

THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA

BY

KITTIE A. BELETIC

Adapted from the fairy tale

by

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSON

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Shoebox Theatre
2015 Old Orchard Drive
Dallas, Texas 75208
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CHARACTERS

QUEEN POMPADOUR:

Loves her son. If she can find a wife for her son, she can live out her days in the garden. Personality is practical and concrete. "The proof is in the pudding" is her motto. Her favorite color is green.

PRINCE PERCY:

The antithesis of his mother; an idealist in search of perfection. A dreamer by nature, he makes many errors in judgment. But his heart is pure. Intellectual in his approach to life. Being a prince, he has little practical experience. What guard? This is the Queen's best friend and confidant. A person of few words. Wise and kind. LOVES to dance. Steady and strong.

**PERICLES
(Captain of the Guard)**

PRINCESS PETALUMA:

From California. Thinks she knows everything. Materialistic. NEEDS to get her way. Vain.

PRINCESS POCATELO:

From Idaho. Fresh face and wholesome. Earnest and hardworking. Not sophisticated.

PRINCESS PAINTED PONY:

From northern Michigan. Loves her land and dedicated to preserving it. Eloquent and graceful. Would NEVER relocate to a castle!

PRINCESS PRIMROSE:

Very similar to the Queen in personality. She is practical and genuine and loves vegetables. She counteracts the Prince's idealism but strengthens his sense of right. The combination reads: Percy orates...Primrose clarifies

SETTING

Medieval. A castle backdrop simplifies set. You are then free to create an exterior for Act I complete with the Queen's garden. In Act II, Primrose's bed can be wheeled on stage right with a special light for her "restless night" scene.

COSTUMES

Medieval. To keep the flavor of the fairytale, costumes should be consistent with set. See Director's Notes for details.

NOTE FROM PLAYWRIGHT

Hans Christian Anderson's whimsical one page story of "The Princess and the Pea" has delighted families for a very long time. The theme of "true love" is love is very important to nurture, the notion of choosing a partner through life based on romantic love alone is not realistic. I have attempted to present through the Queen and Princess Primrose, a dimension of practicality to be added to love. Love is, after all, a choice to be made with great care.

DEDICATION

In honor of True Love ...

ACT I

SCENE I

SETTING: Pantagonia, a fictitious kingdom somewhere in the Netherlands. The Royal Garden.

AT RISE: Enter PERCY from audience followed by PERICLES. PERCY is dictating a proclamation. PERICLES writes furiously with a feathered pen trying to get every word. PERCY is desperately trying to get the proclamation just right, and in doing so, driving PERICLES crazy.

PERCY

And so, on this 25th Day of June, as the sun also rises in the East, let it be known that his Royal Highness Prince Percy of Pantagonia announces his intention of taking a bride! She must be of the highest rank and....no, no, no! That is not right! Scratch that, Pericles. I think I must be more forceful in my announcement. Ahem! Let it be known to all good subjects of Pantagonia, that the good Prince Percy intends to take a bride. The qualities necessary for a Queen-elect are many. She must be...

(Trumpet. Enter QUEEN POMPADOUR. SHE carries a basket with plant cuttings and garden tools. SHE wears a royal garden crown and royal garden gloves)

QUEEN

There is never enough sunlight in the day to complete my planting! Surely as Queen I can find a way to extend the day...I must ask Pericles about that. Now where is he? Pericles! Pericles!

PERICLES

Here your Highness!

QUEEN

I have been searching for you. My potatoes are in need of planting and I cannot find the royal vegetable log. Do you have it?

PERICLES

It is in the royal swing, your Highness. As you requested.

(Enter PERCY)

PERCY

Mother...

QUEEN

Ah, so it is!

(Picks up Royal Vegetable Log)

If anything were to happen to this book, all would be lost. Why the potatoes and the peonies wouldn't know where to be planted. And I shudder to think what would happen to the petunias!

PERCY

Mother, I am composing a Proclamation.

QUEEN

Percy! What is wrong with THIS location? I thought you liked it here in Pantagonia.

PERCY

A Proclamation, Mother. To announce my intention to take a bride.

