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Play Reviews

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ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
Bean, Mimi (Libretto and Lyrics. Music by C. Michael Perry.) *Rumplestiltskin.*

*Rumplestiltskin* is another play within a play where the characters are type cast into parts that are similar to their personalities but will teach them to be better people in the end.

The Rumplestiltskin part of the story is interwoven into both the play and the play within the play. Gor plays the troll and is also the character who deals in buying and selling of children, so the rest of the characters are trying to find out his name in both stories before he wins his wages.

The story is fun and there are predictable plot twists that make the play easy to enjoy for young children as well as adults. The music is generally upbeat and appropriate for the moving along of the play.--Erin Caldwell


All ages

The story begins with Acharaya, an old Wise Man, introducing the characters to the audience. Vikram, prince of Ujjain is to be married to Manorama, a princess in a land over the mountain. On their wedding day, the princess is captured by Badri, a bandit, and taken to his cave. In the meantime, Acharaya has shown Vikram the magic sword of his fathers. It will be his when he has passed a test of the gods. The test comes when he has to rescue the princess. To do this he changes into a bird, flies over the mountains, and rescues the princess. During the prince's absence, Pandu, his servant, assumes control of the prince's body but forgets to preserve his own. The prince, as a bird, returns to find his body gone and is locked behind the golden doors by Pandu. Complications arise when the bandit comes to kill the prince who is Pandu in the prince's body. The ending is happily resolved with the exception of Pandu who has no body to return to and must spend eternity calling and looking for it.

The play can be presented simply or elaborately. It is written to include an onstage prop man who hands props to the actors and becomes parts of the setting during the play. The dialogue, written in rhyme, requires skill in its handling so not to make it singsong and monotonous.

*The Flying Prince* can be enjoyed by all ages. Children in the upper grades as well as adults will find this both challenging and fun to perform.--Dianne Breinholt

*Puppeteria I, and II* each include 8 short puppet sketches for Christian Sunday Schools. They deal with such topics as lying, self-esteem, and forgiveness to name a few. Each sketch could easily be adapted for a regular classroom and any available puppet character could fill the roles without script revisions.

The packets come with 6 copies of the eight scripts, instructions on staging and simple puppeteering skills, and resources for further information. For the beginner these packets are very useful and all applicable information is included in the packet. School teachers as well as Sunday School teachers could benefit from these simple scripts.--Erin Caldwell


*Doors* is a very well-written play about a very sensitive subject, divorce. Jeff is an 11-year-old boy whose parents fight a great deal. Rather than talk openly about their problems with Jeff they try to hide it behind closed doors.

Jeff is confused and afraid and tries to cope on his own in conversations and a series of fantasies with his best friend. Finally, Jeff's father leaves and the play ends with a painful encounter between Jeff and his mother which marks the beginning of a new and better relationship for them.

This play, which I highly recommend for production must be carefully produced. The parts of Jeff and Sandy require very skilled child actors (perhaps a young looking 13 or 14 year old would be helpful). In no way could these parts be played by adults, as is sometimes done in children's shows. The parents must also be played with extreme sensitivity; they are not the bad guys.

Technically the show can use a very simple set with changes from reality to fantasy indicated with subtle light cues. This show would best be viewed by children ages 9 and up with adult supervision. A wonderful show for parents and children to see together. --Jan Williams