

HAPPILY NEVER AFTER

By Amy Zipperer

Copyright © 2010 by Amy Zipperer, All rights reserved.

ISBN: 1-60003-509-4

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice:

Produced by special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

HAPPILY NEVER AFTER

A COLLECTION OF THREE ONE - ACT PLAYS

by
Amy Zipperer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. <i>Prince4U27</i>	<i>Page 8</i>
2. <i>The Real World</i>	<i>Page 13</i>
3. <i>Happily Never After</i>	<i>Page 20</i>

CHARACTERS

GIRL	OUT4LOVE2715464
WAITRESS	Another girl
PRINCE GALLANT	PRINCE4U27 (a real toad)
WICKED QUEEN	Snow White's stepmother
SNOW WHITE	A real actress
MIRROR	An impartial observer
DIRECTOR	A reality TV show producer
CINDERELLA	A modern girl
ALFRED	A modern boy (and Cinderella's estranged husband)

PRODUCTION NOTES

Happily Never After began as a project for a junior college drama club. As the sponsor of the club, I was tasked with finding a play that catered to novice actors, a novice student director, and an extremely limited budget. After much searching, I found a few likely candidates, but each suffered from some drawback or another: large cast size, elaborate staging, high royalty fees, etc. In the end, I decided to write a collection of plays that I hoped would be perfect for the group of students that I was working for rather than to continue the seemingly fruitless search for the perfect play. Because of the malleability that comes as a result of this type of collaborative creative process, the student director for the first production was able to make rather bold discoveries, through trial and error, about this collection.

ORDERING OF PLAYS: Though I had originally envisioned an evening of theater that begins with "Prince4U27," the most accessible of the plays, the student director aptly pointed out that, for a number of reasons, a reordering of the plays to facilitate a production that begins with "The Real World" and ends with "Happily Never After" might be more appealing. To begin with, "The Real World" is the play in the collection that sets the tone of the whole. It's the most surreal of the three, and while it's likely to be the most difficult for the audience to penetrate, it's also most suggestive of the chaos that results from a collision between modern and antiquated. Other reasons for the above ordering tended towards overall polish of presentation: staging

concerns regarding the placement of “The Real World’s” director (our director also played the Prince in “Prince4U27”) and the placement of the Mirror’s frame (we hung ours from the catwalk and cut it down at the conclusion of the first play).

COSTUMING: One of our greatest costuming challenges came in deciding whether or not to rely on the standard Disney fare when costuming Snow White and the Wicked Queen. In the end, time considerations as well as the nagging feelings that the audience might need the visual cues in order to quickly establish character led us to the easily obtained and easily recognizable costuming choices, and we were not disappointed. The audience delighted in seeing these childhood favorites, and we received numerous positive comments about the beauty of the costumes, for “The Real World” in particular. Another big challenge was the costuming of the Mirror. We went through no less than four Mirror costumes, each of which seriously impeded the actor’s ability to move his appendages freely before making the last minute decision to hang a frame from the catwalk that would allow the actor to take advantage of the all of the opportunities for physical humor. By making this decision, we limited his ability to move about the stage, but the payoff was well worth the sacrifice. Another fun residual effect of this decision came as patrons entered the theater and found themselves greeted by a throne at stage left and a large gilded frame at stage right. It was a spectacle that shouldn’t be missed. The other big costuming quandary for us came in whether or not to fashion a literal Toad. In the end, we chose to fashion our toad as a theater-going dufus, complete with suspenders and thick glasses. It worked well, but the literal Toad might have been more suggestive of the larger thematic concerns of “PRINCE4U27.” As we ventured into costuming concerns related to the modern Cinderella in “Happily Never After,” we wanted to stay as true to a modern sensibility as possible with regards to staging. In order to facilitate audience adherence to traditional notions regarding Cinderella, we gave her a crown. It was not intrusive, but it offered a standing reminder of the exposition. In retrospect, I wish we’d given the same consideration to Alfred’s character, something princely to act as a small reminder of his position in the story, maybe a “Team Charming” sports jersey or some other suggestive detail.

THEATRICAL PROPERTY: Perhaps our most significant staging decision came as we attempted to realize the living room of Snow White’s Wicked Queen as envisioned by a mediocre reality TV show crew in “The Real World.” In the end, we decided that the costumes provided the real appeal, and we chose to include only one prop (other than the Mirror’s hanging costume), a huge throne that provided a great place for the high-maintenance Snow White to plop between takes. Another of our biggest prop decisions involved the crude weaponry in “The Real World.” After some consideration, we decided to offer ourselves up to theatricality by using a recreational paint gun. It didn’t look real enough to confuse or shock, but it did look real enough to invite an understanding of the chasm between romantic fairytale personas and real people. The choice was right

for our venue and audience, but a younger audience might find it more appealing to stick to a more conventional fairytale weapon, like a broom for a literal witch. That type of choice could provide a bit of fun while satisfying any zero-tolerance policy. Another prop decision came as we worried, because of our multiple cast doublings, that the audience might not recognize that the Toad and Prince Gallant of “PRINCE4U27” were the same *one* man. To satisfy this need for clarification, our Prince Gallant returned to the stage with a stuffed briefcase that afforded the audience a glance of the Prince’s orphaned cape.

