

Once Upon a Tower

The Untold Story of Rapunzel
and Her Twelve-Story Prison

By
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STORY OF THE PLAY

Not many folks know the TRUE story of how the beautiful, golden-haired Rapunzel ended up alone, locked in a tower ...until now! You see, her parents promised their first-born child to a witch (who preferred to be called an enchantress). But little did the witch know that Rapunzel had an ugly twin sister Ethel. By stealing the witch's glasses, the parents are able to switch babies. Years later, the witch discovers the truth, gets the now spoiled, self-centered Rapunzel back, and hides her in a tower with a solitary window at its top.

Meanwhile the parents, along with the help of their neighbors, plan to free Rapunzel and get ugly Ethel so lost she'll never find her way back home.

Overhearing this, poor Ethel plots to murder Rapunzel and cut off her golden locks to wear herself to finally be loved and happy. But will her plan be foiled by a somewhat handsome but deeply shallow prince or an ugly Beast who has kept Rapunzel company in the tower? And if she lives, will Rapunzel ever realize there is more to life than proms, dating and beauty pageants?

Tacky sets, melodramatic lines, and tons of humor make this version of the beloved fairytale one you'll never forget!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 7 w, 10 flexible, doubling possible)

FIRST CHORUS MEMBER (FCM) (flex): A storyteller.
SECOND CHORUS MEMBER (SCM) (flex): Another.
THIRD CHORUS MEMBER (TCM) (flex): Another.
FOURTH CHORUS MEMBER (FTHCM) (flex): Another.
RAPUNZEL: Beautiful and boy, does she know it.
ETHEL (flex): Rapunzel's ugly twin sister.
HORACE: Rapunzel's and Ethel's father.
DORIS: Rapunzel's and Ethel's mother.
WITCH: Makes an infamous deal with Doris.
NURSE (flex): Brings Rapunzel and Ethel into the world.
FIRST NEIGHBOR: Lives close to Horace and Doris.
FIRST HUSBAND: First Neighbor's husband.
SECOND NEIGHBOR: Also lives close.
SECOND HUSBAND: Second Neighbor's husband.
THIRD NEIGHBOR: Also lives close.
THIRD HUSBAND: Third Neighbor's husband.
FIRST GUARD (flex): Works for the witch.
SECOND GUARD (flex): Also works for the witch.
RABBIT (flex): Of Wonderland fame.
SOMEWHAT HANDSOME PRINCE: Spots Rapunzel in her tower.
CINDERELLA: An old classmate of Ethel's.
DELIVERY PERSON (flex): Delivers an important package.
BEAST: Falls in love with Ugly Ethel.
EXTRAS: Trees, harried stagehands, etc.

NOTE ABOUT CASTING

You may remove or add Chorus Members as needed. You can have as few as two or as many as ten with line changes. Also, Chorus Members can double as some of the characters in the play such as Cinderella, Rabbit, Guards, etc., or one actor could play all the "in and out" characters, or you could have an actor for each of these roles. Any of these ways will work.

For Ugly Ethel, you may want to have this role played by a guy. If a girl plays it, have her made up to look like a hag.

SET AND PRODUCTION NOTES

The whole idea of this being a low-budget play is part of the fun. It also makes it, well, inexpensive to produce. A bare stage with cardboard set pieces, a few chairs and tables, and an optional tall ladder are all you need to succeed. The pieces should be brought on and off by stagehands, chorus members or other actors as the characters/chorus members are speaking to keep the action continuous. The cutout of the tower exterior may be placed against a tall ladder against a table on which Rapunzel sits in a chair. You may choose to paint the cardboard in bright colors to get that fairytale feel.

Have your actors play their parts rather melodramatically, but at the same time act as if it's the most serious story in the world. This will add to the fun and the silliness of the play.

PROPS

Act I: Basket, head of lettuce, cheap baby's crib (homemade is fine), paper contract, pen or pencil, sewing basket, scarf, 4 consecutively larger dolls wrapped in blankets, mop and mop bucket, 2 plastic mop buckets with holes cut out for helmets, 2 long sticks wrapped in aluminum foil, spectacles, rocking chair, large blanket, sunglasses, hat with veil attached, long braids of yellow yarn for Rapunzel's hair, 2 small picture frames, nylon stockings, construction paper flowers, rabbit ears, cotton tail, axe, stick horse.

Act II: A string with a plastic cup attached at each end, apple, can of chili, banana, cumquat, tissue, toy rifle, axe, protractor, phone receiver, large bowl, spoon, handheld mirror, box, small stool, McDonald's bag, water pistol, various cheap monster masks, small twigs and leaves, breath spray, cloak with a hood, optional celebrity or political-figure mask.

ACT I

(AT RISE: The CHORUS MEMBERS roam about the stage as they tell the story standing here and there, entering and exiting as needed. DORIS and HORACE, a storybook married couple, stand in their cardboard cottage.)

FCM: Once upon a time there was a man and his wife...

