Fantastic! Do it again!

DRAGON flies around the world again, groans, then flops over, exhausted.

Ronald

(banging loudly on the door; offstage)

Hey! I say, can someone let me out?

EMMALINA opens the door. RONALD ignores her and struts on stage; he spots DRAGON stretched out on the ground. RONALD strikes a dramatic pose.

RONALD (Cont.)

What presenteth to my Hero’s eye?

The picture of an angry dragon fell,

Withal whose sharp fangs in slav’ring jaw doth lie. . .

DRAGON

(groans; to Elizabeth)

Does he always talk like that? Ugh!

Ronald

(RONALD notices ELIZABETH)

Oh! Elizabeth, it’s you.

(pause; looks her over, sniffs)

What’s the matter with you? You look dreadful. You smell like ashes, your hair is all tangled, and you are wearing a dirty old paper bag. Come back when you’re dressed like a proper princess.

Elizabeth

Ronald, your clothes are really pretty and your hair is all neat. You look like a real prince, but you are a bum.

(to EMMALINA)

Emmalina, why don’t *you* take Prince Ronald home? He must be traumatized after this, what with several strands of hair out of place.

EMMALINA and RONALD exit arm in arm while she fusses over him. QUEEN and KING enter with the whole retinue of NOBILITY and CASTLE WORKERS. EMMALINA and RONALD steal back onstage. QUEEN approaches DRAGON.

QUEEN

(strides to DRAGON, squints; pets DRAGON on her nose)

Well, well. It is you, Priscilla! Why I haven’t seen my old buddy for almost 20 years.

DRAGON

(rising)

Not since you left our laundry business and you ran off with what’s his name.

QUEEN points to KING.

DRAGON

Oh, yeah! Him. Same funny hat!. . .Lost his hair though.

Elizabeth

You know, Priscilla. . .May I call you Priscilla?. . .I have always had a burning desire to go ‘round the world in a hot air balloon. What would you say if we were to team up? I provide the balloon and snacks, and you provide the hot air? You know the way. Waddaya say?

DRAGON

You know, Elizabeth, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

They exit slowly, arm in arm. ALL cheer.

(CURTAIN)

(END)