PROPERTIES

ONSTAGE, “PRINCE4U27”: Bistro Tables & Chairs, Candles,

BROUGHT ON, “PRINCE4U27”: Cape (Prince Gallant), Pocket Mirror (Prince Gallant), Poem (Prince Gallant), Drinks (Waitress), Sandwiches (Waitress), Towel (Waitress)

BROUGHT ON, “THE REAL WORLD”: Crude Weaponry (Wicked Queen), Apple (Mirror)

ONSTAGE, “HAPPILY NEVER AFTER”: Couch, Pillow, Script, Bookshelf, Books

BROUGHT ON, “HAPPILY NEVER AFTER”: Notepad (Cinderella), Camera (Planted Patron), Programs (Actual Patrons)

ORIGINAL CAST

***Happily Never After* was first produced at Georgia Military College in Milledgeville, GA on 14 November 2009 by the following artists:**

Director
Waitress
Ingrid
Prince Gallant
Wicked Queen
Mirror
Snow White
Director
Cinderella
Alfred
Lights and Sound

Caitlin Pendley
Jennifer Bonner
Jessie Clement
Stefan Jones
Krystynna Ransom
Tony Bullard
Jessie Clement
Stefan Jones
Krystynna Ransom
Tony Bullard
Walter Deloach

PRINCE4U27

CHARACTERS

GIRL: OUT4LOVE2715464

WAITRESS: Another girl

PRINCE GALLANT: PRINCE4U27 (a real toad)

SCENE: A quaint bistro-style restaurant, adorned with droopy candles and checkered tablecloth.

TIME: The present.

SCENE ONE

(GIRL waits. WAITRESS wishes to flip the table.)

WAITRESS: Can I get you anything else, Miss? Another glass of water?
Directions to the exit?

GIRL: I'm so sorry. I'm sure he'll be here – just any minute now.

WAITRESS: You said that same thing 30 minutes ago, honey. Best to face it. Prince Charming flaked on you. It's happened before. It'll happen again.

GIRL: Darn this internet dating. It's sure not what it's cracked up to be.
PRINCE4U27. Ha! Second time this week.

WAITRESS: Probably a toad anyways. Big thick glasses.

GIRL: Greasy hair.

WAITRESS: Breath probably smells.

GIRL: Probably like bologna.

WAITRESS: Took one look at you through the window and knew he was out of his league.

GIRL: I guess if you think about it, I'm pretty lucky.

WAITRESS: Imagine having to sit here with that guy.

GIRL: Ick.

WAITRESS: Better off. In fact, if I were you I'd run on out of here.

GIRL: Maybe I'll just have a sandwich.

WAITRESS: Probably buck teeth, too.

GIRL: Oh, this has nothing to do with him. I've just worked up quite an appetite sitting here and waiting like this.

WAITRESS: Uh huh.

GIRL: What do you recommend?

WAITRESS: Well, the whole running... No, but you're going to eat, so I guess the meatloaf sandwich is edible. The BLT's pretty inoffensive.

GIRL: How's the spaghetti?

WAITRESS: Spaghetti. Candles. Don't torture yourself, honey. Meatloaf sandwich says, "I stopped in for a quick bite because I was famished

Happily Never After - Page 7

after my shopping spree at Bloomingdale's." Spaghetti and candles say, "I'm on a date with myself."

GIRL: Meatloaf. Soda.

(WAITRESS exits. GIRL plays tic-tac-toe by herself. After a long moment, PRINCE GALLANT appears. HE looks as though HE's just stepped off the Disney screen. As HE walks toward the table, his cape falls off and HE has to reattach it. HE readjusts his tights and kneels beside the table.)

PRINCE GALLANT: *(Very princely voice)* But wait. Can it be? Are you the internet princess who has haunted my dreams these last three days?

GIRL: PRINCE4U27?

PRINCE GALLANT: It is he, come to rescue the damsel from internet predators marauding for booty!

GIRL: That's so nice of you.

PRINCE GALLANT: Thank you. "Nice" is one of my best qualities. So is handsome.

(PRINCE GALLANT pulls out a pocket mirror, checks himself out, and, satisfied, returns to the conversation.)

Please, call me Gallant, OUT4LOVE *(Consults his hand)* 2715464.

GIRL: And I'm –

PRINCE GALLANT: Ah, but a moment. *(GALLANT stands, forgetting princely act.)* You seen a waitress around here?