SCM: Who were content in living a humble little life.

TCM: They shared a cute but simple cardboard house.

FTHCM: Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.

Sorry, wrong story.

DORIS: *(To HORACE.)* I love my humble cottage on the edge of this low-budget forest.

HORACE: Yes, the smell of the crepe paper vines and the wondrous view of the poster board clouds.

SCM: This couple was very happy indeed.

TCM: As happy as any couple could be living in such a low-budget forest in a flimsy cardboard cottage.

DORIS: *(Singing to HORACE.)* If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.

HORACE: *(As THEY both clap.)* Clap, clap.

DORIS: If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.

HORACE: *(THEY clap.)* Clap, clap.

FTHCM: Horace and Doris were known to break out in song, even though *(As a warning to the actors.)* the Chorus had explained time and again that this play was NOT a musical.

HORACE AND DORIS: *(Embarrassed.)* Sorry.

FTHCM: *(Composes her/himself.)* One day, Doris had a special surprise for her husband Horace.

DORIS: I have a surprise for you, my husband.

HORACE: I LOVE surprises! What is it?

DORIS: I have baked you a cake.

HORACE: Yay, a cake!

FCM: *(Shaking head.)* No.

DORIS: Uh... *(Looking helplessly to a nearby CHORUS MEMBER.)* I mended his fishing rod?

SCM: No, no, no. You're going to have a BABY.

DORIS: *(Turns quickly to HORACE.)* I'm going to have a BABY.

HORACE: Yaaaaay! A BABY!!!

DORIS: *(Throws HER hands in the air and sings louder.)* If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.

HORACE: *(As THEY both stomp.)* Stomp! Stomp!

TCM: The couple was so happy, they danced with joy.

(SFX: A modern upbeat and happy song plays as THEY dance a few moves together. A dancing STAGEHAND brings on a cheap crib and exits again. MUSIC out.)

DORIS: Look what a dancing stagehand brought out for us:
A beautiful low-budget crib in which to sleep.

HORACE: But, how can we both fit?

DORIS: It's not for us, silly, it's for our baby.

FTHCM: We forgot to mention this woman's husband wasn't the sharpest knife in the drawer.

FCM: Within the next few days Doris began to have very strange cravings.

DORIS: *(To HORACE.)* I'm having very strange cravings.

HORACE: What are you craving, my wife?

DORIS: Grits and pretzels stuffed with cheese

Onion juice and black-eyed peas

Ketchup-covered cantaloupe

A sauerkraut shake with hair of goat

But all these things I will gladly toss for a head of lettuce -

Hold the sauce.

SCM: You heard her, folks. She said she will toss everything else for a head of lettuce. Just a little foreshadowing for you who really care that there is foreshadowing in the play.

TCM: Suddenly there was a knock at their free-standing low-budget door.

WITCH: *(Speaks the knock.)* Knock, knock, knock.

HORACE: I will get it, my wife. *(Opens the door.)* Why it's that wicked enchantress who lives next door who NEVER cuts her grass.

WITCH: I thought I heard someone say she was craving delicious lettuce, hold the sauce.

DORIS: (*Rushing to the WITCH.*) Yes, that was me. Since I have been carrying my baby, I have been craving a head of lettuce and must have some at any cost.

WITCH: Isn't that coincidental? I happen to grow lettuce in my garden just over that low-budget rock wall over there. (*Points offstage.*)

DORIS: (*Begging.*) You MUST give me some! You must! You MUST!

FTHCM: At times, the actor playing Doris was a little TOO melodramatic.

WITCH: (*To DORIS.*) I'm sorry, but I'm afraid my delicious lettuce hasn't done very well this year. All I have left is in this basket that I carry.

DORIS: (*Grabs for the basket.*) I want it NOW!

FCM: Doris rushed for the witch, but Horace stopped her.

HORACE: (*Putting up hand and speaking in a very low and dramatic voice.*) I am stopping you! (*Turns to the WITCH.*) How much will you take for the lettuce in your basket?

WITCH: What do you have to offer?

HORACE: I have some baseball cards.

WITCH: Not interested.

HORACE: I have a trick coin you pull from people's ears.

WITCH: I can do REAL magic.

HORACE: I am afraid that is all we have to offer since we are very poor.

SCM: Horace said as he looked around his cheap cardboard cottage.

DORIS: (*Grabbing HORACE by his collar and pulling him to her nose-to-nose, acting a little deranged.*) You get me that lettuce in her basket, do you hear me?

HORACE: (*Suddenly afraid.*) Yikes! Okey-dokey. (*Turns to the WITCH.*) Okay, evil enchantress, what WILL you take for the lettuce in your basket?

TCM: The witch looked around and thought to herself.

WITCH: (*Looking around.*) Let's see, what can you give me in exchange for this lettuce in my basket? (*Looks over at the baby's crib, walks around it as she rubs her chin.*) Hmmmmmm, I really like this baby's crib here.

End of Freeview

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