

# Tales From the Enchanted City

*by L. Don Swartz*

Based on tales from  
The Brothers Grimm

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**DEDICATION**

*For my good friend, Daniel W. Sonnen,  
who can always make me laugh.*

**STORY OF THE PLAY**

Everybody is having a bad day in the Enchanted City. Little Theodore Hood's Grandmother is gravely ill and he must get a powerful medicine to her as soon as possible. But Grandmother lives on the other side of the Enchanted City and the sinister Stranger will stop at nothing to get his hands on the medicine!

Meanwhile, a young lady named Summer Greene has recently inherited a large fortune, making her the wealthiest person in the Enchanted City. Summer's wicked stepmother, Bertha, who used to be the wealthiest, is now Number 2. With a clever disguise and a poisoned Clunky Bar, Bertha sets out to reclaim her title as Richest in the Land! Summer runs away and takes refuge with a group of hobos. Will the happy throng of train-travelers be able to save her?

On the other side of the tracks, Henry and Gretchen, abandoned in a dark part of the Enchanted City, become hopelessly lost, despite leaving a colorful candy trail. Lured into a small store by the smell of fresh baked goods, the brother and sister become prisoners in a crazy man's bagel shop! Will Gretchen's escape plan work, or will the sad siblings become the bagel topping of the month?

Half the fun is recognizing the various fairy tale characters and familiar situations in their contemporary twisted guise! About 70 minutes.

**ORIGINAL PRODUCTION**

*Tales from the Enchanted City*, under the title of *The Enchanted City*, was originally produced by the NT Theatre Workshop at the Grant Street Auditorium in North Tonawanda, New York, on April 18, 1986. It was directed by L. Don Swartz.

The cast was as follows: Cathi Demjanenko; Jennifer L. Cochran; William A. Cunningham; Paul Groman; Karen Kolek; Jennifer Seymour; Daniel W. Sonnen; Tom Testa.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS** (4 m, 4 w minimum)

**ACT I: Theodore R. Hood and the Shortcut to Danger**

(1 m, 3 w, 4 flexible)

MRS. HOOD  
THEODORE R. HOOD  
PHARMACIST  
STRANGER IN BLACK  
BAG LADY  
WINO  
POLICE OFFICER  
GRANDMOTHER HOOD

**ACT II: Once Upon a Summer Greene**

(2 m, 2 w, 4 flexible)

JUDGE CHAMBERS  
BERTHA GREENE  
SUMMER GREENE  
SCOOTER  
BINKY  
MUFFIN  
HOAGY  
PHARMACIST

**ACT III: Henry and Gretchen and the RoDapple Secret Bagel Machine**

(3 m, 3 w, 2 flexible)

MOTHER  
FATHER  
HENRY  
GRETCHEN  
MR. RODAPPLE  
POLICE OFFICER  
BAG LADY  
STAGE MANAGER (*non-speaking*)

**SETTING**

The Enchanted City, once upon a time.

## **SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**

### **ACT I**

Scene 1: The Hoods' cramped apartment in the Enchanted City.

Scene 2: The drugstore.

Scene 3: A park.

Scene 4: Grandma's apartment, St. Christopher Retirement Home.

### **ACT II**

Scene 1: Judge's chamber.

Scene 2: A hobo camp near the tracks.

### **ACT III**

Scene 1: A small kitchen in Henry and Gretchen's house.

Scene 2: A street corner.

Scene 3: RoDapple's Bagel Shoppe.

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

**THE SET:** Platforms at various levels. Everything is suggested with one or two set pieces and by lighting.

**GARBAGE CAN FIRE:** Blinking holiday lights at the bottom of the garbage can works nicely. A fog machine could be added for extra effect.

**RODAPPLE'S SECRET BAGEL MACHINE:** Can be a large decorated cardboard box or an elaborately-built machine of your own design. Some of the effects are handled by a stagehand inside the machine; the smoking and the bagels spitting out of the machine. The actor playing RoDapple simply exits through a hidden door in the back of the machine to get into his bagel costume.

**USE OF MUSIC:** As the best cartoons demonstrate, classical music works great to suggest action and help set the mood.

**THE ACTING STYLE:** Have the actors approach the material in the same serious manner as they would approach, say, *Hamlet*. The universal rule applies here: Play a comedy like a drama for maximum yuks.

## ACT I

### Theodore R. Hood and the Shortcut to Danger Scene 1

*(AT RISE: MOTHER is speaking on the phone. TED, her young son, is standing beside her.)*

**MOTHER:** *(Into the phone.)* What do you mean, you don't deliver? Everyone delivers! But, you don't understand, we just moved to the Enchanted City ... we don't know how to get around yet. Besides, my husband is at work and my mother needs the prescription right away. *(Listens.)* Oh, never mind with the excuses. We'll figure something out. Goodbye!! *(Hangs up.)* I can't believe they don't deliver.

