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For preview only
FLEXIBLE CASTING

Several characters can be played male or female, including MIRROR, RUMPELSTILTSKIN, SHOEMAKER’S ELF, GABLE, TERRY, TJ, TAG, SPATTER, RANDY, MELVIN, STAN, OPAL and PRINCIPAL LEWIS.

SET DESCRIPTION

The set represents two different worlds—fairy-tale land and reality (Validity High School). While our story bounces back and forth between the two, set changes are a snap if you have a distinct backdrop for each.

The fairy-tale classroom set has old-fashioned chairs or benches CENTER STAGE to represent a classroom. Headmistress Gable’s office can be represented EXTREME DOWN RIGHT with a desk, chair, rolling chalkboard and large mirror frame (see costuming production notes regarding mirror).

The reality set for Validity High School shows the main hallway CENTER STAGE, represented by a set of lockers and a sign that reads “SENIOR DANCE TONIGHT.” The high school principal’s office can be depicted EXTREME DOWN LEFT with a desk and two chairs. Another hallway leading to the janitor’s closet is played before the curtain and only requires a self-standing door frame with a door labeled “JANITOR.”

For preview only
A platform UPSTAGE is onstage for both sets and can be used throughout the play to add visual variety. With the addition of chairs and tables or desks, it can become the high school detention hall. For the high school dance scene, the platform might be decorated with streamers, a disco ball, etc.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE
Scene One: Classroom in fairy-tale land, once upon a time.
Scene Two: Gable’s office in fairy-tale land, after school that day.
Scene Three: High school hallway near the janitor’s closet in reality (played in front of the curtain), one Friday morning.
Scene Four: Gable’s office in fairy-tale land, the same day.
Scene Five: High school hallway, still that Friday.
Scene Six: Fairy-tale classroom, a couple days later as fairy-tale time goes.
Scene Seven: High school hallway, still Friday.

ACT TWO
Scene One: High school hallway, immediately following.
Scene Two: High school principal’s office, immediately following.
Scene Three: Fairy-tale classroom, another new day.
Scene Four: High school detention room, still Friday afternoon.
Scene Five: High school hallway, the same.
Scene Six: Fairy-tale classroom, later that day.
Scene Seven: High school hallway near the janitor’s closet (played in front of the curtain), later Friday.
Scene Eight: High school dance, Friday night.
Scene Nine: Hallway with janitor’s closet again, then a split stage showing both the fairy-tale classroom and the high school hallway.
ONCE UPON A HIGH SCHOOL

ACT ONE

Scene One

We open in a fairy-tale classroom. Our favorite fairy-tale characters are doing fairy-tale things. GABLE rings a triangle—a fairy-tale school bell. STUDENTS scatter to their seats and begin to pull books from old-fashioned knapsacks on sticks or from belts that hold them together. WOODSMAN is alone at the back of the room, a hatchet slung through his belt.

GOLDILOCKS: This chair is too hard. (Tries another chair.) This chair is too soft. (Finds another.) Ahh, just right.

MAGDA: (Moves CENTER with PETRA and CINDERELLA.) Cinderella, where are my books?

CINDERELLA: I have them right here, Magdalena.

PETRA: Cinderella.

CINDERELLA: Yes, Petrazula?

PETRA: Where is my mirror?

CINDERELLA: I have it here. (Hands a hand mirror to PETRA, then takes a seat next to them.) You are most kindly welcome.

PETRA: What now?

CINDERELLA: I noticed you must’ve forgotten to thank me, but I wanted you to know you are mostly kindly welcome.

MAGDA: And what do you think you are doing, pray?

CINDERELLA: Just getting ready for class.

PETRA: This section is for the fairest of them all. The scullery section is yonder.

CINDERELLA: But couldn’t I—

MAGDA: Scullery.

