

MADAME PRIMROSE'S
SCHOOL FOR
~~PRINCESSES~~
Pirates

by
Aubrey Bjork



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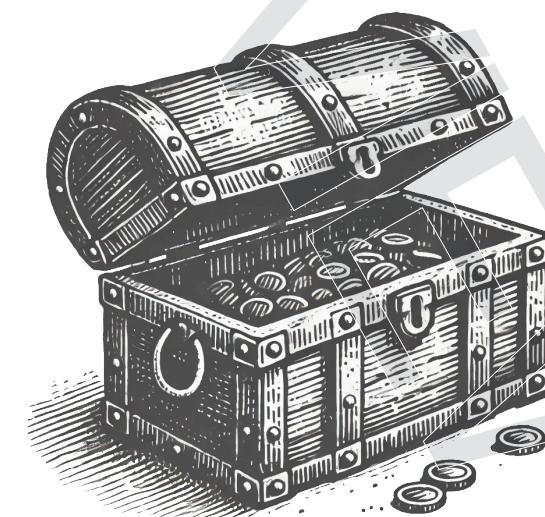
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For Josh Allen, who taught me to lead even when I would rather have followed.



Summary

Bavian and Honeyfuggle Skint, apprentice and signmaker, work on Madame Primrose's new school in preparation for Princess Acrasia. Due to a misunderstanding, the princess is joined in her study by a pirate crew on shore leave.

Meanwhile, Limerence pursues Honeyfuggle and her grievance for Madame Primrose for stealing him away (supposedly.) The pirates learn manners (mostly) and Princess Acrasia learns to take advantage of opportunities.

All comes to a head in the schoolroom when pirates, princesses, and wanted posters combine.

(See Scenes for a detailed plot breakdown.)

Cast Size

16 Roles, 4 m, 3 w, 9 m/w

Duration

About 45 min

Target Audience

Family, General

Cast of Characters

16 Roles, 7 m, 5 w, 4 m/w

The School for Pirates/Princesses:

Madame Primrose *the directress of the school for princesses*
Posy *a slow-witted, but durable assistant to Madame Primrose*
Princess Acrasia *the daughter of King Esurient, sent to finishing school*
Bavian *an apprentice sign-maker turned poet and pirate*
Honeyfuggle Skint *a fast-talking, showy conman turned signmaker*

Smargadine Pirates:

Frumio Admetus *the pirate king*
Fulga *the first mate*
Swither *a dawdling cabin boy/girl*
Concass *a bossy cannoneer and pirate*
Scroggins *a ship's cook and pirate*
Moggy *a pirate, translator for Goozle*
Goozle *a wordless, but focused pirate*

Royal Court:

Count Ostro *a loyal courtier*
King/Queen Esurient *the King of Kerani*
Mr./Mrs. Hirple *a well-meaning, but nearsighted steward*
Limerence *a baker infatuated with Mr. Skint*

Cast Appearances

		#	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7
1	Bavian	34	x	x		x		x	x
2	Honeyfuggle Skint	26	x		x		x		x
3	Limerence	28	x		x		x		x
4	Madame Primrose	41	x	x		x		x	x
5	Posy	22	x	x		x		x	x
6	Fulga	16	x		x		x		x
7	Captain/King Frumio	16	*		x		x		x
8	Mr. Hirple	12	x		x		x		x
9	King Esurient	22	x		x		x		x
10	Princess Acrasia	29	x	x		x			x
11	Count Ostro	12	x		x		x		x
12	Goozle	1	x	x		x		x	x
13	Moggy	25	x	x		x		x	x
14	Scroggins	20	x	x		x		x	x
15	Swither	16	x	x		x		x	x
16	Concass	19	x	x		x		x	x

*No suggested doubling

Scenes

1 - *The Street* - outside the future academy. Honeyfuggle Skint and Bavian finish the sign for Madame Primrose's School—just in time for Fulga and her crew, King Esurient, and Princess Acrasia to arrive. The pirates sweep Bavian into the schoolhouse with them.

