

The Forest of Magic & Mystery: The Fool's Tale

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PRODUCTION NOTES: *This “play” is structured as a series of short performances – to be experienced by groups of people in the order given below. Each of the “stations” needs to be spaced apart – enough distance so that the action of one doesn’t distract from another.*

At the performance’s end, there should be a table that represents the “Ball” with edible treats for children to enjoy.

There is some “singing” in this show – but this in no way needs to sound or seem “professional”. The songs can be the simplest diddies – like nursery rhymes – or even spoken as verses. As long as the performer is having fun, so will the children!

Below is the “script”. The play is interactive, and so the language can be flexible and open to improvisation and embellishment. The logistical details, however, do need to be included and stressed – as they propel the story and the journey for our “travelers” or the children who have come to enjoy themselves.

RECOMMENDATIONS: *Have a volunteer parent “guide” go with each group to help direct, in case the children forget the clues or songs.*

If outside, the path between the stations can be lit with jack-o-lanterns or luminarios.

Parents should join children on the walk. No unattended children.

We also recommend no scary costumes as they can present a distraction.

At each station, a little Halloween “Goodie” can be handed out. We’ve used glass gems, little paper leaves, polished stones, small pinecones, etc.

We encourage the performers to speak slowly and clearly – so that the details of the story can be understood by all.

CHARACTERS:

The Fool: Playful, silly, physical humor

Falconer: Pompous, strutting, macho

Milton, the Falconer's apprentice: A budding magician, joyful, delighted by the attention

Robyn the Miller: A buffoon who thinks everything is funny

The Traveling Minstrel: Smart, sarcastic and a little impatient.

Darla the Baker: Busy – no time for this nonsense

The Poet: Lofty, romantic, passionate

Players: All sorts of circus performers

The Baker's Daughter (Son): Dramatic and accident prone

Slops the Garbage Maiden: The wise fool – slow, methodical, magical.

Queen: Grand, but joyful

Mime: Like a silent movie actor

NECESSARY PROPS

1 slops bucket filled with "slops"

6-7 Golden/sapphire rings

RECOMMENDED PROPS

A leather glove for the falconer

Bags of "flour" at the Miller's, and possibly a sign

A musical instrument for the Minstrel

Baker's bowl and spoon, or other baking tools, as well as a sign for the Baker

Stilts, juggling balls, etc for the performers

A pile of "trash" to represent the Trashery and fire

SCENE 1: THE FOOL AND HER MOUSE, YORIK

(The travelers approach the Fool.)

FOOL: Oh, now I've done it! I'm in a pretty pickle now – a fine mess – a heap of trouble – oh what to do, what to do!

Good pilgrims, steady travelers, oh crowd of – well, curiously dressed voyagers – can you help this fool?!

No, truly I am a fool. Fool to the King and Queen. I dance, I sing, I make merry, tell jokes – a little bit of juggling and an occasional magic trick. I am dear to them! But I've made a terrible mistake and gentry all – I need help.

You see, my pet mouse Yorek – perhaps you know him well – accidentally lost the Queen's favorite ring – the ring she wears every Halloween Ball – the gold ring with the orange sapphire shaped like a pumpkin. Now – my mouse was supposed to fetch me Dean's Balefire String – Dean is the servant in charge of the Halloween balefire or bonfire. But instead of Dean's Balefire String, Yorek took the Queen's Sapphire Ring. You see? But it gets worse! While he was bringing the ring back to me, a falcon tried to catch him and snatched the ring instead - and then flew away.

I must get it back before the Royal Halloween Ball – can you help me?! *(Travelers will say YES!)*

Oh thank you – thank you. All you have to do is follow Yorek my mouse – I'm not sure where he is now, but if you pay close attention, you might see or hear clues as to where he is - and where that ring has gone to. Go first to the Falconer's – he will know what the Falcon has done with the ring. Follow the lights. *(points)*

Oh, and some advice for your journey. You will do better to **listen to the fools** of this land – the jesters, the clowns, the magicians, players and the minstrels. They are the ones who pay attention to what is around them rather than only to themselves. Look for the fools! And good luck!

(The Fool ushers the travelers toward the 2nd station.)

