

Prince Ugly

A musical play by Matt Buchanan

Characters (in order of appearance)

Storyteller
Boot Boy
Chambermaid
Groom
Maurice, the Royal Cook
Court Jester
Schoolmistress
Royal Secretary
Moatminder
King Bruce
Queen Daisy
Royal Butler
Royal Midwife
Prime Minister
Postman
Megan, the Maid-of-all-Work
Lady Betty of Purple
Lord Charles of Pumpernickel
Lady Rebecca of Steppington
Prince William Xavier Hopkirk the Third
Various Children
A Father
A Mother

Musical Numbers

01: Overture (Orchestra)
02: ONCE UPON A TIME (Storyteller and Company)
03: THE KING AND THE QUEEN OF THE KINGDOM (Company)
04: DAD (King Bruce)
05: WE'VE GOT A NEW PRINCE (Company)
06: Royal Fanfare
07: ON TOP (Lady Rebecca)
08: Scary Music
09: THINGS IN THE KINGDOM (Prince William)
10: EVERY CHILD (Megan and Prince William)
11: IT WILL NOT DO (Maurice)
12: Royal Fanfare
13: STICK WITH ME (Prince William and Children)
14: MAKING FRIENDS (Megan and Prince William)
15: MAKING FRIENDS/EVERY CHILD—REPRISE (Megan and Prince William)
16: WE'VE GOT A NEW PRINCE—REPRISE (Company)
17: Bows (Orchestra)

#01: OVERTURE (ORCHESTRA)

Lights up on a fairy-tale Throne Room. Two large thrones—his SR, hers SL. The Storyteller, who is a very old woman, sits in a rocker in the DL corner of the stage, where she will remain for the entire play. She is very well-dressed in a fairy-tale sort of way. No one else is onstage.

#02: ONCE UPON A TIME (STORYTELLER AND COMPANY)**STORYTELLER**

IT HAPPENED ONCE UPON A TIME,
 LIKE EVERY OTHER STORY.
 IT'S REALLY JUST AN EASY WAY TO START.
 BUT EVERY ONCE UPON A TIME
 IS SOMEONE'S FAVORITE STORY
 AND WE'LL ALWAYS KEEP OUR STORIES IN OUR HEART!

Enter the Palace Staff. All of them are singularly sleek and happy-looking, even for fairy-tale servants. They include the Boot Boy, the Chambermaid, the Groom, Maurice the Cook, the Jester, the Schoolmistress, the Royal Secretary, and as many others as can be managed.

COMPANY

IT HAPPENED ONCE UPON A TIME,
 LIKE EVERY OTHER STORY.
 IT'S REALLY JUST AN EASY WAY TO START.
 WE HOPE OUR ONCE UPON A TIME
 BECOMES YOUR FAVORITE STORY
 AND YOU'LL ALWAYS KEEP OUR STORY IN YOUR HEART!

STORYTELLER

MAY YOU ALWAYS KEEP OUR STORY IN YOUR HEART!

The Company settles themselves on the stage in a sort of tableau of castle life. During the following song they join the dance in turn as they sing.

STORYTELLER

Once upon a time. . . Fairy tales always begin “Once upon a time.” It’s a rule. Once upon a time there was a peaceful little Kingdom. The name of the Kingdom was “The

Kingdom.” Don't look at me like that. I didn't name it. The Kingdom was ruled with great enthusiasm and occasional competence by King Bruce and Queen Daisy. Everyone in the Kingdom loved Bruce and Daisy, and especially everyone who worked in the palace. Bruce and Daisy were—how shall I put this—very *casual* employers. Old Bruce made it a rule that nobody should ever have to work in the afternoon—except Maurice, the Royal Cook, of course, who had to get dinner. But HE didn't even know HOW to play, so he didn't mind a bit.

#03: THE KING AND THE QUEEN OF THE KINGDOM (COMPANY)

BOOT BOY

I CLEAN THE BOOTS.

CHAMBERMAID

I MAKE THE BEDS.

GROOM

I FEED THE HORSES.

MAURICE

I COOK ZE MEALS.

JESTER

I TELL THE JOKES.