2 - *The School* - Madame Primrose meets her new students, who demonstrate why they desperately need manners and etiquette. She decides to take the pirates on as students.

3 - *The Street* - Mr. Hirple bumps into Honeyfuggle Skint, who searches for something he left behind. Captain Frumio and Fulga pass by, speaking of their ship and another lost item. Limerence misunderstands Posy and leaves the stage, weeping.

4 - *The School* - The pirates review their progress and take a break for tarts. Bavian and Acrasia discuss their roles as poet and princess, respectively. Acrasia takes an opportunity to arm wrestle.

5 - *The Street* - Fulga and Frumio reserve the progress made on their ship. Honeyfuffle finally finds what he's looking for. Limerence misinterprets him and again leaves in tears. Mr. Hirple sees an important wanted poster.

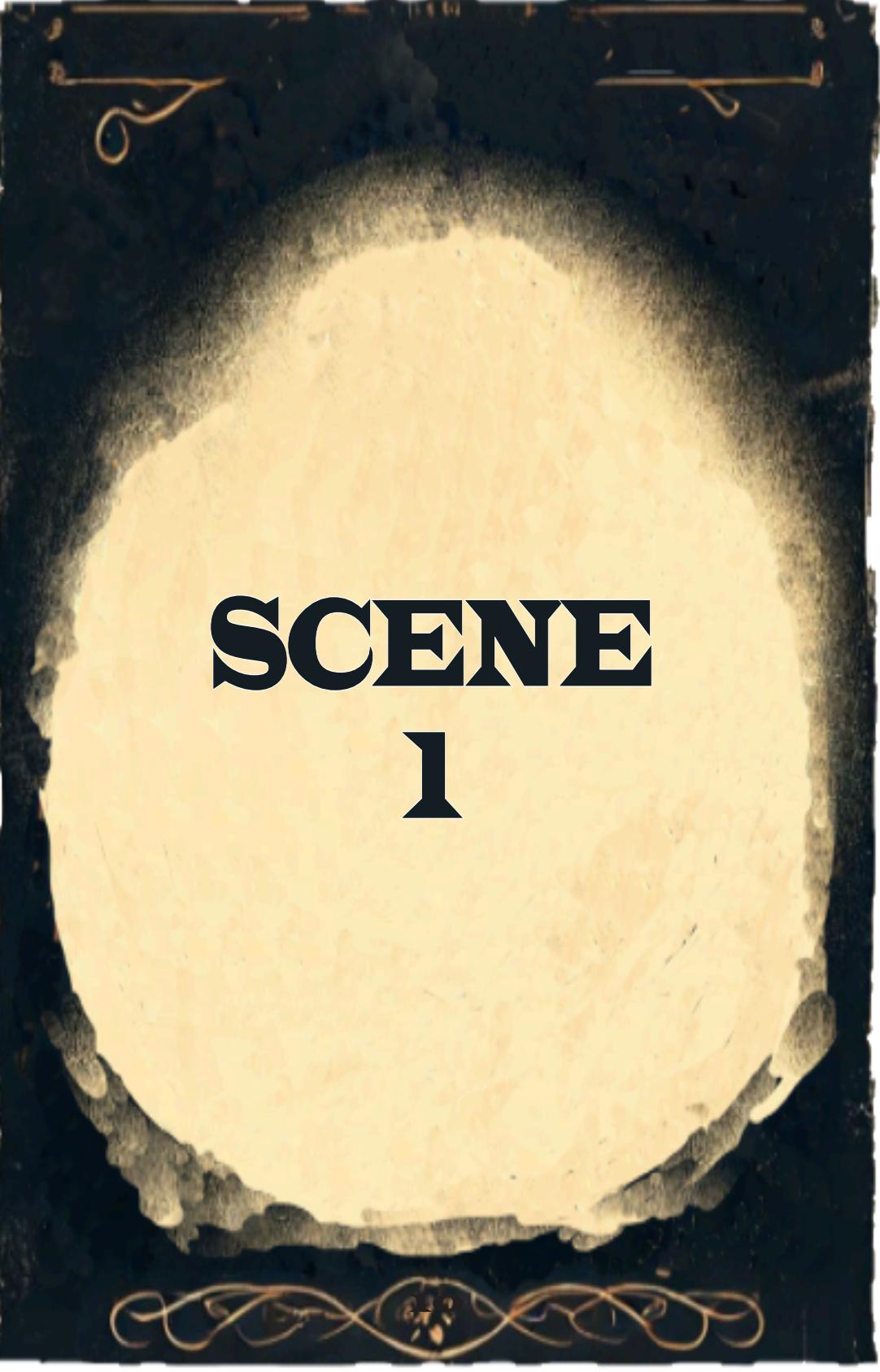
6 - The School - The pirates learn proper fencing technique and a little more about Madame Primrose's sad history. Princess Acrasia negotiates a tart treaty between Posy and the pirates.

