

Princess Impossible

In this play suitable for a large cast, spoiled, demanding, foot-stamping Imogene gets a lesson in nobility from an unlikely source. . . .

by Claire Boiko

Characters

The Royal Household

FABULUS, the royal storyteller

MAGISTER, royal astrologer

PRINCESS IMOGENE

KING GLORIOSO

QUEEN JOYELLA

PRINCE PRIMUS

PRINCE SECUNDUS

PRINCE TERTIUS

GENERAL BRAVURA

PRIME MINISTER POMPOSO

RESIGNATA, *lady-in-waiting*

DELICASIA, *royal cook*

TWO HERALDS

YEOMAN

The Forest Urchins

GORD

BOK

SNITCH

SNATCH

Shepherd Family

TAD

RUFUS, *his father*

HANNAH, *his mother*

SCENE 1

TIME: *Long ago.*

SETTING: *Far away. The mythical kingdom of Harmonia.*

BEFORE RISE: *FABULUS, in troubadour attire, enters center, bows and addresses audience.*

FABULUS: My lords, my ladies. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Fabulus, the official storyteller of the Kingdom of Harmonia. Happy Harmonia—that was what we used to call our kingdom. We had a king, a queen and three princes. And then we had a princess. When she was born, we sent up fireworks. We were so delighted! She was our one and only Princess Imogene. But then came the terrible twos, the dreadful threes, and the frightful fours. Now she is older and she is quite, quite impossible. If anyone tries to discipline her, she threatens to stamp her foot. Nobody knows what will happen if she

stamps her foot. And everyone is afraid to find out! (*FABULUS crosses right as curtains open on throne room of the royal palace of Harmonia. Up left and right are open, draped casement windows with a large tapestry of a happy, pastoral scene between them. Up center, on a dais, are two thrones: KING GLORIOSO is seated right, QUEEN JOYELLA, left. Below them, on satin pillows, are PRIMUS, SECUNDUS and TERTIUS. GENERAL BRAVURA and PRIME MINISTER POMPOSO, quill and scroll in hand, are seated right. DELICASIA and LADY RESIGNATA are seated left. Up right, on a high stool, is MAGISTER, peering anxiously through a telescope pointed out the window. TWO HERALDS stand left and right, on apron. FABULUS speaks to audience, indicating the scene before him.*) This is the throne room of the royal palace of Harmonia. King Glorioso is anxious to conclude the business of the day before Princess Imogene arrives to upset everything. (*FABULUS crosses down right, sits on apron.*)

HERALDS (*In unison, raising trumpets*): Hear ye, year ye—

KING GLORIOSO (*Waving them to stop*): We heard you. Enough! (*HERALDS lower trumpets, step back, left and right.*) Quickly, Magister, do you see Princess Imogene?

MAGISTER: She is at the duck pond, trying to catch a duck. Oops. They've all flown away. Oh, she's so angry. She's glaring at the castle. Oh, your majesty. She's on her way!

KING (*To LADY RESIGNATA*): Resignata, you are her lady-in-waiting. Go—find the Princess and delay her.

LADY RESIGNATA (*Twisting her hands, whining*): Oh, your majesty, must I? She'll be so cross.

KING: Go. We have to hold at least one

meeting in peace and quiet. (*LADY RESIGNATA runs off right, wailing.*)

MAGISTER: Quickly, your majesty. The Princess is almost here.

KING (*Speaking rapidly*): The court of Harmonia is now in session. All rise for the Anthem of Praise. (*All rise. KING waves his hand. All begin to sing.*)

ALL: Hail—

KING (*Cutting them off*): That's enough. (*All are seated.*) Prime Minister Pomposo, is there any business of state? (*PRIME MINISTER POMPOSO rises, points to scroll with plumed pen.*)

PRIME MINISTER: The Kingdom of South Unicornia wishes to conclude a treaty of trade. They have thirty points to discuss—

KING: No time for points. I'll sign the treaty. Quick! (*PRIME MINISTER runs with scroll and pen to KING, who scribbles his name at bottom. KING turns to GENERAL BRAVURA.*) General Bravura, your report.

GENERAL (*Rising*): Ah, your majesty. You may be assured that your brave and noble armies are—

KING: Enough. Any problems?

GENERAL: Uh. Oh. Well, only the Forest Urchins.

KING: Who are the Forest Urchins? In a nutshell.

GENERAL: They are troublesome young people. Orphans, I think. They lie in wait for rich travelers in the forest and they pounce—

KING: They pounce? We can't have pouncers in the forest. Deal with them! (*GENERAL nods, sighs, and is seated.*) Now, I need the dinner menus from the

royal cook. Delicasia, the short menu, please.

DELICASIA (*Rising, curtsying*): There are twelve courses of dinner, your majesty. We begin with a lovely cream broth of cockleshells. . .

KING: Excellent. Be seated, Delicasia. (*DELICASIA shrugs, shakes her head and is seated.*) Magister—what is the astrological forecast, please?

MAGISTER (*Trembling*): Oh, sire. Venus is in the seventh house of Mars.

KING: Which means? (*Two sets of rapid footsteps approaching and shouting are heard off right.*)

MAGISTER: Batten down the hatches. The Princess is here! (*He falls onto his stool, shaking his head. All groan as PRINCESS IMOGENE enters angrily, followed by LADY RESIGNATA, who is on the point of collapse.*)

LADY RESIGNATA: I tried to delay her, your majesty. I really tried. But she was too fast for me. Oh-h. . . (*She is seated right, wailing loudly.*)

PRINCESS IMOGENE (*Hands on hips*): Stop that, Resignata. Stop it now. (*LADY RESIGNATA stops mid-wail. PRINCESS surveys the court in disgust.*) What kind of a Court is this?

Your royal Princess is standing before you. Get up and bow! (*All rise, bow mechanically except KING and QUEEN, who hide their heads in their hands.*) That was pitiful. Do it again. With feeling. (*All spring up, bow very low and are seated. PRINCESS snaps her fingers.*) Attention, everybody. I have an announcement. Today I am going to take a stroll. (*Dramatically*) To The Forbidden Forest. I am going to have an adventure. All by myself.

ALL: No!

QUEEN JOYELLA: My dear daughter, you cannot go into the forest unescorted. It isn't ladylike at all.

PRINCE PRIMUS (*Rising*): Sister, you cannot go into the forest by yourself. It is too dangerous.

PRINCE SECUNDUS (*Rising*): Sister, someone must go with you. (*Poking TERTIUS*) You go, Tertius.

PRINCE TERTIUS (*Remaining seated, folding arms mutinously*): Oh, no. The last time I went with Imogene on one of her adventures she tied me to an oak tree.

PRINCESS: Quiet! (*Princes are seated hastily.*) I am going all by myself. Alone.

PRIME MINISTER: No, your highness. I

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