QUEEN

(Feeling faint. Goes to sit in the Royal swing)

Pericles! My dearest Pericles! Did I hear correctly? Did my son, Prince Percy of Pantagonia just announce to his Mother, Queen Pompadour the First of his intentions to take a bride? A replacement for me at last?

PERICLES

He did indeed, your Highness.

PERCY

Oh Mother, there could be no REPLACEMENT for you! But it is time that I start the process of finding my Queen. The search for a perfect Princess will not be simple. I was just about to list the criteria as you came in.

QUEEN

I am delighted, Percy! Of course, you must not choose the first Princess who comes along, but then, first impressions are often the best. Perhaps we should plan a party?

PERCY

Mother! We must not make light of this. I will first issue my Proclamation and then the search will begin. Pericles! Take this down!

(PERICLES rushes to take dictation)

On this glorious day, the 25th of June, the persistent Prince Percy of Pantagonia announces his intention to begin the search for the perfect Princess. She must, therefore, be: One - popular; Two - Pretty; Three - positively precious; Patriotic! Peaceful. Pedigreed and prove it!

QUEEN

How about practical?

PERCY

Penitent, yet passionate. Penurious and penny-pinching. Perceptive and placable.

PERICLES

Pipe-dreaming!

QUEEN

Preposterous!

PERCY

In short...She must be...Perfect! Post it, Pericles, I'm on my way now to ready the Great Hall. Mustn't be..... unprepared.

(PERCY exits through castle gate. PERICLES hangs up proclamation on Royal Posting Place, the tree, and exits following the QUEEN who stops halfway off stage right)

QUEEN

Perhaps I can persuade Prince Percy to pick MY perfect choice! Come Pericles! To the Palace penthouse. We have plans to make!!!

(Exit QUEEN and PERICLES stage right. MUSIC CUE. Enter PRINCESSES on cue of song. During song, PRINCESSES individually read proclamation and react while each sings her solo. Trio at end of song)

SONG - HERE I GO/PRINCESSES

POCATELO

**I KNOW THE PERFECT PRINCESS MUSN'T SHOW
SHE MUST CONVINCe THE PRINCE ALTHOUGH
BECOME THE PERFECT CAMEO
OH – HERE I GO!
OVER THE RAINBOW TO OUR SAFE LITTLE BUNGALOW
FACE THE MAN WITH A GLOW – HERE I GO!**

PETALUMA

**OH – WHEN YOU’RE PERFECT YOU KNOW IT’S SO
THINK BROCADE NOT IN CALICO
ALWAYS DRESS STATUS QUO
THINK AHEAD – HERE I GO!
OVER THE RAINBOW TO OUR SAFE LITTLE BUNGALOW
FACE THE MAN WITH A GLOW. . . HERE I GO!**

PAINTED PONY

(Uses sign language)

**HEIGH-HO! I’M AGLOW
AND MY HEART OVERFLOWS
HERE I GO!
THE RAINBOW IS OUR LITTLE BUNGALOW
HERE I GO!**

ALL

(Sing all together.)

(PERCY enters toward the beginning of song. QUEEN & PERICLES enter toward the end. After song, PRINCESSES crowd around PERCY, flattering him and fawning over him. HE is obviously liking it. QUEEN rolls her eyes)

PERCY

Ladies, ladies, ladies. Let's not be too anxious. You are all so lovely. This will truly be a difficult matter of choice. Ahem!!! I can see that you have all read the Proclamation. You must then understand exactly what sort of girl would be suitable to become my bride. After all, she will someday be Queen.

.....

LATER IN ACT I, SCENE I ...

PERCY

(Watches them leave. Strolls into garden)

I am perplexed. And unsure of myself. What a strange...and awful feeling! These Princesses....they think I must change....they envision quite a different life than I had expected. Is this what life holds for me? Am I to change myself...in order to attract the perfect Princess?....

(Walks)

NO! I will not change! I will not choose a Princess who cannot accept me for who I am!

(Walks)

And yet, it is my duty as Prince to choose the best. They are all lovely....

(Sighs)

But none are the girl I have imagined. **(MUSIC CUE)** If only I could find her and make her mine...**(WHISPERS)** make her mine...