7 - The School - Honeyfuggle Skint sneaks on stage, looking for something he lost (again). Limerence arrives and accuses Primrose of stealing her man. A fight breaks out. King Frumio and Fulga arrive and confront Honeyfuggle. King Frumio and Narelle reconcile their differences. King Esurient, Count Ostro, and Mr. Hirple arrive. The crew goes after Honeyfuggle Skint and the missing jewels. King Esurient marries King Frumio and Narelle Primrose.

Prop Suggestions

- A sign that reads "Madame Primrose's School for" and a replacement sign with the word "Princesses"
- A ladder or step stool
- A basket filled with baked tarts or pastries
- A bag of gems
- Various classroom items—a globe, desks or benches
- A wanted poster with the face of Honeyfuggle Skint





SCENE

1

Scene 1

A Slip of the Wrist

(BAVIAN enters dreamily with a bucket of paint and a paintbrush. A ladder rests against a storefront that reads "Madame Primrose's School for." He makes his way to the ladder, composing bits of a poem as he goes.)

BAVIAN: My darling, I hold you in my heart, warm and snuggly, like a barn. Hmm. That's not quite right.

(HONEYFUGGLE enters and sees BAVIAN dreaming instead of painting.)

HONEYFUGGLE: Bavian! Isn't that sign done yet? Get it done or I'll have to dock your pay.

(BAVIAN nearly falls off the ladder, startled out of his reverie.)

BAVIAN: I'm getting paid?

(LIMERENCE enters, holding a basket.)

LIMERENCE: Oh, good day, Mr. Skint!

(HONEYFUGGLE immediately strikes a dashing pose against the ladder, which wobbles. BAVIAN holds on desperately.)

HONEYFUGGLE: Dearest Limerence! Fancy seeing you here on this fine morning, though it's not as fine as you.

(BAVIAN pretends to dry heave. HONEYFUGGLE bumps the ladder warningly with his elbow. BAVIAN returns to painting.)

LIMERENCE (deeply flattered): Why Honeyfuggle Skint, who taught you such a way with words?

HONEYFUGGLE (piously): My own dear mother. 'Honey,' she said, 'speak sweet things and sweet will come to you.' (He peeks into LIMERENCE's basket.) Do you have anything sweet for me today—aside from your company, of course?

(BAVIAN groans. HONEYFUGGLE glares at him and threatens to shake the ladder, and BAVIAN resumes painting.)

LIMERENCE: Here's a basket full of tarts. They're little pieces of heaven, if I say so modestly.

(She hands one out blindly. BAVIAN reaches to take it, but HONEYFUGGLE steps forward and grabs the cake deftly. BAVIAN wobbles, but stays on the ladder.)

