



2003

The Nutmeg Princess

Jennifer Eskelsen

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Eskelsen, Jennifer (2003) "The Nutmeg Princess," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 24 : Iss. 1 , Article 20.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol24/iss1/20>

This Play Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Keens-Douglas, Richard. *The Nutmeg Princess*. Playwrights Canada Press, 2000. ISBN 0887545998. Contact publisher regarding price. 69 pp.

Reviewer: Jennifer Eskelsen

Reading Level: Primary; Intermediate; Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Folklore; Plays; Adventure Plays;

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Work--Juvenile drama; Honesty--Juvenile drama; Folktales--Juvenile drama;

Theme: When you believe in magic, amazing things happen.

Production Requirements: simple/moderate costumes, sets, and props. Birds & hawk sound.

Acts: 2

Run Time: 90 min

Characters: 23

Cast: All adults 5F, 8M

Time Period: Past

The village kids on the island of Spice in the Caribbean are playing when Pettite Mama comes into the village. She is a very strange woman who believes in the magic of nature, and because of this the whole village is afraid of her, except Aglo. He befriends Pettite Mama, and in doing so learns about a mysterious princess. This princess can only be seen, according to Pettite Mama, when the smell of nutmeg is strong, in the early morning in the lake in the mountains. The next morning Aglo and Petal (his best friend) set off up the mountain to find the Nutmeg Princess. After being confronted with many obstacles, Aglo and Petal find the lake where the princess is said to be, but only Aglo can see her because Petal doesn't believe she is real. They go back to the village and tell everyone what they saw. Several villagers go up to the lake to see the princess, but they are unable to because they do not believe. Aglo and Petal go up with them and decide to go out to where the princess is on her raft. When they reach it, Petal sees her for the first time. The Princess gives them each a diamond from her hair and then vanishes. They run home to show their families, and are met with Pettite Mama's lawyer who tells them that she has died and left everything she owns to them.

The characters in this play do not change from the beginning to the end, and there are no differences between the various villagers' personalities. However, this may allow the focus to be drawn to how Aglo, Petal and Pettite Mama are different from the rest of the community. The one character who makes any sort of adjustment is Petal who, at first skeptical of Pettite Mama, in the end believes what she said. Also, the speech patterns of all the characters do not remain constant. At times the dialogue implies strong, Caribbean accents, and at other times characters lose their accents, although this may not be as noticeable to an audience as it is to a reader. Readers of the script may find the switching accents very distracting from what the character is actually saying. The attitudes of the villagers are strongly illustrated in the dialogue. For example: when Aglo and Petal are having difficulty getting to the raft in the lake, some of the villagers who are there are so frustrated with them that they refuse to help. The individual characters don't generally have their own voice, but each group within the play does. For instance, the villagers seem to have the same voice together, but they differ from that of Pettite Mama and Aglo's parents. This tends to give an "us verses them" feel, which adds to the conflict. Things happen quickly in this story; even the songs are mostly a faster than average tempo. There is a lot of arguing and teasing in this play, which is naturally a quick sort of dialogue. The action definitely drives the story forward, with every action having a specific purpose. Much of the action is comical, as when Aglo and Petal convince the Mongoose and Goat to be tied up so they can envision all the sweets they can dream of. In addition, many members of the cast play two or more roles. The set can be very simple and imaginative without taking away from the story because so much of the play is based on magic and mysterious things, and was written not to have elaborate and complex sets. There are some sound cues that are needed, like birds and a hawk. This play would be good for a high school or community theatre production.