GIRL: She's just –

(PRINCE GALLANT walks towards one end of the stage and then the other.)

PRINCE GALLANT: *(Yelling to no one in particular)* I'll take a Dr. Pepper. *(HE returns to the table.)*

GIRL: And I'm –

PRINCE GALLANT: The most beautiful girl I've ever seen. I'm moved to poetry. *(HE stands on his chair, clears his throat, and pulls a small slip of paper from beneath his princely skirt.)* When I walked into this place / And saw at last your powdered face.

(WAITRESS enters with drinks.)

And your beautiful golden... brown hair / I knew you were the girl most fair / And the girl most full of grace / An image my mind could not erase.

WAITRESS: Can I get you anything from the menu? Original rhyme scheme? Buffalo wings?

PRINCE GALLANT: What will the lady have?

WAITRESS: She's already ordered. You were, after all, 37 minutes late.

Happily Never After - Page 8

PRINCE GALLANT: Unfortunately, I was detained by a –

WAITRESS: Mental health practitioner?

PRINCE GALLANT: Dragon!

GIRL: Oh! That is brave!

WAITRESS: The mythical creature dragon?

(WAITRESS mimes a dragon, and GIRL looks crestfallen.)

PRINCE GALLANT: *(Annoyed)* A paper Chinese dragon. Parade down the street. Lots of traffic.

GIRL: A parade? He can't help that!

WAITRESS: I don't see a parade.

PRINCE GALLANT: I'll have the rosewater quail and blancmange.

WAITRESS: This isn't Wonderland.

PRINCE GALLANT: *(With daggers)* Give me the burger. *(Poo Poos WAITRESS away.)* Now, my fragile swan. Where were we?

GIRL: My name is –

PRINCE GALLANT: Ah, but I must guess it. Is it Briar Rose?

GIRL: No.

PRINCE GALLANT: Not Snow White.

GIRL: No.

PRINCE GALLANT: Then it is Beauty. It must be Beauty. I knew it all along. A Prince can sense these things.

GIRL: Actually, it's –

PRINCE GALLANT: Wait. Don't tell me! The name Beauty really excites me. Imagine it. Beauty. Beauty. *(Drawing it out)* Beauty.

GIRL: But that's not my name.

PRINCE GALLANT: Fine. What is it?

GIRL: Ingrid. My name is Ingrid.

(WAITRESS enters with INGRID's sandwich.)

PRINCE GALLANT: Of course it is. I knew it all along. A prince can sense these things. *(HE knocks over his soda. Quickly, HE rises and covers the soda with his cape.)* I have covered the spill so that my Beauty... Ingrid does not slip.

WAITRESS: Well, this is just the most ridiculous thing I've ever seen.

(SHE reaches down and wipes the soda away with a towel. SHE throws the cloak at the PRINCE and exits.)

PRINCE GALLANT: Mark my words. That one will end up a stepsister.

But back to us. Ingrid, what do you like to do in your spare time?

Cook? Clean? Tame birds?

GIRL: I like to... It sounds silly, but... I like to...

PRINCE GALLANT: *(Pointing to sandwich)* Do you mind?

Happily Never After - Page 9

(PRINCE GALLANT picks up INGRID's sandwich and bites into it.)

GIRL: I like to go to the theatre.

PRINCE GALLANT: Oh, my Gosh! What a waste of time!

GIRL: I guess it is, a little.

PRINCE GALLANT: *(Recovers quickly and uses a very princely voice)* I mean... for someone of your beauty. You must take up modeling for storefronts or become a flight attendant.

GIRL: But I wouldn't like those things.

PRINCE GALLANT: How do you know? Have you experienced them?

GIRL: No, but –

PRINCE GALLANT: *(Leaning forward)* And love's first kiss? Have you experienced that?

INGRID: No, I don't think so.

PRINCE GALLANT: But you must. We shall make haste. Back to my castle I will take thee so that thee may experience love's first *(long pause)* kiss. My horse is just outside.

GIRL: Actually...

PRINCE GALLANT: If you are afraid of horses, fear not! It is really a 97 Ford Mustang.

GIRL: I don't think so.

PRINCE GALLANT: But whyever not?

GIRL: Frankly, all of this just seems a little silly. The dragon. And the poem. And the tights. Especially the tights.

PRINCE GALLANT: I have to tell you, Ingrid. Most girls eat this stuff up. What makes you so different?

GIRL: Guess I'd rather have the toad.

PRINCE GALLANT: Toad?

GIRL: Yep, a real theatre-going, thick-glassed, greasy-haired, bologna-sandwich-eating dufus.

PRINCE GALLANT: *(Very unprincely)* You are missing out. Oh, are you missing out.

(PRINCE GALLANT exits as WAITRESS enters with his food.)

GIRL: You were right. I should have run.