HONEYFUGGLE: Scrumptious! Divine as the hands that prepared it!

(BAVIAN groans. HONEYFUGGLE knocks him off the ladder. BAVIAN squawks and falls off.)

HONEYFUGGLE: I've always been able to turn my hands to anything, dear. (Trying to impress her.) A jeweler for the tzar of Admetus, a cartographer in the ports of Nadav—

(BAVIAN slowly and painfully picks himself up, crawling in front of them to get back to the ladder.)

LIMERENCE: You don't say! How impressive!

(BAVIAN moans. HONEYFUGGLE nudges him, not gently, with his foot. Bavian hauls himself back to the ladder.)

HONEYFUGGLE: Yes, my dear. I'm a humble sign painter now, but back in the day I was the fastest man on the job.

LIMERENCE (admiringly): Oh, sir!

HONEYFUGGLE: It's all in the wrist. Why, let me demonstrate—Give me a word, any old word.

(He flicks his wrist dramatically, knocking against the ladder and BAVIAN, who both nearly fall over again. LIMERENCE swoons. HONEYFUGGLE

clammers up the ladder, snatching the paintbrush from BAVIAN, whom he pushes off the steps. BAVIAN falls with a squeal.)

LIMERENCE: Oh, er, uh—

BAVIAN (*from the ground*): Ow—

HONEYFUGGLE: Ow-ctopus. (*He mimes speedily painting the word onto the sign.*) Of course, this isn't Madame Primrose's School for octopuses.

BAVIAN: Octopi.

LIMERENCE (*a little indignant*): Who has pie? I'm the royal baker here!

HONEYFUGGLE: —so we won't put that word on here. I say, Bavian, what was this sign supposed to say?

BAVIAN: Madame Primrose's School for P—

HONEYFUGGLE: Just testing you, just testing you— Let's have another word, and I'll finish this job.

BAVIAN (*fed up*): You finished? I did all the work. That's piracy!

HONEYFUGGLE: P-I-R-A-T-E-S. (*He mimes painting, but accidentally finishes the sign with the word 'pirates.'*) Bam-boom and Bob's your uncle,

the job's all done! All that work built me up an appetite. Another cake, dove of the kitchen?

LIMERENCE: Silly old me! I must have left them back at the bakery. Perhaps you'll come with me to fetch them?

HONEYFUGGLE (*offering his arm*): of course, ma'ame. Anywhere in the world with you. Bavian, clean up the supplies and collect the bill from Madame Primrose.

(*THEY exit. BAVIAN looks at the sign and sighs. He grabs a spare board, writes the word 'princesses' on it, and leans it against the ladder. He limps over to the paint bucket and brush to pick them up. MADAME PRIMROSE and POSY enter.*)

MADAME PRIMROSE (*hurriedly*): Just finishing, I see, and good thing, too. If I were not a tad early, I should think you a tad late. I don't have time to check it now. Princess Acrasia will be arriving soon. I'll get started inside. Posy, pay the apprentice, please.

(*MADAME PRIMROSE sweeps into the school. Posy remains outside, staring at the lettering on the building and looking very confused.*)

POSY: Isn't that supposed to say—

BAVIAN: It's French.

POSY: Oh.

(BAVIAN scrambles up the ladder and puts the word 'Princess' over 'Pirates'.)

BAVIAN: Is it really true, then? Princess Acrasia is coming?

POSY: That's what Madame Primrose told me.

BAVIAN: To think that in this fetid heat, her shoes will shortly cross this street.

POSY: Whose shoes?

BAVIAN: Hers. The princess—every poet's dream. Princess Acrasia, the jewel of Kerani, kingdom by the sea.

POSY: They made a jewel into a princess?

BAVIAN: It's an expression.

POSY: She's that, too? No wonder she's royal, then.

(FULGA enters. Her voice is thunderous.)

FULGA (enormously intimidating): Hey, there! Can one of you landlubbers give me directions?