CINDERELLA: But—I—

PETRA: Scull! Scull, scull, scull. (Dejectedly, CINDERELLA goes to the far side of class while MAGDA and PETRA flank GOLDILOCKS.)

MAGDA: Prithee, why are you here?

GOLDILOCKS: Oh, this chair is just right.

PETRA: Methinks that be my sister’s chair.

GOLDILOCKS: Oh, but it’s mine now. (PETRA and MAGDA literally throw her out of the chair and sit.)

ROSAMOND: (Comes flitting over into the room.) Oh, isn’t it a beautiful day. A most perfect day. The air is sweet, the birds are chirping,
and all the forest animals have helped me with all my chores. A perfect day.

PRINCE: Good morning, Rosamond.

ROSAMOND: Good morning, Charming.

GABLE: (ENTERS, carrying class register.) Good morning, glories.

STUDENTS: Good morning, Headmistress.

GABLE: Everyone, please take your seats. (They do.) Welcome to a brand-new school year. (FAIRY-TALE STUDENTS cheer.) I'm sure that this year will be just like last year. And the year before. And the year before.

RAPUNZEL: (Raises her hand.) Ooh. Ooooh-oooh-oooh.

GABLE: Yes, Rapunzel?

RAPUNZEL: And the year before?

GABLE: Of course.


GABLE: Yes, Rapunzel?

RAPUNZEL: Yay!

GABLE: Indeed. Yay. And might I venture to say, yippee. It’s a brand-new year full of old stories to tell. A journey into the known. Such a pleasure to know things will always end the way we expect. So let’s review what we learned last year, shall we? Who can say what the most dangerous thing in the world might be?


GABLE: Yes, Rapunzel?

RAPUNZEL: Evil queens?

GABLE: Good.

LITTLE RED: Wolves, comma, big bad?

GOLDILOCKS: Bears?

GABLE: Forest creatures, always scary.

HANSEL: Ovens?

GRETEL: Low-fat cookies?

SHOEMAKER’S ELF: Open-toed shoes?

SNOW WHITE: Poison apples?

ROSAMOND: Spinning wheels?

PETRA/MAGDA: Stepsisters.

CINDERELLA: Oh, I am so, so sorry.

MAGDA: Not interested in apologies.

CINDERELLA: I’ll try harder to make you happy.

