

AFTER EVER AFTER

A Play in One Act
for Young People

by

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SYNOPSIS

After Ever After is a fantasy exploring the lives of fairy tale characters after the fairy tale is over. Eight familiar characters come to take a class entitled “Get Real”, and encounter an evasive and enigmatic teacher who somehow manages to help them get in touch with their real selves, and reveals her own essence as well. Through the course of the play, the one-dimensional characters of fairy-tale fame experience self-discovery, liberation, and transformation, blossoming into more complex individuals with more realistic feelings, aspirations, and approaches to life. The action of the play takes place in real time in a single extended scene, except for the Epilogue.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

After Ever After has had two productions, for two studio performances each, by the Junior Players of the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, GA, in 2001 and again in 2006. The performances took place in the Theatre 3 of the 14th Street Playhouse. The show was presented free of charge, and it was not reviewed.

CASTING

After Ever After has a cast of nine, including six girls and three boys.

SET AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

After Ever After can, as it was in its original incarnation, be produced with a minimum of set or technical needs, using simple props, neutral stage pieces, and ordinary sound effects to establish the various settings. Basic requirements are eight chairs, a teacher’s desk, and a chalk or dry-erase board, or similar technology. The play also involves some specific effects, including Cap’s peg-leg, and Rap’s extremely long hair that can be cut off during the play.

CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

Rap, a girl with very long hair (Rapunzel)

Cap, a well-traveled man (Captain Hook)

Gran, an old woman (Little Red Riding Hood’s Grandmother)

Dru (Drusella, Cinderella’s stepsister)

Dope (Dopey)

Skin (Rumpelstiltskin)

Ms. P, a teacher (Princess, who felt the pea)

Tess, a poor woman (the Giant’s wife, who lived at the top of the Beanstalk)

Aurora, a beautiful girl (Sleeping Beauty)

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Setting: A classroom with a desks on one side, eight chairs in two rows on the other, and a chalk or dry erase board with the words GET REAL! on it. Each chair has a pad and pencil on it. Across from the chairs are a desk and chair for the teacher.

At rise: RAP is sitting in the foremost chair, with her hair laid out artfully in a large circle on the floor, leading back to her lap. She is brushing the ends of her long braid. Silence. She looks around. Silence.

CAP enters from behind. RAP notices him, especially his prosthetic hook hand, the eye-patch and the sword in his belt. He walks, limping, toward the front.

RAP: Please be careful.

CAP: What?

RAP: Like, my hair. Didn't you see it? Please be careful not to step on my hair.

CAP: Any more attitude like that, Missy, and I'll have you walk the plank!

RAP: Whatever!

(He goes into the back row and hovers. Silence. GRAN enters slowly, walking with a cane.)

GRAN: Oh, me. Oh, my. Oh, me. Oh, my.

CAP: Oh, brother!

GRAN: Have they started yet?

RAP: No. Nobody was here when I got here.

GRAN: Well, it's a miracle that I made it here alive.

CAP: It will be a miracle if you make it out of here alive!

GRAN: Oh, my.

RAP: I'm sure the teacher will be here soon.

(GRAN sits in the front row. Silence.)

GRAN: Sorry about your hand. What happened?

CAP: Crocodile. Leg, too. Not that it's any of your business!

GRAN: Crocodile?!? Oh, my.

(Silence. Then, sounds of rustling and bustling from outside.)

DRU *(from offstage)*: This way, you ignorant monkey!

DOPE *(from offstage)*: Are you sure?

DRU: Stop questioning everything I say. It's right in that room, I'm sure.

DOPE: Well, okay.

(DRU appears in the doorway, followed by DOPE, lugging lots of bags.)

DRU: I told you. You're lucky you met me. You would never have found this on your own.

DOPE: Has the class started yet?

DRU: No! Does it look like anything has started?

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MS. P: And me, my name is . . . well, in my job as a teacher, I'd love for you to simply call me Ms. P. Okay?

ALL: Okay, Ms. P.

MS. P: So, what does it mean to Get Real? Well, in this class you will learn some very useful things. We'll start with some practical items. You might want to write these down.

(Some begin to take notes, as appropriate.)