SONG - MAKE HER MINE/PERCY

**MAKE HER MINE MAKE THIS OUR RENDEZVOUS
AND IN TIME OUR DREAMS WILL ALL COME TRUE
MAKE HER MINE**

(At end of song, Thunder and lightening and rain begin. PERCY looks up and starts to leave. Enter PRIMROSE. Neither is looking where he is going. They collide)

BOTH

Oh!

PERCY

Who are you?

1-1-14

PRIMROSE

I might ask the same of you!

PERCY

(Poetically)

I am but a simple soul, lost and confused.

PRIMROSE

WHAT????

PERCY

Ahem.....I am Prince Percy. And YOU are in the garden of Queen Pompadour...my mother. How do you come here? And just look at you! You are a mess!

PRIMROSE

(Throws up her hands)

Well, isn't that just the berries! You would be a mess too if you had walked 2 leagues on a dusty road only to be met by a poetic lost soul who insists on a conversation in the rain!

PERCY

(Remembering his manners)

I am SO sorry. Allow me.

(Escorts her under the tree)

There now, that's better. Now then, just who are you, and how do you come to Pantagonia?

(Obviously charmed)

PRIMROSE

Pantagonia? Is that where I am?

(Gets map out of satchel)

Pantagonia....Pantagonia....Pantagonia....Ah, here it is! Yes!

(Folds up map)

Pantagonia is where I am, all right.

PERCY

Yes. Pantagonia is where you are...I JUST TOLD YOU THAT. Good heavens, woman, have you lost your mind as well as your way?

PRIMROSE

I believe it is YOU who are lost, as you might recall. "Lost AND confused". Well, I am neither. I know exactly where I am and I certainly have no doubts about WHO I am, as it seems you do!

PERCY

(Exasperated)

THEN WHO, PRAY TELL, ARE YOU? AND HOW HAVE YOU WANDERED INTO THIS CASTLE GROUNDS?

(Fade rain)

PRIMROSE

A little less emotion, if you please. I will not deal with someone who is so overwrought as you.

(Looks closely at him)

Are you ill?

(PERCY clenches his fists and looks straight ahead)

No, I dare say, you are quite well, just high strung, I think. Never mind. I will tell you anyway.

(Straightens her cap and dress)

I am Princess Primrose. I have come from very far away in search of new and exotic vegetables which are my past time and passion. You see me here only because my carriage broke down nearly 2 leagues down the road. I elected to walk only out of desperation. The driver left hours ago and has not returned. The only practical thing to do was to set out in search of help. Then it started to rain....and well, when I saw your castle, it reminded me of home... It seemed only natural for me to come here.

PERCY

(By now HE is gazing at her)

PRIMROSE

But perhaps this was not such a wise choice. You seem...preoccupied, of sorts. I should, perhaps, be on my way...as soon as the storm subsides.

PERCY

NO! I mean, absolutely not! You will stay the night...as the guest of Queen Pompadour. I have been rude and unseemly. You are right. Yes, so very right! And I ... I...

(HE falls into a gaze. . . MUSIC CUE, As both fall in love. Enter QUEEN and PERICLES from stage right. PRINCESSES file out of castle. ALL witness love scene)

ALL

AHEM!!!!!!!!!!!!

PERCY & PRIMROSE

OH!

Queen

Well, well, well.....My son, who have we here?

PERCY

Mother....Ah, this is Princess Primrose...Primrose, this is my Mother, Queen Pompadour.

PRIMROSE

(Curtseys)

Your majesty. I am honored to be in your kingdom. It is quite by accident that I am here, but I welcome your hospitality, nonetheless. Your son, in true princely fashion, has politely offered lodging for the night. I am easily persuaded as it is late in the evening and my options are nil. Still, it is with surprise that I must say that I feel strangely at home here. With your permission, I will change into something..... more suitable for sleeping.

(PRINCESSES eye PRIMROSE critically. Suspicious of her, THEY muscle in between her and the PRINCE. The QUEEN suspects that her son has fallen for PRIMROSE)

QUEEN

My dear, we are honored that you have happened upon our humble home. You are most welcome here. What is ours, we share with you...

(To other PRINCESSES)

With all of you. And now, I dismiss you all with a glowing good night. It is late and with all of the primrose...er, promise of tomorrow, I think it is best if we all adjourn to our respective rooms. Ladies, you will find proper dressing gowns in your quarters and you may then choose from the light reading in the library as Pericles and I make certain your rooms are properly prepared for.....a good night's sleep.

