

# THE UGLY DUCKLING PRINCESS

a play by

by Craig Sodaro

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### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

When King Barney passes over Princess Jean for her sister Rose's hand in marriage, the enraged Jean curses Barney and Rose with an "ugly duckling." The curse comes true in the form of Barney and Rose's oldest child, Dora, as spoiled a child as the kingdom ever knew.

Dora's three sisters want desperately to marry, but Dora has ruined every chance they have had for Dora must marry first. Rose and the sisters now call on Magdelia, the witch who taught Jean everything she knew, to help them. Magdelia says there's only one way to break the curse: some unlucky fellow must fall in love with Dora.

A matchmaker points Magdelia and the sisters in the direction of Bodkin, a simple woodcutter who longs to marry. Dora is kidnapped and sent to Bodkin, who begins to slowly chip away at Dora's nasty personality.

Back at the castle, the mother of the sisters' latest beaux has laid siege to the palace demanding her sons marry the princesses immediately. Jean is also in the throne room, trying to trick Rose into abdicating. What's a queen to do? Luckily, Bodkin arrives to help save the day along with Dora, who fight a hilarious sword fight with the sisters' princes. Needless to say, the ending is a happy one.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**  
*(8 male, 16 female, 5 either)*

**GRUNELLA:** An old servant  
**CLEO:** Her young helper  
**LEO:** Her other helper  
**CHESTER:** The Prime Minister  
**KING BARNEY, THE BOUNCY**  
**JEAN:** A princess  
**MORTMER:** Jean's right-hand man  
**ROSE:** Jean's sister  
**PREACHER**  
**MAGDELIA:** A witch  
**FLORA:** Barney and Rose's daughter  
**NORA:** Another  
**LAURA:** Another  
**PRUNELLA:** The new tutor  
**DORA:** Their oldest daughter  
**MOE:** A prince  
**LARRY:** Another, his brother  
**CURLY:** A third, also a brother  
**DUCHESS:** Moe, Larry, and Curly's mother  
**HEPZIBAH:** A matchmaker  
**MA:** An old lady who lives in the forest  
**BODKIN:** Her woodcutting son  
**DAISY:** A friend of Ma  
**MAISY:** Another  
**PAISY:** Another  
**THUG ONE**  
**THUG TWO**  
**THUG THREE**  
**PAGE**

## SETTING

There are two basic scenes –

1. The throne room of King Barney's castle. Entrances right and left center if possible. Long, narrow table which can be covered with different cloths as the years pass. Several benches that can be used with the table or separately. Two thrones, perhaps on a dais. A large painted trunk. Decorations can include banners, pillars, windows, and so on. Placement of thrones and table are up to the director and can be moved from scene to scene.

2. Bodkin's cottage in the forest. A cottage center with a door big enough for several performers to enter and hide in or behind. A couple of trees here and there. An old bench.

Scenes on the road between Bodkin's and the palace play before the curtain and do not require any additional set.

## THE SCENES

### ACT I

**Scene 1:** The palace throne room, evening a long time ago.

**Scene 2:** The same, twelve years later, at breakfast.

**Scene 3:** The same, five years later.

**Scene 4:** Bodkin's cottage, later that night.

### ACT II

**Scene 1:** The palace throne room, a week later.

**Scene 2:** In the woods a short time later. Before the curtain.

**Scene 3:** Bodkin's cottage, that night.

**Scene 4:** The woods, immediately after. Before the curtain.

**Scene 5:** The palace throne room, a short time later.

**ACT I**  
**Scene 1**

*(The palace throne room. Evening. AT RISE: GRUNELLA enters right carrying a tablecloth.)*

GRUNELLA: Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! No time to waste and worry!

*(CLEO and LEO, servants, enter right, dragging behind, carrying napkins.)*

CLEO, LEO: No time to waste and worry.

*(GRUNELLA opens tablecloth and neatly places it on table while talking.)*

GRUNELLA: Big doings at the palace tonight! The king just might ... he might ... he might.

CLEO: He might what?

GRUNELLA: He just might! That's all. Little pitchers have big ears and it's not up to me to spill the beans.

LEO: I don't got beans in my ears!

GRUNELLA: I don't HAVE beans in my ears.

LEO: Nobody said you did.

GRUNELLA: Be good servants and place those napkins ever so neatly. Oh, gracious! I can't wait to see what transpires.

*(GRUNELLA hustles off left. CLEO and LEO toss napkins on the table carelessly.)*

GRUNELLA: *(Off left.)* Cleo! Leo! We've more to do!

LEO: Coming, Grunella!

*(CLEO and LEO saunter off left as KING and CHESTER enter right.)*

CHESTER: So what's this here big news, your highness?

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KING: Chester! We've been friends since the cradle. Call me by my first name.

CHESTER: All right, Barney, what's up with the good linen?

KING: Everything has to be just perfect. How do I look?

CHESTER: Fine for a parade, but a bit over the top for an execution.

KING: Execution? Oh, no, Chester ... we're not lopping off heads tonight.

*(GRUNELLA, CLEO, and LEO enter from left carrying silver. During next dialogue, they set silver at table.)*

CHESTER: Oh, no? That is your execution silver. We saw it last at the beheading of Sir Crandall Creepstone ... and before that at the lopping of Mandrake Sinscollar.

KING: Oh, dear ... I hadn't thought of that. It's really just company silver. I guess the only time we have company is when we're having an execution.

CHESTER: You've got a heck of a social life, Barney.

KING: Well, it's all going to change tonight! I took your advice.

CHESTER: What advice?

KING: I called this number.

CHESTER: One-eight-hundred-"Star-Glo"?

KING: The psychic hotline!

*(GRUNELLA hustles CLEO and LEO off right.)*

CHESTER: Barney, I was kidding. That was a gag.

KING: But it worked!

CHESTER: Mind if I gag?

KING: My psychic, LaTwanda, has helped me see the light.

CHESTER: I keep telling you to wire this place for electricity. Then you wouldn't need someone like LaTwanda to help you turn the lights on!

KING: Metaphorically speaking, Chester.

CHESTER: *(Sarcastically.)* Ah! A metaphor. I beg your royal pardon.

KING: Granted.

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