

The Goose Girl

Adapted from Grimms'
By

Wayne Peter Liebman

This play is copyrighted and is
for viewing purposes only.

For production rights, please
contact the author or his agent.

Copyright ©2004
by Wayne Peter Liebman
liebmanw@dogearplays.org

Cast of Characters

The Queen (40+ yrs; may be played by a man)

Princess Daisy (20-30 yrs)

Fallada (a magic horse) (any age)

The waiting maid (20-35 yrs)

The elements (wind, water; doubles as knacker, oven) (any age)

Prince Jacques (20-35 yrs)

The King (40+ yrs)

Conrad (a gooseherd) (20-35 yrs)

Scene

A Fairy Tale Kingdom.

Time

Once upon a time.

Notes

Story theater: The action of the play is continuous. There should be no pauses between scenes.

Accents: The waiting maid speaks with a Cockney accent. When she assumes the Princess's identity, she speaks in standard English. The Prince and King speak with French accents.

Horse costume: A horse's head, with eye openings for the actor to see out. Perhaps burlap with some shape to suggest the body of the horse.

Elements costume: The actor playing the elements is invisible to the other characters. His/her costume should be sleek and magical; it should suggest wind and water.

Goose: Optionally, an additional actor may be employed as a goose for Conrad to herd in the meadow scenes.

Scene 1

SETTING: The QUEEN'S palace.

AT RISE: The cast has rushed onto the stage from all directions, clumping together and facing upstage. In turn, each spins around and walks downstage to face the audience.

QUEEN

Once there was an old queen.

PRINCESS

Who had a beautiful daughter, Daisy.

PRINCE

Who was betrothed to a prince, Jacques.

KING

Who was the son of an old king.

CONRAD

Whose geese were tended by a gooseherd named Conrad.

ELEMENTS

And whose kingdom was very far away.

(a beat)

QUEEN

Now it was time for the wedding at the King's castle.

PRINCE

(as himself, to ENSEMBLE)

Mon Dieu! I'm so excited. I'm so excited.

(ENSEMBLE looks at PRINCE.)

KING

(as himself, deadpan)

Oui, oui, Jacques.

(PRINCE, KING and CONRAD exit.)

PRINCESS

So Daisy prepared to set out.

WAITING MAID

(steps forward, curtsies)

With her new waiting maid

(with exaggerated charm)

to watch over her.

FALLADA

They were each given horses to ride.
(Neighs and gives the WAITING
MAID a stick horse.)
The waiting maid's horse was ordinary.

WAITING MAID

(scowling)
Here, what's this?

FALLADA

But the princess's horse, whose name was Fallada, could talk.

QUEEN

The queen, too old to go herself, packed precious things--
(SHE gives a trunk or sack to
the WAITING MAID and fills it.
The WAITING MAID sinks under
the burden.)

ELEMENTS

Jewels, goblets, gold and silver plate.

WAITING MAID

Uhhh!

QUEEN

Everything required for a royal dowry.

PRINCESS

For the queen loved her daughter very much.

QUEEN

Then the queen took a knife
(takes knife, etc.)
and cut her finger. She let three drops of blood fall

ELEMENTS

on a white handkerchief
(HE holds a handkerchief under
the QUEEN'S hand, then wafts
it to the PRINCESS.)
which she gave to Daisy, saying

QUEEN

(to PRINCESS)
This will protect you on your journey.
(breaks down weeping; the
effect should be comical)
Goodbye!

ENSEMBLE

Goodbye! Take care! Write soon!

(CROSSFADE to:)

The road. The PRINCESS and WAITING MAID ride their horses. The ELEMENTS accompanies unobtrusively.

ELEMENTS

They hadn't gone far when the princess got thirsty.

PRINCESS

I'm so thirsty! I know!

(to WAITING MAID)

Take the golden cup you've brought and bring me some water from the brook.

WAITING MAID

Look here, missy! It's at the bottom of the pile, now, in'it? Why don't you just lie yourself down and have a nice drink? Take as long as you like.

PRINCESS

Oh, dear.

(to audience)

Said Princess Daisy.

ELEMENTS

But, not wanting to be disagreeable, she did what the maid asked.

(The ELEMENTS (helped by the QUEEN) lays rippling blue Chinese silk on the ground and the PRINCESS dismounts and drinks.)

And the three drops of blood said, "If your mother only knew--

QUEEN

(weeping)

It would break her heart."

FALLADA

Then they rode on. But it was hot. They came to another stream and again the princess said

PRINCESS

Would you please bring me some water in my golden cup?

WAITING MAID

I've told you before. Lay down and get your own water!

PRINCESS

Alas!

(to audience)

Said Daisy.

PRINCESS(cont'd)

(The ELEMENTS, helped by the
QUEEN, lays blue Chinese silk
on the ground and the PRINCESS
dismounts and drinks.)