(Winks and nudges PERICLES. PRINCESSES surround PERCY. HE tries to glance at PRIMROSE, but is overwhelmed by the other PRINCESSES as THEY exit through the castle. PRIMROSE, PERICLES and QUEEN remain)

PRIMROSE

I am most grateful, Queen Pompadour. And anxious as I am to change into some dry clothing, I must admire your most exquisite garden.

QUEEN

OH!!!!!!

(Eyes PRIMROSE)

How good of you to notice.

PRIMROSE

I cannot help but notice. Even as Prince Percy was telling me about himself, I was distracted by the beauty of your vegetables. So crisp and fresh they are! So vivid and colorful! Tell me, what is your secret?

QUEEN

Well, I simply spend a great deal of time with them, and I...well, I...

PRIMROSE

You care! I can tell...I am quite a gardener myself. In fact, the purpose of my journey comes directly from a Proclamation I saw posted in the newspaper of my kingdom.

QUEEN

The Proclamation of the Prince?

PRIMROSE

No! It was a statement regarding the importance of the preservation of our land...

(Excitedly)

the moors and the mesas, the plains and the prairies, the bush and the basins. We must care about our land...or we will lose it!

QUEEN

(Applauds)

Bravo! My dear...

(Affectionately puts her arm around PRIMROSE. Leads her to the castle gate)

You may be the answer to a Queen's prayers.

(PRIMROSE looks quizzically at her)

That is to say, you may want to get some sleep now....and...don't forget your prayers.

PRIMROSE

Yes, I am a bit tired.

QUEEN

Of course you are...and there is nothing better than a good night's sleep....

(Winks at PERICLES)

Pericles! Show Princess Primrose to her room!

(PERICLES opens the castle gate. PRIMROSE exits through the castle and offstage. QUEEN and PERICLES plot and plan)

SONG - A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP (OH YEAH!)/ QUEEN & PERICLES

PERICLES

OH YEAH! OH YEAH!

QUEEN

**SEE I FOUND A PRINCESS AND SHE ACTS JUST RIGHT
SAYS SHE LOST HER WAY COULD SHE SPEND THE NIGHT
THEN SHE TELLS ME HOW SHE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW
ALL THE SECRETS THAT MAKE MY GARDEN GROW
IS THE GIRL FOR REAL? IS SHE THE ONE TO KEEP?
GUESS WE'LL KNOW FOR SURE WITH A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP**

PERICLES

OH YEAH! OH YEAH!

QUEEN

**GATHER ROUND MY FRIEND `CAUSE I HAVE A PLAN
TO DISCOVER WHICH IS THE PRINCESS GRAND
I WILL HELP MY SON CHOOSE THE ONE FOR HIM
`CAUSE ETHE WAY THINGS ARE IT IS LOOKING DIM
I DON'T CARE TOO MUCH IF SHE COOKS AND SWEEPS
ALL WE'RE LOOKING FOR IS A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP**

1-1-20

PERICLES

OH YEAH! OH YEAH!

QUEEN

DO WE USE A BEET? DO WE USE A BEAN?
SHOULD WE PLANT JUST ONE OR EMPLOY FIFTEEN?
THERE'S SO MUCH TO DO AND WE CAN'T BE LATE
BETTER HURRY UP IT'LL SOON BE EIGHT
THAT'S THE TIME WHEN ALL LITTLE GIRLS WILL CREEP
INTO BEDDIE-BYE FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

PERICLES

OH YEAH! OH YEAH!

QUEEN

GRAB THE WHEELBARROW FILL IT UP WITH TREATS
BRING IT THROUGH THE GATE BUT BE MOST DISCREET
NO ONE ELSE SHOULD HEAR NO ONE ELSE SHOULD SEE
NO ONE ELSE SHOULD GUESS WHAT THE PLAN MIGHT BE
AND IF ALL GOES WELL SHE'LL BE COUNTING SHEEP
AND BE MISSING NOTHING BUT A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

PERICLES

OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH!

BOTH (ALTERNATE)

OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH!
OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH!
OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH!
OH YEAH!

(BLACKOUT)

INTERMISSION