

Rapunzel

Adapted from the story by the Brothers Grimm

By Noah Smith

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Rapunzel

- 2 -

STORY OF THE PLAY

There's more to Rapunzel than just her long, long, hair! Here's the real story. Years ago, Gothel, rumored to be a witch, seized the newborn baby of a couple who stole rampion from her garden. She named the baby Rapunzel which is German for rampion because rampion is not a very pretty girl's name!

So Gothel locked the baby in a high tower and eventually the child grew up, raised by Gothel and by her parents who talked to her from the ground. Rapunzel's father, fancying himself a scholar, taught her how all the planets revolve around a flat earth, and her mother, who thought herself wise in the ways of the world, taught Rapunzel never to have an opinion of her own

One day a goofy prince who rides in on stick horse, sees a way to climb up the tower on Rapunzel's hair and vows to free her. But Gothel kidnaps Rapunzel to keep from losing her. That's when our fairytale heroine frees herself and learns how to survive on her own by becoming a hairdresser and getting her own apartment. She returns to tell her parents, Gothel, and the prince that she will make her own decisions now. And as for a "happily ever after," let's just say perhaps the ending is more of a beginning!

Rapunzel

- 3 -

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 3 w, 2 flex)

STRUTZ: A minstrel, the singer.

FRETZ: A minstrel, the guitar player.

WILHELM: Rapunzel's father.

SABINA: Rapunzel's mother.

GOTHEL: An old woman, said to be a witch.

RAPUNZEL: Daughter of Wilhelm and Sabina.

PRINCE RUPERT: A prince.

Setting: Outside of Wilhelm and Sabina's house and Gothel's tower in Central Europe, 1700s. On one side of the stage is the small house belonging to Wilhelm and Sabina. On the other is Gothel's tower. It is a very large tower which must be strong enough that actors can climb up it from the outside (which will require some sort of ladder structure). There must also be some way to climb to the top from the inside. At the top of the tower is a balcony, large enough to accommodate three actors comfortably. At the foot of the tower is a garden. Behind the tower are some hedges or bushes, brambly ones, large enough to provide an invisible escape for actors going up and down in the tower.

Props: Guitar, vegetables to pick, wrapped doll baby, chalkboard and pointer, long braid of hair (rope), bag lunch, hairbrushes, stick horse, scissors, cauldron, bandage for head, pack, orange, funny wig, big red fright wig, bag of gold, dummy of Rupert.

**See Author's production notes at end of playbook.*

Rapunzel

- 4 -

RAPUNZEL was presented by the Summer Theatre at Mount Holyoke College, at the Outdoor Theatre on the Mount Holyoke College Campus, July 4-7, 2001. Susan Daniels, Artistic Director; Tom Reing, Director; Christie Phillips, Scenery Designer; Ilene Goldstein; Costume Designer; Walter Mantani, Sound Designer; Allison Loos, Properties Designer; Emma Sonduck, Stage Manager; Jay Miller, Technical Director.

The cast, in order of appearance, was as follows:

STRUTZ -- Ronni Jane Reich
FRETZ -- Alec Nelson
WILHELM -- Greg Black
SABINA -- Heather Strycharz
GOTHEL -- Sharona Mizrachi
RAPUNZEL -- Courtney Costello
PRINCE RUPERT -- Steve French

The original production included the original song "*When at Last I'm Free*" by Jackie Chatham. Additional music was composed by Ronni Jane Reich.

Rapunzel

- 5 -

ACT I

(AT RISE: STRUTZ and FRETZ enter, looking lost. They are wandering minstrels. Strutz is the vocalist, though much of her singing is recitative. Her partner is Fretz who plays the guitar.)

FRETZ: We're never going to find it!

STRUTZ: It's around here somewhere, I promise. I --
(Sees the audience.) Look!

FRETZ: People!

STRUTZ: Our audience!

FRETZ: Our public!

STRUTZ: The folks who paid to see us here today!

FRETZ: The -- what? Paid? These people paid money to see us?

STRUTZ: Well, yes.

FRETZ: Oh! I don't like that! That means they're going to want to get their money's worth! We're going to have to tell a pretty great story.

STRUTZ: Which, of course, we will. We are, after all, the finest minstrels in all the land. I am Strutz!

