



2002

### The Twelve Dancing Princesses

Lena Wagner

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Mims, Hoel. *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*. Performance Publishing Co., 1976. \$25.00. 37 pp.

Reviewer: Lena Wagner

Reading Level: Toddler; Preschool; Primary;

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Plays; Fantasy Plays; Fairy Tale Plays;

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Princesses--Juvenile drama; Fairy tales--Juvenile drama; Dancing--Juvenile drama;

Theme: Believe in yourself

Production Requirements: 4 sets, easy costumes, and magic

Acts: 1

Run Time: 40 min

Characters: 13 female, 14 male

Cast: children

The story begins with a young man named Noble traveling to see the king, who is offering the hand of one of his 12 daughters to anyone who can discover where they spend their evenings dancing. On the road he runs into Aunt Faith—a witch—who decides to help him by giving him a magical cloak that makes him invisible. When Noble reaches the King, the King is very disappointed that he has to give a ragged soldier a chance for the hand of one of his daughters. However, his curiosity about where the girls dance every night overcomes him and he decides to let Noble try. Noble tricks the girls into believing he is asleep, dons the cloak of invisibility, and follows them to the magical dance. In the end Noble is given the King's youngest daughter Hope for the discovery.

This delightful short play has a very simple plot structure with exposition, rising action, the climax, and dénouement. There are quite a few characters in the show, which could be good for accommodating a lot of children in the show; if you are looking for a small cast, many of the parts can be either combined or double cast. The sets are meant to be very simple and would therefore be easy to construct and move. One thing that could be difficult is all the magic that Aunt Faith uses, but the script deals with ideas on how to pull it off in the end production notes. For example, it suggests using white talcum powder when Aunt Faith appears and disappears to create the affect of magic being used. Other things to consider in order to produce this show are how to provide the music for the dancing scene, and how to make Noble invisible. The music should be simple enough to figure out. On the other hand making Noble appear invisible could be a difficult task. Some ideas the book suggests are covering him in a neutral color such as black, or using plastic and a spot light to create a glare. This play would be wonderful to produce in an elementary school because the story teaches a good moral. The characters are all simple and easy for children to understand and therefore play.