PETRA: Or excuses.
CINDERELLA: Oh, pooh.
PETRA/MAGDA: See what we mean?
PRINCE: (To the STEPSISTERS.) You don’t have to be so cruel.
CINDERELLA: Thank you, Charming. (PRINCE winks at her.)
GABLE: Now, Charming, you know everyone has his or her own nature. That’s what makes our world so wonderful.
MAGDA: So insert a cork firmly in thy pudding hole, Charming.
PRINCE: (To CINDERELLA.) Don’t worry. Nobody really likes them anyway.
PETRA/MAGDA: We don’t care.
CINDERELLA: And everyone knows what happens to them.
PETRA/MAGDA: We don’t care. (But they do. And they sit and pout.)
GABLE: (Laughs.) Ha-ha, ha, I’m so glad everyone remembers so much from last year. And the year before.
GABLE: Yes, Rapunzel?
RAPUNZEL: And the year before?
GABLE: Yes. But let’s not forget the bigger danger. Doubt. Disbelief. Without belief, our entire world would crumble. Belief is the very fabric of our existence. Okay, before we start officially, I think we should take roll. (Reads from the class register.) Let’s start with our princesses.
RAPUNZEL: Ooooh-oooh-oooh.
GABLE: Yes, Rapunzel?
RAPUNZEL: Yay.
GABLE: Yay, indeed. Okay, Rapunzel?
RAPUNZEL: Here.
GABLE: Rosamond?
ROSAMOND: Here.
GABLE: Snow White?
SNOW WHITE: Here.
GABLE: Very good. Moving on to heroes. Prince Charming?
PRINCE: Here. I like your hair that way.
GABLE: Thank you. Hansel?
HANSEL: Guten tag.
GABLE: Shoemaker’s elf?
SHOEMAKER’S ELF: Here.
GABLE: Let’s see about our ingenues. Gretel?
GRETEL: Here.
GABLE: Jill?
JILL: Here.
GABLE: Where’s your brother?
JILL: He had to see a man about a pail.
GOLDILOCKS: Here. No, that’s too common. Present. No, that’s too impersonal. Hello. Yes, that’s just right.
GABLE: Little Red?
LITTLE RED: (Loud.) My, what a big “here” I’m saying.
GABLE: Cinderella?
CINDERELLA: Here.
GABLE: Goldilocks?
GOLDILOCKS: Here. No, that’s too common. Present. No, that’s too impersonal. Hello. Yes, that’s just right.
GABLE: Little Red?
LITTLE RED: (Loud.) My, what a big “here” I’m saying.
GABLE: Cinderella?
CINDERELLA: Here.
MAGDA: (Coughs into her fist.) Snob.
PETRA: (Coughs, too.) Snob.
MAGDA: Prince’s pet.
GABLE: Enough, ladies. Moving on to villains. Rumpelstiltskin?
RUMPELSTILTSKIN: How’d you know my name? Who told you?
GABLE: Wicked Witch of the North by Northwest?
WICKED WITCH: A pox on you. And your little dog, too.
GABLE: Wicked stepsisters?
MAGDA: Excuse me. It’s Magda.
PETRA: And Petrazula. Thank you.
MAGDA: Prince’s pet.
PETRA: And Petrazula. Thank you.
GABLE: Thank you. Okay. Incidental characters. Woodsman? (No answer.) Woodsman? Woodsman?
RAPUNZEL: Ooooh-oooh-oooh.
GABLE: Yes, Rapunzel?
RAPUNZEL: He’s right there. (Points. Every eye in the room turns to WOODSMAN. He stands reluctantly.)
GABLE: Woodsman. Why didn’t you answer?
WOODSMAN: I’m sorry, ma’am. I was just thinking.
GABLE: Very commendable, but we try to leave that to our heroes.
WOODSMAN: Why?
GABLE: Why what?
WOODSMAN: Why am I not allowed to think? And why don’t I have a name?
GABLE: You do. Woodsman.
WOODSMAN: No, that’s what I do. It’s not a name.
GABLE: We all know you as Woodsman. We have for years. Last year. The year before.
GABLE: Yes, Rapunzel?
RAPUNZEL: And the year before?
GABLE: You see?
WOODSMAN: But why am I just Woodsman? Everyone else has a name. Goldilocks.
WOODSMAN: Rapunzel. Cinderella. Even the Sleeping Beauty is called Rosamond.
ROSAMOND: Oh, that’s awfully kind of you about the beauty part. But I’m not sure about the sleeping. I don’t sleep that much.
WOODSMAN: (Holds out his pencil.) Is my pencil sharp?
ROSAMOND: Well let’s — (Touches the point with her finger. Boom! She instantly falls asleep, dropping to the floor like a sack of potatoes.)
WOODSMAN: She pricks her finger on anything, and she’s narcoleptic. But even she has a name.
GABLE: Well, we all have a place here. That’s what makes our world so wonderful. Everybody knows his or her place within the great story.
WOODSMAN: What if I want to change it? (ALL gasp in shock. This is the worst form of blasphemy.)
GABLE: (Dark and sinister.) What did you say?
WOODSMAN: I just meant…
GABLE: Change the story? You can’t do that.
WOODSMAN: Why not?
WOODSMAN: Because why?
GABLE: Listen to me, Woodsman—
WOODSMAN: That’s not a name.
GABLE: —everyone has a place in the story. Why, you have several. Don’t you help out Little Red?
LITTLE RED: And what a big help he is. Saves me from the big, bad wolf.
GABLE: And you take Snow White into the forest? And Hansel and Gretel?
ROSAMOND: (Wakes up.) He also comes by and chops firewood each day so my aunts and I don’t freeze in our little cottage.
GABLE: How many stories do you need, boy?
WOODSMAN: But I’m just a small help. I don’t really do anything, I want to be... (Big dramatic pause.) ...a hero. (Laughs from the STUDENTS.)