FRETZ: And I am Fretz!

STRUTZ: And we are here to sing the story of --

FRETZ: _____ *(Title of the last play the theatre produced.)*

STRUTZ: Fretz, I don't think that's right.

FRETZ: *(Taking out a piece of paper.)* Look, it says right here, Strutz -- *(Name of theatre.)* will perform *(Title of last play.)* ... *(Date of last play.)* ... Oh.

STRUTZ: Oh great! So what story are we telling today? *(Audience tells HER.)* "Rapunzel"? Oh! I know that story! With the hair!

FRETZ: And the tower!

STRUTZ: And the prince!

FRETZ: And the troll under the bridge!

STRUTZ: No, Fretz -- look, forget it. *(To audience.)* We'll need your help for this one. This story is full of thrills! *(FRETZ plays a guitar chord.)* Chills! *(Guitar chord.)* And surprises! *(Guitar chord.)*

Rapunzel

- 6 -

FRETZ: So, when you see something thrilling, you need to say "Oooh!" Try that ... one, two, three, thrilling!
(*Audience responds.*)

STRUTZ: Now, when something is chilling, you need to say "Brrr!" Try it ... one, two, three, chilling! (*Audience responds.*)

FRETZ: And if it's a surprise, you say "Bum bum baah!" Try that. One, two, three, surprise! (*Audience responds.*)

STRUTZ: Excellent! So! Let's begin. (*FRETZ plays guitar as STRUTZ sings or recites.*)

LONG AGO, IN A FAR OFF PLACE,
LIVED A YOUNG WIFE WHO WAS FAIR OF FACE
HER HUSBAND, TOO, WAS HANDSOME AND STRONG
AND THEY EXPECTED A CHILD BEFORE TOO LONG.

(*SABINA and WILHELM enter. Sabina is very pregnant.*)

WILHELM: Are you all right? Sabina, my dear? Can I get you anything? Anything at all?

SABINA: Wilhelm.

WILHELM: Yes?

SABINA: Be quiet for just a minute! I need to sit down.

WILHELM: Okay, okay, sure!

(*WILHELM helps SABINA sit on a stump or something.*)

SABINA: Ow!

WILHELM: Is it time? Is the baby coming?

SABINA: No! No! I sat on a twig.

WILHELM: Oh! ... I love you, Sabina.

SABINA: And I love you, Wilhelm.

STRUTZ: (*Sings or recites.*)

BOTH HEARTS BURNED WITH LOVING FIRE
BUT THERE WAS ONE THING SABINA STILL DESIRED.

SABINA: I wish I could have...

WILHELM: Yes? Yes?

SABINA: Oh, no, it's impossible!

WILHELM: Nothing is impossible! For you dear, I will do anything!

Rapunzel

- 7 -

SABINA: Well dear, I have this craving for ... rampion.

WILHELM: Well, if you want rampion, I shall get you rampion. Rampion it shall be. I have only one question.

SABINA: Yes, dear?

WILHELM: What is rampion?

SABINA: It's a leafy green vegetable. But it's very rare, dear, you could never find it.

WILHELM: Why not? Does it grow near here?

SABINA: The only place I've ever seen it is in the garden of our next-door neighbor, Gothel.

WILHELM: But Gothel from next door is ... a witch!

(WILHELM and SABINA exit.)

FRETZ: A witch! Isn't that ... chilling!

(FRETZ plays as the audience responds.)

STRUTZ: But because Wilhelm was brave and, frankly, not all that smart, he agreed to steal some rampion from the witch's garden. Late that night, he sneaked into the garden and began to pick the rampion.

(FRETZ plays some light sneaking MUSIC and WILHELM tiptoes into the garden and begins picking vegetables.)

FRETZ: When all of a sudden, he encountered a horrible ... surprise!

(FRETZ cues the audience for surprise sound. GOTHEL enters.)

GOTHEL: Who are you? Who dares to invade my garden?

WILHELM: Aah! The wi ... er, uh, the Gothel.

GOTHEL: Silence, fool! Don't you know that I am a powerful witch?

WILHELM: Yes, yes, ma'am, I do.

GOTHEL: And yet you dare to steal my rampion?

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