Number 1. Brush your teeth. In your fairy tales, personal hygiene is not a primary concern. But in the real world, tooth decay is something to worry about. Especially if you have been anywhere near a gingerbread house, or a Gingerbread Man, for that matter. Number 2. Look both ways when you cross.

Again, traffic is probably not that bad on your little forest path, or outside your fancy castle.

CAP: Or on the high seas!

MS. P: Anywhere. Traffic is not a big problem in fairy tales. But you've all got to start 'thinking outside the book.' Drivers in the real world get so distracted. You know, cell phones, CD's, global positioning systems. And Number 3. Stop, drop and roll. That's your best defense in case of fire. Yes?

GRAN: Will it work with wolves?

MS. P: I'm afraid not. Only fires. And call 9-1-1 as soon as you can. Write that down. 9-1-1.

DOPE: Um, Ms. P, can you please spell that please?

RAP (*with attitude*): 9-1-1.

GRAN: Oh my, getting real sounds so complicated.

MS. P: Yes, but it is also a great deal of fun.

(TESS appears in the doorway. She enters during the following. Behind her is AURORA, walking drowsily.)

TESS: Fun! I sure hope this class is fun. I haven't had any fun in a long time.

MS. P: Welcome! We've been waiting for you.

TESS: Yes, I know. I would have been here on time, if I didn't have to walk. But that's how it goes when you don't have any money. I'm as poor as the day is long. Oh, I used to have everything I wanted, like these fine young ladies here. Like this one that I found sleeping outside on the road. Here, have a seat.

(She sits AURORA in the back row, and moves to her own seat in the front.)
I was as rich as the hills. But then we were robbed blind, by some young heartless scoundrel; he got away with all our riches, our prized possessions, our gold and jewels.

(Some of them look at SKIN, as appropriate.)

SKIN: Don't look at me. I don't steal ... not my deal ... make it myself ... Hear that, you elf?

DOPE: I'm a dwarf!

MS. P: Gentlemen!

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ALL: Yayyyy!!!! (*AURORA awakens.*)

AURORA: What's going on? What did I miss?

MS. P: It's wonderful! Everyone is getting real! They are taking charge of their lives. Aurora, what do you want?

AURORA: Me?

MS. P: Yes, you.

AURORA: I want to stay awake long enough to be a part of the fun. I want to know why I keep falling asleep.

DOPE: Wait a minute. Can I ask you something?
(*She nods.*)

What was it that put you to sleep in the first place?

AURORA: It was the thirteenth fairy's spell. If I ever poked my finger with the spindle of a spinning wheel, I would sleep for a hundred years. I knew I shouldn't have even gone near it, but I wanted to try spinning at least once. You see, I've always loved fabrics, and always wanted to know how they are made.

DOPE: Come here. (*She does. He takes her hand and examines it closely.*) Just as I thought. You still have a tiny splinter from that spindle. The spell must still be partially in effect. If we pull out this splinter, you will be cured. One hundred percent, with zero chance of recurrence.

AURORA: Then pull it out! Pull it out!

DOPE: I need something sharp!

DRU: Something sharp! Who has something sharp!

CAP: Hook to the rescue!
(*DOPE uses CAP's hook to remove the splinter.*)

AURORA: You've done it! I can feel it! I'm not at all tired!

TESS: Now you can do whatever you want to.

AURORA: I want to spin and weave, making linen and wool for the finest clothes and furnishings you've ever seen.
(*All cheer for her.*)

MS. P: Well, you all should be very proud of yourselves. You have done amazingly well. I feel quite satisfied. I think you all know what you need to do, so all I can say is: Class Dismissed.

(They start to disperse, except AURORA, who stares at MS. P)

AURORA: Wait a minute!

MS. P: What is it?

AURORA: We forgot someone.

ALL *(looking around)*: Who?

AURORA: Her!

MS. P: Me?

AURORA: Yes, you! You've been leading this class, trying to discover our little secrets, acting like a princess on a throne. What right do you have?

RAP: Yeah, you never told us anything about yourself.

CAP: Yeah, how do you Get Real?

DRU: How do you take charge of your life?

SKIN: What do you really want?

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