SCENE 2: THE FALCONER AND HIS APPRENTICE

(The travelers approach the Falconer, and the Falconer welcomes them.)

FALCONER: Well, hello crowd of admirers! You must be here to watch me work. Milton – let us give a demonstration!

MILTON: A magic trick? I've got a great one – look, nothing up my sleeve!

FALCONER: No, you fool! They want a demonstration of falconry! The most noble hunting art there is! The pinnacle of skill and focus! Fetch Falco, my falcon.

MILTON: Falco is still out, oh most skilled holder of birds – which reminds me, he was carrying something quite shiny -

FALCONER: That is of no consequence! These people want a demonstration – let's see – you can be my falcon, Milton – just pretend to fly around like one. *(He blows a special whistle to call him – Milton snaps to and pretends to perch – but clearly wants to continue about the shiny something)* Good – now I tell my falcon what it is that I want-

MILTON: There was a little white mouse too-

FALCONER: Mouse?! My falcons don't hunt silly little mice! Now fly!

MILTON *(pretends to fly and tell the story at the same time)*: Falco had a shiny thing – glittering in fact -- maybe a ring. And he dropped it-

FALCONER: They are not interested in some story about a shiny ring, Milton! To the right!

MILTON: And it fell – this ring – into a sack of flour at –

FALCONER: Hush now! To the left!

MILTON: Robin-

FALCONER: Milton!

MILTON: The Miller's Shop!

FALCONER: That is enough! You are a terrible Falcon – Falcons don't talk. So - Back to your chores, fool. *(to the travelers)* You must return when my real Falcon is at hand! Oh what a noble beast! Now where could he be?

(The Falconer turns away. As Milton goes to tending the fire, he whispers to the audience.)

MILTON: And there really was a white mouse too – and he seemed to be following the sparkling ring. Something exciting is afoot, I think. If you want a real adventure, I'd go to Robin, the Miller's - that way.

(Milton ushers the travelers toward the 3rd station.)

SCENE 3: ROBIN THE MILLER AND THE TRAVELING MINSTREL

(The travelers approach the Miller's station.)

ROBIN: Work work work. It's all I do day in and day out. Never a break for years and years. So I thought, hey – why can't a hard working Miller ever enjoy the songs of a wandering minstrel. Sure they are silly folk, filled with folly and fancy – but they are good for a laugh – and a laugh I could use.

(He approaches the minstrel and cocks his head to listen.)

MINSTREL *(singing)*:

The Miller he sat on bale of hay
He leaned back with his belly displayed
So I sang him a song as I looked around
And made up a song – to sing to this clown

ROBIN: Ha ha ha! See? This minstrel is funny – singing about clowns and bellies.

MINSTREL *(singing)*:

The Miller is daft, as daft as a boar
So I sang of a ring that fell into some flour
The ring it fell, it fell from the sky
Like rain or snow or a bird that can't fly.

ROBIN: A bird that can't fly! Ha ha ha – who ever heard of a bird that can't fly?!

MINSTREL *(singing)*:

Penguins and Ostriches, Kiwis and Coots
Are some birds that can't fly – to name just a few.
But you wouldn't know that, for you are a fool
That white mouse I just saw was smarter than you.

ROBIN: Oooh, a song about a mousie – can the mousie talk?

MINSTREL (*frustrated with the Miller, turns to the audience and says*): This could go on forever – this fellow notices nothing. Is there anything I can help you with? Are you looking for something or wish to find someone?

(The Minstrel encourages the audience to ask about either the mouse or the ring.)

Yes, well – the inspiration for my songs are always grounded in the real world and yes, I actually did see a ring fall from the sky and land in a sack of flour. Yes I did!

(Audience asks about the sack.)

The sack? Oh, its not here anymore – the Miller’s wife took it away, saying something about the baker.

ROBIN: The baker? Do I hear you telling jokes about the baker – see, these traveling minstrels are so silly. But Darla, the baker is a friend of mine – her bakery is right down that road – she makes the most delicious cinnamon buns you’ve ever tasted! Now good minstrel – sing that song about the mouse – this should be funny!

(The minstrel winks and ushers the travelers onward toward the 4th station, and repeats his song from before.)

MINSTREL: To the baker’s you go. And good luck!

