

Enter Fairy Godmother

By
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DEDICATION

*For my family; my first, most supportive readers,
and
for Nat; my Clever Manka.*

STORY OF THE PLAY

Seeking comfort from her miserable life and an easy ticket to the prince's ball, our heroine Ashenputtel cries out for her Fairy Godmother. The magical matriarch who arrives, however, is a no-nonsense narrator who works her magic by giving lesser-known folktales a playful yet empowering twist. This Fairy Godmother offers no magical pumpkin carriages but rather spins three separate tales of women from around the world who make their own happily ever after.

The first story, from Ecuador, "The Search for the Magic Lake," features a peasant girl who must boldly go where many men have gone before and failed: on a quest to draw healing water from the magic lake. Through her courage and generosity, she just might tame a dreaded jungle puma ... and save the kingdom in the process.

"Clever Manka," a tale from the former Czechoslovakia, pits a keen peasant girl against a domineering political official who forbids his son to marry her. Will clever Manka outwit the man who has demanded that she prove herself worthy by doing the impossible?

Japan is home to the third and final adaptation, "The Wife's Portrait." A woman with a nose "the size of a four-door sedan" has herself painted as a knockout model in a portrait in order to snare a dashing but superficial prince. Will she drown in their combined shallowness, or accept the hand of a humble farmer who loves her with or without her extreme makeover.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(9 m, 9 f, 8 flexible, doubling possible)

PRINCIPLE CHARACTERS

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Omniscient and empowering narrator.

ASHENPUTTEL: A would-be princess.

WICKED STEPMOTHER: Cruel, fairly loud woman.

THE SEARCH FOR THE MAGIC LAKE

EMPEROR: Will do anything to save his son and preserve his legacy.

SUMAC: Strong female protagonist.

SPARROW: Female. Loyal friend to Sumac.

PUMA: Male/Female. Menacing foe in the jungle.

BEAST: Male/Female. Large physical presence.

PRINCE: Sickly young man who coughs a lot but says little.

SIR NOLAN: Male/Female. Gets thunked in the head.

SIR JULIO: Male/Female. Gets thunked in the head.

DUMB: Male/Female. Foolish brother/sister.

DUMBER: Male/Female. Even more foolish brother/sister.

CROWD OF LOYAL SUBJECTS: Also get thunked.

CLEVER MANKA

BURGOMASTER: Arrogant and chauvinistic.

ANTONIN: Clever young man in the shadow of his father.

MANKA: Clever, independent woman.

SHEPHERD: Loyal, humble father of Manka.

LADY: Attractive but dingy love interest.

FARMER: Male. Conceited jerk.

GUARD: Male/Female. A loyal guard.

THE WIFE'S PORTRAIT

KUMIKO: Self-conscious, selfish woman.

PAINTER: Loyal to her sister.

PRINCE: Royal jerk.

GOMBEI: Humble farmer.

LACKEY: Male. Obedient servant called upon to play an exaggerated game of charades.

JUSTICE: Male/Female. Fly-by-night justice of the peace.

MALE ADMIRERS/GUARDS: Several.

SETTING

Flats and props can be used to create the interior of Ashenputtel's humble quarters, fully equipped with ash-stained walls, a dreary gray brick fireplace, spartan furnishings, and an abundance of cleaning supplies. The backdrop need not change from tale to tale, but that is certainly an option for the more ambitious set designers.

Two small step ladders can be used for height in "The Search for the Magic Lake" and can be draped with greenery to suggest trees in the jungle.

*Additional **props** and **costume notes** at the end of the script.

SPECIAL NOTE

"Enter Fairy Godmother" earned an honorable mention in the 2005 Jackie White Memorial National Children's Playwriting Contest.

"Readers liked many things about 'Enter Fairy Godmother.' This is a very funny play. It has snappy dialogue and a nicely irreverent attitude. It doesn't take itself too seriously and gives a nice ribbing to other fairy tales. The strength of the play, however, comes from the main character in each of the three stories the Fairy Godmother weaves for Ashenputtel. Sumac, Manka, and Kumiko are strong, clever women who don't wait for their magic to save them from their predicaments or make their choices for them. They serve as excellent role models and would be fun for young women to play. They are anti-fairy tale princesses."