SCHOOLMISTRESS

I RUN THE SCHOOL.

SECRETARY

I PAY THE BILLS.

MOAT MINDER

I CLEAN THE MOAT.

ALL

AND THIS, OF COURSE, IS
THE KING AND THE QUEEN OF OUR KINGDOM!

*King Bruce and Queen Daisy enter, to
many pats on the back and warm smiles.
They are dressed regally, but casually.*

WE LIVE IN A GRAND PALACE
DESIGNED BY A TUDOR.
WE DO OUR WORK EACH MORNING
AND THEN WE CAN PLAY.

MAURICE

I COOK IN A GRAND KITCHEN
WHERE I MAKE ZE FOOD FOR
ZE KING AND ZE QUEEN OF OUR KINGDOM!

ALL

OUR KINGDOM'S THE BEST LITTLE KINGDOM, BY FAR,
FOR NOBODY WORKS TOO HARD.
AND EVERYONE'S FAVORITE CITIZENS ARE
THE KING AND THE QUEEN OF THE KINGDOM.

BUTLER

I MANAGE THE WHOLE CASTLE.

MIDWIFE

AND I BIRTH THE BABIES.

PRIME MINISTER

I'M HEAD OF THE KING'S CABINET.

POSTMAN

I BRING THE MAIL.

ALL

WE ALL AGREE, DEFINITELY,
NO "IFS" OR "MAYBES,"
THAT OURS IS THE GREATEST OF KINGDOMS!

OUR KINGDOM'S THE BEST LITTLE KINGDOM, BY FAR,
FOR NOBODY WORKS TOO HARD.
AND EVERYONE'S FAVORITE CITIZENS ARE
THE KING AND THE QUEEN OF THE KINGDOM.

DANCE.

ALL

OUR KINGDOM'S THE BEST LITTLE KINGDOM, BY FAR,
FOR NOBODY WORKS TOO HARD.
AND EVERYONE'S FAVORITE CITIZENS ARE
THE KING AND THE QUEEN OF THE KINGDOM.

Exeunt all but Storyteller.

STORYTELLER

Yes, life in the palace was usually pretty free and easy. But there was a time—well, of course it was a good thing, but it did make life for those in the palace a little more frantic for a while. I'm talking, of course, about the birth of the new baby. The King had always wanted to be a father, and he was a little—well, excited. There he comes now.

King Bruce scurries on. He's still recognizably the King, because of his crown, but now he looks anything but royal. He is in pajamas and a robe, and wears one bedroom slipper.

KING BRUCE

A baby! We're really going to have a baby! *(Addressing the audience.)* You know what that means? It means—

#04: DAD (KING BRUCE)

KING BRUCE

I'M GONNA BE A DAD!
 SUCH A WONDERFUL DAD!
 I'LL BE THE GREATEST DAD
 ANY BOY EVER HAD!
 I'M GONNA BE A DAD!
 I'M GONNA BE A FATHER!
 I'M NOT NERVOUS A TAD—
 I'M REMARKABLY GLAD
 I'M GONNA BE A DAD!

I'M GONNA BE A POP!
 SUCH A MARVELOUS POP!
 I'LL BE THE COOLEST POP!
 I'LL BE REALLY THE TOP!
 I'M GONNA BE A POP!
 I'M GONNA BE A DADDY!
 TELL YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD COP
 THAT THE WAITING CAN STOP—
 I'M GONNA BE A POP!

I'LL TEACH HIM TO PLAY WITH A BAT AND A BALL
 I'LL WATCH AS HE PLAYS IN THE SNOW!
 HOLD ONTO HIS BIKE, 'TIL I'M SURE HE WON'T FALL—
 I'M GONNA BE THE GREATEST—OH,

I'M GONNA HAVE A SON!
 SUCH A WONDERFUL SON!
 GONNA TELL EVERYONE
 ALL ABOUT MY NEW SON!
 I'M GONNA HAVE A SON—
 UNLESS MY SON'S A DAUGHTER *(Gulp!)*
 I'M NOT NERVOUS A TAD!
 I'M REMARKABLY GLAD
 I'M GONNA BE A DAD!