ELEMENTS

And the three drops of blood said, "If your mother only knew

QUEEN

(weeping, exaggerated)
it would break her heart."

ELEMENTS

But this time, as the Princess drank, the handkerchief with
the three drops of blood fell from her blouse and was carried
away by the stream.

(The ELEMENTS carries the
handkerchief away.)

PRINCESS

Daisy didn't notice.

FALLADA

But Fallada did.

WAITING MAID

So did the maid. She knew without the handkerchief the
princess was in her power.

(to the PRINCESS)

Now, there, duckie. You don't need all them fancy clothes.
You take mine.

(The WAITING MAID forces an
exchange of clothes.)

And, I'll ride Fallada, if you don't mind.
(SHE mounts FALLADA and gives
the PRINCESS the stick horse
to ride.)

FALLADA

And so the true bride rode on the wretched nag
(to the WAITING MAID)

and the false one rode Fallada.
(HE neighs, rears up and tries
to throw the WAITING MAID.)

WAITING MAID

Steady!

(SHE chokes FALLADA with the
reins.)

We don't want no harm to come to anyone, now do we?

(to the PRINCESS)

And you'll keep quiet too if you know what's good for you.

WAITING MAID(cont'd)
(SHE twists the PRINCESS'S
hair.)

Swear!

PRINCESS

I swear.

(CROSSFADE to:)

The KING'S castle. The PRINCE comes out to greet his bride, mistaking the WAITING MAID for the PRINCESS. The KING watches from a window.

ELEMENTS

On their arrival there was great rejoicing.

PRINCE

Mon Dieu! I'm so excited!

(The PRINCE lifts the WAITING MAID from FALLADA and carries her inside.)

WAITING MAID

What's that? Whoops! Stop that now! Jacques! You naughty boy!
Ha ha ha!

KING

But the king saw how delicate the girl on the nag was and asked about her.

WAITING MAID

(to the KING)

Just a servant I picked up on the way. Give her some work to keep her busy.

(to the PRINCE)

Whoops! Naughty boy! Down! Ha ha ha!

KING

Well, there's the boy who tends my geese.

CONRAD

(entering)

That's me, Conrad.

KING

She can help you.

(CONRAD and the PRINCESS exit together. KING exits opposite.)

WAITING MAID

So the spoiled brat of a princess got what she deserved and all was well.

FALLADA

Except that Fallada knew the truth.

WAITING MAID

Right.

(to the PRINCE)

Oh, dearest? Might I crave a boon?

PRINCE

But of course, mon amour.

WAITING MAID

Could you have the knacker cut that horse's head off? He insulted my person.

PRINCE

Zoot alours! Insulted the bride of Jacques? No! The swine! He shall die at once, my biscuit.

(LIGHT SHIFT: red and sinister.)

ELEMENTS

(entering with ax, as knacker)

And so, the knacker was called. He led FALLADA to a lonely place.

(HE leads FALLADA behind a backlit, white sheet. The action is visible in shadow.)

He swung his ax, and removed the horse's head.

(FALLADA neighs, raises an arm and cries "Freedom!" and the ax falls. The knacker emerges with the head, crimson ribbon flows down from the wound.)

(CROSSFADE to:)

The edge of town. PRINCESS enters. The ELEMENTS (as knacker) stands opposite holding FALLADA's head.

PRINCESS

But Daisy, now a goose girl, promised to pay the knacker for a small service. At the edge of town was a gate she passed through every day with the geese. Would he nail Fallada's head above the portal?

ELEMENTS

Indeed he would.

(HE nails the head above the gate, then exits, passing by the PRINCESS, who gives him a coin.)

PRINCESS

Oh, poor Fallada, hanging there.

FALLADA

Oh, poor princess in despair.
If your mother only knew--

QUEEN

(appearing, then disappearing)
Her heart would break in two."

(Enter CONRAD, optionally with honking goose.)

CONRAD

All right. We've got work to do.

(CONRAD and the PRINCESS proceed to the meadow.)

PRINCESS

So the princess went with Conrad to the meadow, where every day, she sat on a rock and let down her hair.
(SHE sits, shakes her hair, leers at audience, etc.)

CONRAD

(oogling)
Which was pure gold, and glistened in the sun. Conrad couldn't help himself, he couldn't, he wanted some of Daisy's hair.

PRINCESS

But the princess said,
Blow, wind, blow.
Take Conrad's hat and make it go
Flying here and flying there
until I've done braiding my hair.

ELEMENTS

(entering)
And a wind came up
(HE takes CONRAD'S hat and carries it out of CONRAD'S reach. CONRAD chases.)
That sent Conrad's hat flying far and wide.

CONRAD

Stop! Stop! Until Conrad was quite out of breath and all done in.

(HE exits with ELEMENTS.)

PRINCESS

Daisy went home by herself.

(SHE goes, etc.)