(BAVIAN and POSY jump. One of them knocks the word "princesses" off the front of the building.

BAVIAN grabs the paintbrush and supplies and dashes off stage.)

FULGA: I'm Fulga, first mate on the Smargadine. We just put into port and we're looking for lodgings. (She catches sight of the sign.) School for Pirates, ay? The lot could do with some schoolin.' Are ye shippin' any more pupils?

POSY: We don't have a boat.

FULGA: More's the pity. I mean, are ye takin' on more students?

POSY: Oh! Yes, but Madame Primrose—

FULGA: Splendid. I'll send the crew up once they lose their sea legs. The captain has business ashore, and they need something to keep them occupied.

POSY: But, don't you see—

FULGA (hands Posy a whopping great sack of gold): Here. This should cover the expenses.

(FULGA strides offstage. POSY stares at the sack, shrugs, then staggers into the school. BAVIAN dodges out of her way as he sneaks back onstage. He notices the fallen sign and hurries to put it back up [as comically as possible]. A trumpet sounds. KING ESURIENT, MR. HIRPLE, COUNT

OSTRO, and PRINCESS ACRASIA enter. BAVIAN hides.)

KING ESURIENT: You're sure this is the street?

MR. HIRPLE: I assure you, your majesty, the school is here. I spoke with Madame Primrose only just this morning. (To PRINCESS ACRASIA) I hope your lodgings will be to your satisfaction, your highness.

PRINCESS ACRASIA: Fine, fine. (To ESURIENT) What was it you're doing, again, your majesty?

OSTRO: An informant of mine has led me to believe a large treasure rests just off the coast of Mitiss—

PRINCESS ACRASIA: More treasure?

KING ESURIENT: Absolutely, dearest. It's a short trip.

PRINCESS: Then why can't I come?

OSTRO: It's a perilous trip, your highness.

PRINCESS: I could be perilous. I could be—

KING ESURIENT (*impatient, not really listening*): Yes, of course, Darling. Mr. Hirple will be here, in case you need something. Lord Ostro, away!

(KING ESURIENT and LORD OSTRO exit. MR. HIRPLE gestures respectfully and PRINCESS

ACRASIA enters reluctantly. They slam the door, which knocks the sign down again. It now reads 'pirates'. BAVIAN starts to sneak toward the door. Enter SCROGGINS, CONCASS, MOGGY, and GOOZLE. SWITHER trails in behind.)

CONCASS: Come on, then. Move along!

SWITHER: Are we nearly there?

(GOOZLE walks right up next to the sign and stares at it hard.)

MOGGY: Look, lads, Goozle found it!

(The PIRATES gather around the sign.)

SCROGGINS: Clear as a ladle on a cooking rack.

CONCASS: There she blows. Everyone inside!

(They go to enter the school. BAVIAN jumps out of hiding. The PIRATES put up their swords threateningly.)

BAVIAN: Wait! You can't go in there.

CONCASS: Who says we can't?

SCROGGINS: It's right there, clear as a tick on a ship's cat.

MOGGY: "Pirates."

BAVIAN: It's not supposed to say that.

SCROGGINS: What's it supposed to say?

(BAVIAN moves gingerly around the swords and lifts the sign out of the bushes.)

BAVIAN: This is Madame Primrose's school for Princesses.

(The PIRATES stare at it, then at BAVIAN.)

MOGGY: You made that up.

BAVIAN: No. I mean, yes, I made the sign, but—

SWITHER *(solemnly)*: That's a bad sign.

SCROGGINS: Maybe you should try piracy instead.

CONCASS: Does he have what it takes?

(GOOZLE gets uncomfortably close to BAVIAN, staring him straight in the eyes, then steps back and nods.)

MOGGY: Goozle says he's a soft and complicated soul, but he'll do in a pinch.

ALL: Hooray!

(They drag BAVIAN into the schoolhouse.)