I'LL TAKE HER TO SCHOOL, AND I'LL BUY HER A HORSE.
THERE'S SO MANY THINGS I DON'T KNOW!
MY DAUGHTER WILL BE VERY PRETTY, OF COURSE
I WONDER IF SHE'LL HAVE A BEAU?

I'M GONNA BE A DAD!
SUCH A TERRIFIED DAD!
I'LL BE THE PROUDEST DAD
ANYONE EVER HAD!
I'M GONNA BE A DAD!
I'M GONNA BE A FATHER!
THOUGH I'M NERVOUS A TAD—
I'M REMARKABLY GLAD
I'M GONNA BE A DAD!

LIFE CAN NEVER BE SAD
FOR A MOM AND A DAD!
I'M GONNA BE A DAD!

KING BRUCE

Oh dear! I'm not ready! I don't know how to do it! I—oh, bother!

He starts to exit, but he's not really looking where he's going, and he trips over a rug. He gets up, glares resentfully at the offending rug, and scurries off.

QUEEN DAISY

(Off.) Bruce! Bruce!

STORYTELLER

That's Daisy. She's really sweet, usually—honest.

QUEEN DAISY

(Off.) Bruce! Pickles and ice cream! And shrimp cocktail with peanut butter! Now!

KING BRUCE

(Off.) Coming, darling! Right away, sweetness!

King Bruce scurries across in the opposite direction. His crown has slipped over his eyes, and he misses the exit the first time and has to disentangle himself from the curtain. He exits successfully.

STORYTELLER

Can you tell this is his first baby? Hers too, naturally. The whole Palace was topsy-turvy. Everyone was getting ready. A huge celebration—the biggest The Kingdom had

ever seen—was planned for when the baby arrived. The Prime Minister and the Royal Secretary had their hands full with all the planning, let me tell you.

The Royal Secretary and the Prime Minister enter, deep in conversation. The Secretary carries an enormous list that overflows his grasp and trails behind.

ROYAL SECRETARY

(Reading.) . . . Flowers, balloons, tapestries. . .do we HAVE tapestries?

PRIME MINISTER

In the basement.

ROYAL SECRETARY

Placemats, invitations. . .

The Royal Secretary stumbles over the same rug the King tripped over. He does not fall, but he stops.

(Hollering.) Megan! MEGAN!

MEGAN

(Off Left.) Coming! Don't have a cow!

Megan enters. She looks like a typical fairy-tale serving wench. She's in her early thirties, but looks older because of a life of hard work. She walks with an obvious limp but is otherwise healthy enough. She carries a pail and mop, and has a whiskbroom in her apron.

ROYAL SECRETARY

Megan, get rid of this rug! And clean this place up. It looks like a sty.

STORYTELLER

Stop!

Everyone but the Storyteller freezes. The Storyteller enjoys this power enormously.

Do you see any dirt? I never liked that one. By the way, keep your eye on Megan. She's the Maid-of-all Work. She doesn't look like much, but she's important. Trust me. Go!

The action resumes as if nothing has happened.

MEGAN

Yes, Your Secretaryness. Right away.

The Secretary and the Minister exit.

Mercy! You'd think it was the first time anybody ever had a baby!

Megan sweeps up imaginary dust with her whiskbroom, and then sweeps it under the rug. Then she picks up the rug and exits with it.

STORYTELLER

I hope that baby comes soon. Everyone's losing their heads.

QUEEN DAISY

(Almost a scream, off.) It's time! Bruce! It's time.

King Bruce enters in an even worse panic than before. He is followed by the Royal Secretary, who still trails the long list.

KING BRUCE

Hold on, my angel! Coming, Sugar Dumpling!

ROYAL SECRETARY

Your Majesty, about those invitations. . .

KING BRUCE

What's that? Don't bother me with that now! I'm about to have a baby!.

QUEEN DAISY

(Off.) Bruce!

KING BRUCE

Well, Daisy is, that is. I'm going to be a Dad!

ROYAL SECRETARY

But, Your Majesty—the invitations!

QUEEN DAISY

(Off.) BRUCE!

KING BRUCE

Oh, dear!