GABLE: A hero.

WOODSMAN: Yes. I want to be the hero of my own story. (More laughs.)

GABLE: Listen to me, Woodsman—

WOODSMAN: I’m more than that.

GABLE: No. You don’t have your own story.

WOODSMAN: Why not? Why do I have to do what’s written? (ALL gasp.)

PETRA: Hey. Wait a second. Maybe we don’t have to be hated?

GABLE: Yes, you do.

MAGDA: Not that we mind being hated.

MAGDA: Hate away. We think you’re all stupid anyway.

PETRA: Losers.

WOODSMAN: But you don’t have to be hated. You could have a choice. (To LITTLE RED.) You don’t have to be so gullible.

LITTLE RED: I’m not gullible.

RUMPSTILTSKIN: You thought a wolf was your granny.

LITTLE RED: He was wearing glasses.

RUMPSTILTSKIN: You’re the most gullible person alive.

LITTLE RED: I am? Really? Wait, were you teasing?

RUMPSTILTSKIN: Yes.

LITTLE RED: Well, I don’t know. What a big tease you are!

WOODSMAN: (To ROSAMOND.) You don’t have to be so helpless and needy.

ROSAMOND: Oh, I’m not helpless. (To HANSEL.) Tell him I’m not helpless—you’re a boy, he’ll listen to you.

WOODSMAN: (To HANSEL and GRETEL.) You don’t have to have navigation problems. You could control your sweet tooth.

MAGDA: We don’t have to be wicked stepsisters?

GABLE: But you are wicked.

PETRA: But we don’t have to be stepsisters.

CINDERELLA: The house would be ever so lonely without you.

PETRA/MAGDA: Shut up.

CINDERELLA: Ever so sorry.

MAGDA: We could be evil queens.
PETRA: Like Maleficent.

GABLE: No, no, no.

WOODSMAN: Why not?

MAGDA: I could be evil.

PETRA: I could be a queen.

WOODSMAN: We could all be what we want to be— (The CLASS explodes into ad-libs about this, i.e., "I always wanted to be a ballerina." Or, "I wouldn't just have to make shoes. I could make accessories, purses, jewelry." Maybe they can change things. Maybe not. It builds into a shouting match.)

GABLE: That’s it! (To WOODSMAN, PETRA and MAGDA.) You’ve disrupted my class. You three. Stay after school! (ALL gasp. MAGDA and PETRA move away from WOODSMAN. LIGHTS FADE to a SINGLE SPOTLIGHT on WOODSMAN. As OTHER STUDENTS EXIT, GABLE lays down the law.) You are what you are. That’s all you’ll ever be. Get used to it. (EXITS. SPOTLIGHT OUT.)

End of Scene One

ACT ONE
Scene Two

LIGHTS UP: GABLE’S office, EXTREME DOWN RIGHT. Nearby, MIRROR is asleep. PETRA and MAGDA are writing on a rolling chalkboard “I CANNOT CHANGE THE STORY” over and over.

MAGDA: I can’t believe we have to do this. It’s all your fault.

PETRA: My fault? You’re the one who said you wanted to be an evil queen.

MAGDA: You’re the one who wouldn’t shut up about it.

PETRA: Why are you being mean to me?

MAGDA: It’s what I do.

PETRA: Oh, yeah, huh.

WOODSMAN: (ENTERS, lays hatchet on the desk.) Ladies. It’s okay, neither of you is to blame.

MAGDA: He’s right.

PETRA: I know.

PETRA/MAGDA: It’s YOUR fault.