(singing and nodding the travelers onward):

Penguins and Ostriches, Kiwis and Coots
Are some birds that can’t fly – to name just a few.
But you wouldn’t know that, for you are a fool
That white mouse I just saw was smarter than you....

SCENE 4: DARLA THE BAKER AND THE PLAYERS

(As the travelers approach, they see that Darla is very busy baking and working and moving about. In "line" are several performers – clowns, stilt walkers, jugglers and a poet. The performers can juggle and clown gently as appropriate.)

DARLA: The buns won't be ready for some time – why don't you wait outside. All this nonsense isn't good for business! See? There are all these new customers and they can't get to the counter because of all this foolishness.

POET: Foolishness – nay, my dear bunswoman – we are players to the King and Queen themselves. Or at least we hope to be. We are trained in delight, wonder and mystery – and I am the voice – the poet, the one who listens to the whispers on the wind and sees the sparkle of magic everywhere I look.

DARLA: As I said, Foolishness. If you please, take your whispers and magic outside.

POET: But the magic, oh buns-smith, is here! I see it everywhere. I see the shimmer of rainbows on your sugar. I hear the magic spells sung from the rising dough. I smell the wonder of your ingredients in the air – and I saw you cooking with gold!

DARLA: With gold?! Now I know you are a fool – no baker cooks with gold.

POET: But I saw it! I saw it sparkle in the bag of flour. I saw it tossed into your mixing bowl. I saw it kneaded into one of your magic buns and then placed into the oven for baking. Then I saw the buns taken away on a platter. The glitter of Gold – I saw it!

DARLA: You saw no such thing – now don't make up stories, you'll scare my customers away.

POET: I admit, that I have told some untruths in my day, but this is no fiction. There is gold in those those buns! Does anyone believe me? Anyone?

(Improvisation moment. The Poet encourages the travelers until someone says: yes, we do!)

Did you see the gold too?

(The Poet listens to the children's response. Asks them to tell him all they know. If mouse is mentioned, Darla can get upset. "There are no mice here!")

The gold in those buns is the Queen's ring? What a wonderful story. This would make a very good play – a gold ring going from place to place – and a mouse you say – I love it. If only there were a tragic love story as well or a duel or something. But early days, I'll work on it. If you still want to find the Queen's ring – you can follow that plate of buns. *(to the baker)* Where did that plate go?

DARLA: My daughter (son) brought it to the Palace Kitchen to be served at the Halloween Ball. *(she points.)*

POET: Go find those magic buns – and good luck! Such a good story ... Do tell me the end of it! *(to one of the other players)* Imagine: if the King accidentally eats the ring! A King so greedy he EATS gold – I love it...

(The Poet ushers the travellers to the next station.)

SCENE 5: THE BAKER'S DAUGHTER (SON)

(This scene is between "stations" – the travelers find the Baker's Daughter (Son) on her way back to the bakery. She is holding her jaw.)

GIRL *(in pain)*: Ow ow ow ow owow – that hurt! Don't tell my mom I told you but there is something really really really really wrong with those cinnamon buns.

There's stuff in them. Hard things – why would she put hard things in the cinnamon buns?

(confesses) OK – so I tried one. I always try one – just in case to see if everything is delicious. And the first bite was. Then, I took a second bite and ow! A hard thing. It was horrible. Delicious but horrible.

I looked around and spat it into the Slops bucket outside the kitchen. Tossed the whole bun in there.

(excited) And THEN I brought the plate of buns inside to give to the cook, and I was going to tell him about how there were things – hard things in the buns – that he should watch out – when suddenly everyone started running around! The people in the kitchen were shrieking and running and calling out that a mouse – a white mouse was in the kitchen!

The mouse chased the cook until he gave the plate to the assistant cook and then the mouse chased the assistant cook, and then the plate went to the scullery maid and the mouse chased the scullery maid, until she dropped the plate and the buns went everywhere.

(amazed) Then, a curious thing: The mouse looked at every one of those buns and then back at me like I had something to tell him. Like I knew something. Do you know what the mouse was looking for?

(The Baker's Daughter encourages the children until they tell what they know: the mouse was looking for the ring in the bun that was spit into the slops bucket.)