And next morning at the gate saw her horse again.

(to FALLADA)

Oh, poor Fallada, hanging there.

FALLADA

Oh, poor princess in despair.

If your mother only knew

Her heart would break in two.

(Enter CONRAD, optionally with honking goose.)

CONRAD

But the goose girl still had work to do. And went with Conrad to the meadow.

(CONRAD and the PRINCESS proceed to the meadow.)

PRINCESS

Where she sat on a rock and let down her hair.

(SHE sits, etc.)

CONRAD

(oogling)

Which glistened in the sun even more. Poor Conrad couldn't help himself, he wanted some.

PRINCESS

But Daisy said,

Blow, wind, blow.

Take Conrad's hat and make it go

Flying here and flying there

until I've done braiding my hair.

ELEMENTS

(entering)

And a wind came up again

(HE takes CONRAD'S hat and carries it out of CONRAD'S reach. CONRAD chases.)

That sent Conrad's hat flying far and wide.

CONRAD

Oh, no! Until Conrad was quite out of breath, but this time, he went straight to the King.

(CONRAD reaches the castle.

PRINCESS returns to the gate.

The KING enters.)

I've had it, I have. I'm done with her.

KING

Now my boy. What's this?

CONRAD

It's that goose girl. She talks to the dead horse. Every day, it's "Oh, poor Fallada, hanging there," and "Oh, poor princess, in despair," and then she takes her hair down and my hat goes flying and it's all day to get it back.

(The hat is tossed on stage.

It lands in front of the

king.)

KING

Sacre bleu! I must see this for myself.

ELEMENTS

And so the next day the king followed them.

(CONRAD joins the PRINCESS at the gate; the KING follows.)

And saw the princess talking with Fallada's head.

(CONRAD and the PRINCESS go to the meadow; the KING follows.)

And saw her glistening, golden hair.

(The PRINCESS sits, takes down her hair, etc.)

PRINCESS

Blow, wind, blow.

(The ELEMENTS takes CONRAD'S hat.)

Take Conrad's hat and make it go--

CONRAD

All right! Enough already!

(CONRAD stomps off. ELEMENTS exits.)

(CROSSFADE to night:)

KING

The old king was very puzzled. That night he summoned the goose girl.

KING(cont'd)
(The PRINCESS enters.)

I've seen everything. You must explain yourself.

PRINCESS

Your majesty, I mustn't tell a soul. I've sworn.

KING

Well. Then pour your heart out to this cast iron oven.
(HE walks away. The ELEMENTS enters with a tube and a black frame, the "stove.")

ELEMENTS

As fairy tales of magic must be wove,
It now befalls I represent a stove.

PRINCESS

So Daisy crawled inside.
(The PRINCESS steps through the frame and crouches.)
How could she know the king would listen?
(The ELEMENTS extends the tube to the KING'S ear.)
Here I sit, forsaken. A princess forced by a false waiting
(rapidly)
maid to give up my royal garments so she could marry my
betrothed, while I must be a poor goose girl fending off the
gooseherd. If my dear mother knew
(A beat as the QUEEN appears but this time does not speak.)
it would break her heart in two. Ai, me.

KING

I knew she was no goose girl! Where is my son? Where is he?
Jacques! Jacques!

(The PRINCE enters. The PRINCESS climbs out of the "oven.")

PRINCE

Yes, father?

KING

Do you know who this is?

PRINCE

It's the goose girl, father.

KING

No, stupid! It is the princess who was to be your wife. You have married a waiting maid!

PRINCE

A waiting maid! A waiting maid! I am ruined! I don't even like her!

(HE kneels before the PRINCESS.)

O Mademoiselle! I blame myself! Ten thousand pardons. I flop at your feet! I kiss your kneecaps! Forgive me!

KING

Idiot! Listen!

(HE whispers to the PRINCE. The ELEMENTS enters.)

ELEMENTS

Then they dressed the princess in royal garments and prepared a great banquet.

(The PRINCESS is dressed in a robe; a table appears in pantomime; the ENSEMBLE is seated, dines.)

PRINCESS

On one side of the prince sat the true princess.

WAITING MAID

And on the other side, his lovely wife, who didn't recognize the princess.

(to the PRINCE)

My dear, who is that girl? She's very pretty, isn't she?

KING

Shhhh! I propose a riddle!

WAITING MAID

Riddle? I love riddles!

KING

Well then, my, uh, daughter, suppose you had a servant who was so disloyal as to have your pet horse killed

(ENSEMBLE: Ohh!)

rob you of your place

(ENSEMBLE: Ohh!)

and send you into the world with nothing?

(ENSEMBLE: Ohh!)

What punishment would she deserve?

WAITING MAID

Why...whoever would do that deserves to have all her clothes taken off

(ENSEMBLE shudder)

and to be shut up in a barrel with sharp nails on the inside.

(ENSEMBLE shudder)