WOODSMAN: Me?

PETRA: Yes. Whatever your name is.

WOODSMAN: That’s my point. I don’t have one, do I?

MAGDA: And you don’t need one. Everybody just says “loser,” and we know they mean you.

For preview only
WOODSMAN: I am not a loser.

PETRA: You're right. You're nobody. (Shoves a finger into his chest and he backpedals into the mirror, nearly knocking it over.)

WOODSMAN: Whoa, easy. You almost made me break the mirror.

PETRA: Yeah, you’d have to stay yourself for another seven years. (She and MAGDA laugh.)

WOODSMAN: Look, it’s all smudgy. (Picks up a rag and starts to buff the mirror.)

MIRROR: (OPTIONAL MAGICAL SOUND EFFECT. LIGHTS Flicker and MIRROR starts to laugh like a child being tickled. More and more until the voice booms.) Who dares awaken me?

WOODSMAN: Oh, my gosh. It’s a magic mirror.

PETRA: Oh, magic mirror on the wall...

MIRROR: I’m not on the wall, kid.

MAGDA: Oh, magic mirror on the wheels, with the little leg things—

MIRROR: Just mirror will do, kid.

MAGDA: Mirror, mirror. Who’s the fairest of them all?

MIRROR: Snow White. It’s always Snow White. Don’t you do your homework?

MAGDA: This is why we have to get out of here.

MIRROR: (To WOODSMAN.) What did I say?

WOODSMAN: I think she was hoping you could say it was her.

MIRROR: I can’t lie.

MAGDA: (Looks in the mirror.) I think I look pretty good.

MIRROR: I take off ten pounds. Like a reverse camera.

PETRA: What’s a camera?

MIRROR: A camera. The picture-taking device. (No response.) Digital photography? (No response.) PhotoShop? The stuff they use to alter reality.

WOODSMAN: What’s reality?

MIRROR: You don’t know about reality? (Then it hits him.) Oh, my goodness, you don’t know about reality. Forget I mentioned it. Bye.

PETRA: Wait, tell us about Re-al-ity.

MIRROR: Nothing to tell. I gotta go.

PETRA: You can’t tell a lie. So I demand you tell us about Re-al-ity.

MIRROR: Please don’t. I could get into so much trouble—

PETRA: You must do as I command.
MIRROR: (Hating that he has to tell the truth.) It’s a place. Another dimension. A land where the stories aren’t written. (WOODSMAN and the STEPSISTERS “oooh” in respect.) Where everyone has free will and can do what they want.

MAGDA: It sounds perfect.

PETRA: A magical place.

WOODSMAN: Can you change who you are?

MIRROR: Of course. In reality, you decide who you want to be.

MAGDA: You mean we could be queens?

MIRROR: Sure. Anything’s possible.

WOODSMAN: Could you take me there?

MIRROR: Yeah, kid, geez—what, you don’t know how this works? You rub me, you get a wish.

WOODSMAN: I thought that was for lamps and genies.

MIRROR: Mirrors... and some crystal balls... and anything silver. Man, that stuff tarnishes like crazy. It’s a widely accepted thing, rubbing and wishing. There’s a whole set of rules. Very complicated.

WOODSMAN: All right, I want you to— (Wham! MAGDA whacks WOODSMAN on the back of the head with a frying pan stashed behind the desk. SOUND EFFECT: FRYING PAN BONK. He goes down like a bag of hammers.)

PETRA: Where’d you get that?

MAGDA: It’s always there when you need to whack somebody on the head.

PETRA: Oh, yeah.

MAGDA: Mirror, I want you to send us to Reality.

MIRROR: I don’t think that’s a good idea.

MAGDA: I demand it!

MIRROR: Okay, okay. You don’t have to be so mean about it.

PETRA: Yes, we do.

MAGDA: It’s who we are. But we don’t care. Take us to Reality.