King Bruce rushes off. The Secretary gives one frustrated look to the audience and follows. A moment later King Bruce enters, pacing furiously. He has lost his crown, and one tail of his bathrobe is tucked into his pajama trousers. He sits on his throne, but can't sit still. He paces some more. He casts pointed glances offstage. He paces some more. Finally, after an agonizing wait, we hear the wail of a newborn. Almost instantly the Royal Midwife, in her nurse whites, charges on.

MIDWIFE

It's a girl! It's a girl!

KING BRUCE

A girl! A daughter! I have a daughter!

The King leaps up and dances a furious jig, pulling the Midwife into a spin with him.

STORYTELLER

Stop!

Everyone but the Storyteller freezes.

You know, I think the infant-princess-under-a-curse motif had been done to death in fairy tales, don't you? I mean, come on. . .Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel. . .I've had it with helpless females. BACK UP!

King Bruce and the Midwife reverse their dance.

KING BRUCE

(Sitting down.) Retaud a vah I! Retaud a! Lrig a!

MIDWIFE

Lrig a stih! Lrig a stih!

The Midwife rushes off backwards.

STORYTELLER

STOP! FORWARD!

The Midwife rushes on again.

MIDWIFE

It's a boy! It's a boy!

KING BRUCE

A boy! A son! I have a son!!

The King leaps up and dances a furious jig, pulling the Midwife into a spin with him. He is about to dip her when he realizes what he's doing.

Oh. Excuse me. Oh, what the heck! I have a son!

The King does dip her. Then he plants a big kiss on her cheek and lets her go. She blushes and exits.

QUEEN DAISY

(Off.) Bruce! Come meet your son!

The King rushes off. The Ensemble enters and begins decorating the Throne Room for a gala party.

STORYTELLER

Joy reigned throughout The Kingdom. They named the baby Prince William Xavier Hopkirk the Third--but he was the first one ever to have that name. The King proclaimed a national holiday, and everybody had a whole week off. Preparations were completed for the big celebration. Important guests from all over The Kingdom would soon arrive with gifts for the new Prince.

#05: WE'VE GOT A NEW PRINCE (COMPANY)**BOYS**

SING HEARTY! LET'S PARTY!
LET'S DANCE AND SING ALOUD!

GIRLS

WE'VE GOT A NEW BABY!
DAISY, YOU'VE DONE YOURSELF PROUD!

MAIDS, BUTLER, AND FOOTMEN

START CLEANING! ALL MUST BE GLEAMING!

ALL

THEY'LL COME FROM MILES AROUND
TO SEE OUR NEW BABY!
LET JOY AND LAUGHTER ABOUND!

WE'VE GOT A NEW PRINCE!
 WE'VE GOT A NEW HEIR!
 WE'VE GOT A NEW DARLING BOY!
 SOMEDAY HE'LL BE KING,
 SO EVERYONE SING,
 LAUGH AND JUMP FOR JOY!

BELLS RINGING! EVERYONE SINGING
 TO GREET THE ROYAL TOT!
 WE'VE GOT THE BEST BABY!
 NO ONE CAN TELL US HE'S NOT!

WE'VE GOT A NEW PRINCE!
 WE'VE GOT A NEW HEIR,
 TO FURTHER THE ROYAL LINE!
 SOME DAY HE'LL BE KING,
 SO EVERYONE SING!
 OUR LITTLE BABY'S FINE!

WE'VE GOT A NEW PRINCE!
 WE'VE GOT A NEW HEIR!
 WE'VE GOT A NEW DARLING BOY!
 SOMEDAY HE'LL BE KING,
 SO EVERYONE SING!
 SING FOR OUR BRAND NEW BOY!
 LAUGH AND JUMP FOR JOY!

#06: ROYAL FANFARE (ORCHESTRA)

The King and Queen enter, she with the baby in her arms. The King, while still a little sloppy, is dressed in proper Kingly fashion, and the Queen is positively radiant. The baby is placed in a cradle between the thrones. The Prime Minister and the Royal Secretary enter and stand at the King's left, and the Butler stands SR to announce the guests.

The first guest to arrive was Lady Betty of Purple—Her Majesty's oldest friend.