... Betsy Phillips, Director
*Jackie White Memorial National
Children's Playwriting Contest*

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Scene 1

(AT RISE: LIGHTS up. ASHENPUTTEL, a Cinderella-esque heroine, scrubs a lonely scrub in her humble chambers.)

ASHENPUTTEL: *(Singing.)* Someday, my prince will come ...
someday, my prince will come ... Ah, hurry up, prince.

W. STEPMOTHER: *(Yelling from offstage.)* Ashenputtel!
Ashenputtel! ASHENPUTTEL!!!

ASHENPUTTEL: Here, Wicked Stepmother!

W. STEPMOTHER: *(Entering.)* You are as deaf as you are
dumb, Ashenputtel. My hair is in need of straightening.
Finish scrubbing and then join me in my chambers.

ASHENPUTTEL: Yes, Wicked Stepmother. And ... uhm,
Wicked Stepmother?

W. STEPMOTHER: What is it? Talking to you is not on my
"To Do" list before going to the ball.

ASHENPUTTEL: That's what ... I wanted to ask you ... about
the ball. If I can ... if I finish scrubbing the floor, sweeping
the fireplace, and shaving your back ... perhaps, perhaps,
per--

W. STEPMOTHER: Perhaps what? Your stammering is
costing me precious primp time.

ASHENPUTTEL: Perhaps, I could go to the ball too.

W. STEPMOTHER: I am to assume you are joking about
showing your ratty clothes, nappy hair, and miserable face
anywhere outside of this castle. But if by chance there is a
hint of hope within you of going to the ball, then let me speak
slowly and simply so you will understand: No way. Never.
Ever. Now, finish your chores.

*(W. STEPMOTHER exits. ASHENPUTTEL drops to her knees
and sobs.)*

ASHENPUTTEL: I am without hope. Without love. Please,
Fairy Godmother, answer my tears.

*(A "Shave and a Haircut" knock at the door. ASHENPUTTEL
goes to answer.)*

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ASHENPUTTEL: Hello?

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Hello, dear. It's your Fairy Godmother.

ASHENPUTTEL: Fairy Godmother? At the door? Shouldn't you materialize out of my teardrops or something?

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Opportunity knocks.

ASHENPUTTEL: *(Opening door all the way.)* Oh ... well ... come in then.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Greetings, child. I have come to answer your tears.

ASHENPUTTEL: This is not at all how I pictured you.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Well, I thought you'd be a blonde. *(Or brunette, red-head, etc.)* But here we are. Tell me the secret wishes of your heart.

ASHENPUTTEL: I wish to go to the ball and to become a princess.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Really? *(ASHENPUTTEL nods.)* No desire for world peace? Goodwill toward men? Cure for the disease of your choice? *(ASHENPUTTEL shakes her head no.)* Very well. Then I shall grant you the secret wishes of your heart.

ASHENPUTTEL: Fantastic!

FAIRY GODMOTHER: *(Narrating.)* Once upon a time, there was a ruler of the vast Inca Empire who had only one son. This youth brought--

ASHENPUTTEL: Fairy Godmother? Sorry to interrupt, but ... what are you doing?

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Getting you ready to go to the ball.

ASHENPUTTEL: Oh, good. It sounded like you were going to tell a story.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Oh, no, dear. I'm working magic Just close your eyes and wish for whatever it is you desire. Yes. That's it *(Pauses as ASHENPUTTEL closes her eyes.)* Once upon a time, there was a ruler of the vast Inca Empire who had only one son. This youth brought great joy to his father's heart, for it was he who would carry on the family business of ruling.

(EMPEROR, PRINCE, DUMB, DUMBER, and small band of LOYAL SUBJECTS enter and stand CS.)

End of Freeview

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