MIRROR: This is a very bad idea— (STEPSISTERS step behind MIRROR. LIGHTS FLASH. SOUND EFFECT: PORTAL OPENS. STEPSISTERS scream. LIGHTS OUT.)

End of Scene Two
PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES ONSTAGE

ACT ONE

Scene One: Fairy-tale classroom set consisting of old fashioned chairs or benches.
Scene Two: Gable’s office set consisting of desk, chair, rolling chalkboard, large mirror frame, Rag, frying pan.
Scene Three: High school hallway set consisting of lockers, sign that reads “Senior Dance Tonight.” Janitor’s closet door frame, trash can.
Scene Four: Gable’s office set. Hatchet.
Scene Six: Fairy-tale classroom set.
Scene Seven: High school hallway set.

ACT TWO

Scene One: High school hallway set.
Scene Two: Principal’s desk, two chairs.
Scene Three: Fairy-tale classroom set.
Scene Four: Student desks, chairs.
Scene Five: High school hallway set.
Scene Six: Fairy-tale classroom set.
Scene Seven: Janitor’s closet door frame.
Scene Eight: Banners, streamers, balloons, disco ball.
Scene Nine: One platform that fills the entire stage.

PROPERTIES BROUGHT ON

ACT ONE

Scene One:
Triangle (GABLE)
Hatchet, pencil (WOODSMAN)
Old-fashioned knapsacks, books (FAIRY-TALE STUDENTS)
Hand mirror (CINDERELLA)
Class register (GABLE)
Scene Two:
Chalk (MAGDA, PETRA)
Hatchet (WOODSMAN)
Scene Three:
Yu-Gi-Oh! cards, tissues (STAN, MELVIN)
Books, notebooks, backpacks (REALITY CAST)
Stack of index cards (GLORIA)

Scene Five:
Tissues (STAN, MELVIN)
Ballot forms (SADIE, DANICA)
Hatchet (WOODSMAN)

Scene Six:
Triangle (GABLE)
Old-fashioned knapsacks, books (FAIRY-TALE STUDENTS)
Pocket mirror (WICKED WITCH)
Pencil (RUMPELSTILTSKIN)

Scene Seven:
Ballot forms (DANICA)

ACT TWO

Scene One:
Hatchet (BULL)

Scene Two:
Clipboard with paper, pen (PRINCIPAL)

Scene Three:
Triangle (GABLE)
Crutches, head bandage (LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD)

Scene Five:
Tissues, long paper banner that reads “Dungeons & Dragons” (MELVIN, STAN, OPAL)

Scene Six:
Wicked Witch’s broom (SHOEMAKER’S ELF)
Pail (JILL)
Finger bandages, coffee cup (ROSAMOND)
Apple (SNOW WHITE)

Scene Eight:
Hairpin (MAGDA)
Sword, vial of antidote (ROSAMOND)

Scene Nine:
Stack of index cards (GLORIA)
Mop and bucket (MAGDA)

SOUND EFFECTS
Magical sound for mirror’s awakening, frying pan bonk, magical sound of portal opening, chase music, dance music, clock chiming midnight.
You might have theme music play behind ROSAMOND’S lines to enhance her character.

COSTUMES
The REALITY CAST should be clad in typical modern-day dress appropriate to each character’s role. Dress the FAIRY-TALE CAST according to the traditional tales. In ACT TWO, Scene Three, LITTLE RED needs to be wearing bandages and walking with crutches. Later in Scene Six, ROSAMOND should have bandages around her fingers. Also in Scene Six, RAPUNZEL will need a hat to cover a new short haircut.

The mirror frame can be a decorated flat or ornamental full-size mirror with a hole or notch cut near the top for the actor’s face. Paint the actor’s face to match the gilding of the mirror. In the final scene, the MIRROR’S clothing can match the makeup when the character emerges from the mirror frame.
We hope you’ve enjoyed this script sample.

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