BUTLER

(In his most pompous voice.) Lady Betty of Purple!

Lady Betty enters R and approaches the Royal Family. She is impeccably dressed,

which makes the huge tricycle she is carrying all the more incongruous.

LADY BETTY

Daisy!

She tries to embrace the Queen, and they both become hopelessly entangled in the tricycle. The Prime Minister rushes forward to rescue the gift, putting it to one side, and the pair embrace properly. Lady Betty absently kisses the King.

Bruce.

KING BRUCE

(Not especially enthusiastic.) Betty.

LADY BETTY

Now, where is the little Prince? Oh, how precious! Goo! Goo! *(etc.)*

QUEEN DAISY

Come away, Betty, dear, before you wake him.

KING BRUCE

(Under his breath.) And give him the fright of his life!

The Queen punches the King on the arm, but she doesn't really mean it.

LADY BETTY

Now, lead me to the buffet!

The Prime Minister escorts her off L, then returns to her place at the King's side.

STORYTELLER

The next guest to arrive. . .well, he'll tell you.

BUTLER

Lord Charles of Pumpernickel!

Lord Charles strides on R, slapping the astonished Butler on the back as he passes him. He is a big, boisterous man in hunting tweeds. He carries a gift-wrapped bag of golf clubs.

LORD CHARLES

(Much louder than necessary.) Bruce, you old dog! Well done!

He rushes the King, dropping the golf clubs unceremoniously in front of the cradle. The King leaps to his feet, and the pair engage in an incredibly elaborate secret handshake, involving considerable physical movement as well as sound effects.

KING BRUCE

Good to see you, Chuck.

LORD CHARLES

How's he treating you, Daisy?

QUEEN DAISY

(Dryly.) Hello, Charles. Interesting gift for an infant.

LORD CHARLES

Oh, he'll use 'em one day. I see this charming person is trying to hurry me along. See you at the reception, Chuck.

Indeed, the Prime Minister is trying to hurry him along, and she escorts him off L. As the Butler is speaking the Royal Secretary moves the golf clubs aside.

BUTLER

The Honorable Francis. . .

STORYTELLER

Stop!

Everyone but the Storyteller freezes.

You don't need to see all this, do you? Anyway, it's really not so important who came. What's important is who DIDN'T come. At least at first. Lady Rebecca of Steppington. The sorceress. The Queen's SECOND oldest friend. Lights!

The lights go down on the Throne Room and come up on a corner of the stage. (Lights stay up on the Storyteller.) Lady Rebecca enters, dragging a Postman by the ear. She is dressed like a traditional fairy-tale sorceress, but she is not unattractive.

LADY REBECCA

Look harder! I know it's there!

POSTMAN

I'm telling you, lady, there's nothing for you today!

LADY REBECCA

There has to be. I know Daisy sent me an invitation. (*Darkly.*) She wouldn't dare not to.

POSTMAN

I'm telling you. . .

LADY REBECCA

Shut your trap or I'll turn you into a turnip!

STORYTELLER

She would, too.

LADY REBECCA

Give me that bag!

She seizes the Postman's mailbag and empties it on the floor. She drops to her knees and begins going through the letters. She picks them up one at a time, checks the address, and throws them over her shoulder. The Postman scurries around gathering them up as they fall.

No. . .Not this one. . .nope. . .(*etc.*)

STORYTELLER

Don't blame the Queen. They met at school.

Lady Rebecca comes to the last letter. It's not for her either. She crumples it in her hand as smoke comes out of her ears. The hapless Postman tries unsuccessfully to get the letter away from her through the following.

LADY REBECCA

It's not here. IT'S NOT HERE! I can't believe it! How dare they leave me out! I'll tear them apart! (*To Postman.*) Are you still here?

POSTMAN

Er. . .the letter. . .

LADY REBECCA

Here! Now GET OUT! Before I feed you to my wolverine!

*The Postman exits hastily. Lady
Rebecca builds a raging head of steam.*

They won't get away with this! Nobody snubs Lady Rebecca of Steppington!
NOBODY! I MAKE the rules!

(ORCHESTRA)