**TED:** I heard.

**MOTHER:** Theodore, your grandmother is very ill and we have to get her medicine to her as soon as possible.

**TED:** I thought the truck with our furniture was coming this afternoon.

**MOTHER:** Oh, that's right! I forgot! You stay here to let the men in and I'll go for the medicine.

**TED:** No way! You're not going out there alone. I'll go.

**MOTHER:** No, you don't! I forbid it. I'm not having you wander about the city all by yourself. There's too many weirdoes out there!

**TED:** Mom, one of the kids at school showed me around the other day. I met some of his friends and they took me to some of their favorite hangouts. I'll be fine.

**MOTHER:** Why don't you call this boy up ... what's his name?

**TED:** His name's Froggy.

**MOTHER:** Why don't you call this Froggy boy up and ask him to go with you?

**TED:** I don't know his phone number. I don't even know his last name. I'll be okay. Give me the money, I'll go pick up the medicine and deliver it to Grandma.

**MOTHER:** Oh dear. I don't know what else we can do. She needs the medicine as soon as possible. Are you sure you will be all right?

**TED:** Yes, Mother, I'll be fine. After I get the medicine I'll go straight to Grandma's apartment building, and come straight home.

**MOTHER:** Oh, all right. I guess it's the only way. Do you remember how to get to Grandma's apartment building?

**TED:** Kind of. I know it's across the street from that big white building with the whiskey bottle billboard on top of it.

**MOTHER:** That's right. Just keep that whiskey bottle in sight and you won't get lost. Listen to us! Already the corruption is taking root. Stay on the main streets. Follow 23rd all the way to Baily ... then stay on Baily until you see Grandma's building. If you get lost, the name of her building is the St. Christopher Retirement Home.

**TED:** But, Mom! If I go that way, I'll be going way out of the way! I'll cut through the park and save lots of time.

**MOTHER:** Theodore R. Hood! No! Don't take any shortcuts! You know how I feel about shortcuts! You know how your father feels about shortcuts! We come from a long line of people who hate and fear shortcuts! Remember how your Great Grandmother Ruby almost got herself killed for taking a shortcut? If it wasn't for that kindly woodsman, we wouldn't even be having this conversation right now! Promise me you won't take any shortcuts! Promise me!

**TED:** Oh Mom!

**MOTHER:** Promise me or I'll go myself!

**TED:** All right! (*Crosses fingers behind his back.*) I promise.

**MOTHER:** And don't talk to strangers.

**TED:** I know, Mom.

**MOTHER:** And look both ways while crossing the street and come straight home.

**TED:** Yes, Mom, I promise.

**MOTHER:** What a good boy. (*Hugging HIM.*) This is a mother's dream. This is a mother's angel. This is a mother's precious child! Now ... here is the money for the medicine.

**MOTHER:** *(Cont'd.)* Wrap your fingers around it and shove your fist deep in your pocket. *(HE does.)* That way the pickpockets won't get it. *(SHE hands HIM a quarter.)* Here, put this quarter in your shoe. In case you're mugged you can still make a phone call. *(HE begins to do so.)* Don't take the money out of your pocket! You're forgetting everything! *(HE maneuvers the quarter into his sneaker with his other hand.)* Good. Now, here are the keys to this building. This one will get you in the building. This one is for the elevator, and this one is for our door. *(Hands them to HIM.)* Hold them like I taught you.

**TED:** Aw, Mom!

**MOTHER:** Come on now. We don't live in the 'burbs anymore. *(HE inserts the keys between his fingers and makes a fist.)* There. An instant weapon. And here is a map of the city in case you get lost. *(Shoves the map under HIS arm.)* Remember above all to walk briskly with a sense of purpose. Keep your head held high with a determined look on your face. Show me. *(HE stands tall and puts on a determined look.)* If you do get lost, try and find a policeman. Please be careful!

**TED:** I will be, don't worry. I'll be back before you know it. *(Standing tall with his right hand shoved deep in his pocket, his left arm tucked close to his body to keep the map from falling, and with his left hand extended forward with the lethal keys in the striking position, he limps out the door.)*

**MOTHER:** Act natural! Don't call attention to yourself! Goodbye! You be careful! What a brave boy! *(Begins to pace.)* Oh dear ... oh dear ... oh dear ... .

*(MUSIC / BLACKOUT.)*

**End of Scene**

### **End of Freeview**

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