It was a ring?! A gold ring?! The queen's gold ring?! Quick – go to the kitchen and get the bucket.

(realizes) No not the kitchen! I saw Slops, the garbage maid already picking it up. You must go to the trashery where Slops has her burn pile and bury pile. Don't let her toss it into the fire or bury it – it's that way! Go! Go!

(The Baker's Daughter hurries the children toward the Trashery.)

SCENE 6: SLOPS THE GARBAGE MAID & THE TRASHERY

(The travelers approach the Trashery. The Garbage Maid is working with a few piles of trash not far from the bonfire. She is sorting all sorts of trash here and there, but the worst of it is in her bucket.)

SLOPS: Nut shells to bury and paper to burn. Peach pits to bury and woodchips to burn. Bad oats to bury and chair legs to burn.

Have you more slops for me? You've come to the right place.

Haven't had many visitors here before – maybe a guard who found a dead rat or a maid with a sack of oil rags. Never a crowd though. And people dressed so ... strange-like.

Oh, you must be going to the Halloween ball, of course! Well the ball is past the fire and the over that bridge to the palace. My you are really lost. So off you go – enjoy yourselves, you don't want to be here where everything unwanted goes. Nothing of value here.

(She goes back to her work until one of the travellers interrupts to ask about the ring. If they don't ask her questions she can turn to them and say: "Why aren't you off? Is there something you're looking for?")

A ring? Here? Such a thing couldn't happen – only the things nobody wants comes here to the garbage maiden – nothing golden – nothing that shines. *(Takes the bucket)* I'll take the rest of this and toss it on the fire.

(The travelers will likely stop her – "The ring is in the bucket!" If they don't, she can say: "Why are you all so stiff and worried-like?" And coax out the answer.)

In the bucket? Where? In here with all of this? *(She shows them that the bucket is filled with all sorts of disgusting food stuffs – nothing you'd want to touch.)*

Will you look? Just reach in and see if you can find it. Yes, you, just dig your hand in there... *(If there is a taker, then let them fish around in the muck until they find it. If not, Slops can do it.)*

Its true! Look, it is the golden ring. Who's ring could it be? *(Slops coaxes the answer out of the travelers.)*

The Queen's?!

Oh, how will we get the ring back? I am not allowed to go to the ball. No, one of you will have to go. One of you will have to take the ring to the Queen.

Who will do this? Who will represent this group and take this straight to the Queen.

Oh, you know and perhaps she will give you a reward! Yes, perhaps she will give you something in return. This is a big honor – who will take it on?

(She wipes the ring on her skirt and gives it to someone small and trustworthy.)

Good! Over the bridge – by the balefire there. Look for her – she – well, she looks like a Queen, there's no mistaking her. Good luck!

(Slops hustles the children toward the final station.)

SCENE 7: THE QUEEN AND THE BALEFIRE

(The children approach the Queen.)

QUEEN *(speaking to her lady-in-waiting, who is a mime)*: What now? You say a mouse came to you?!

(The mime acts out a little mouse chasing her around, and then begins to mime the ring. This is to be performed like charades.)

And the mouse chased you and chased you and then – what? The little thing wanted what – a nut? A piece of cheese.

No, sounds like..... yelling. Singing?

Cut it short – uh, sing. Yes, sounds like sing. Hmm thing, spring, dingading, bling – ring. Ring?

Yes? Oh, my ring – my Halloween Sapphire Ring!! Did the mouse have it? Oh, how I want my ring!

(Then the child presents the ring and maybe tells a little story about how he/she got it.)

My Ring! Is it true? My Halloween Sapphire ring! It is returned – oh happy day. I am indebted to you, my dear travelers. We all are! As now the Halloween Ball can begin!

(She studies them with joy.) Oh my dear travelers, how can I thank you? Each and every one of you! I know! You shall be my guests of honor. Travelers all. You shall be honored at the Halloween Ball.

Now go to that nice woman (man) at the table and each of you can have a treat from my baker Darla – oh, she has the finest cinnamon buns – Thank you thank you and Happy Halloween!

(She ushers them to the “Ball” where they are greeted -or escorted if need be - and they can have some lemonade, cider and a baked goodie.)

END OF PLAY.