(WAITRESS sits down with the cheeseburger.)

WAITRESS: Don't worry. There's a prince out there for you.

(INGRID takes a bite of the cheeseburger.)

GIRL: How can you be sure?

WAITRESS: The way I figure, if he's PRINCE4U27, there are at least 26 others to choose from.

Happily Never After - Page 10

GIRL: I just lost my appetite.

WAITRESS: Chin up. I'll get your check.

(WAITRESS exits. PRINCE GALLANT enters dressed as a TOAD and sits at a nearby table. INGRID notices him noticing her.)

TOAD: Theatre just let out. Glad I beat the rush.

INGRID: Oh, what did you see?

TOAD: *(Searching)* A play.

INGRID: Which one?

TOAD: I bet you can guess.

INGRID: The revival of *Streetcar* at the Maxie?!

TOAD: Bingo.

INGRID: How was it?

TOAD: I'll just come over and tell you.

(TOAD moves over. HE picks up INGRID's hand.)

It was a fairy tale production. What is this you're eating?
Cheeseburger?

(SHE pushes the burger towards him, and HE takes a bite.)

THE REAL WORLD

CHARACTERS

WICKED QUEEN: Snow White's stepmother

SNOW WHITE: A real actress

MIRROR: An impartial observer

DIRECTOR: A reality TV show producer

SCENE: The living room of the Snow White castle.

TIME: Present day.

SCENE ONE

(WICKED QUEEN is primping. MIRROR wipes at her cheeks and dabs at her hair in an effort to help her to appear to her best advantage.)

WICKED QUEEN: Mirror, Mirror on the wall, who's the fairest one of all?

(MIRROR clears his throat.)

Well?

MIRROR: Now by fair, do you mean "pretty" or "impartial"?

WICKED QUEEN: What do you think I mean? Why would I ask a mirror if I am the most "impartial"?

MIRROR: I'm just saying. Because if you were asking who is the most impartial, I'd probably have to say, "Snow White."

WICKED QUEEN: *(Excitedly)* But?

MIRROR: But if you were asking who was the "prettiest," I'd probably have to say, *(long pause)* "Snow White."

(WICKED QUEEN offers up a bone-chilling scream.)

WICKED QUEEN: No! It cannot be!

MIRROR: Did you want me to lie because if you did –

WICKED QUEEN: Silence! Snow White, get in here.

(SNOW WHITE enters. Throughout the next, SHE is the picture of sweet innocence.)

SNOW WHITE: Yes, Wicked Stepmother. Did you call me?

WICKED QUEEN: I just asked the mirror who's the fairest, and what do you think it said?

SNOW WHITE: It said you, Wicked Stepmother, surely, for you are the fairest in the entire land. The way your hair curls, just so, around your face and creates the most pleasing frame. The way your lithe figure

Happily Never After - Page 12

calls to mind a Degas painting. And the length of your eyelashes. Shut up. I'd kill for those eyelashes.

WICKED QUEEN: He said that you are the fairest.

SNOW WHITE: No.

WICKED QUEEN: Yes.

SNOW WHITE: No.

WICKED QUEEN: Yes.

SNOW WHITE: Yes?

WICKED QUEEN: No. Wait. You're confusing me. Yes.

SNOW WHITE: But there must be some mistake. I've got it. He thought you meant "impartial."

WICKED QUEEN: No.

SNOW WHITE: Yes.

WICKED QUEEN: No.

SNOW WHITE: No?

WICKED QUEEN: Yes.

SNOW WHITE: I'm the fairest? I'm the fairest?

WICKED QUEEN: According to the mirror.

MIRROR: I'm very fair.

SNOW WHITE: Pretty?

MIRROR: Impartial.

SNOW WHITE: I don't want to be the fairest.

MIRROR: Why not?

SNOW WHITE: Too much pressure. The constant stares. The idolization.

(Getting into the fun of it.) The copying of the hairstyle. The red-carpet fashion recap. The glamorous parties.

MIRROR: *(Sarcastically)* You poor thing.

WICKED QUEEN: Excuse me.

MIRROR: What's up, Queen?

WICKED QUEEN: I'm not the fairest. And she is.

SNOW WHITE: No.

WICKED QUEEN: Yes.

SNOW WHITE: Yes?

WICKED QUEEN: Yes! *(Dramatically)* And now I shall have to kill you.

(SNOW WHITE offers up a bone-chilling scream. WICKED QUEEN pulls out an unrealistic piece of weaponry, perhaps a crude gun made from a broom.)

Say your prayers, Snow.

DIRECTOR: *(Moving to stage from audience)* Cut. Cut. Cut.

WICKED QUEEN: What's wrong? It was me, wasn't it? I wasn't believable. Give me another shot. I can scream louder. Was it the last bit with the thing here? I wasn't holding it the right way, huh?

SNOW WHITE: You've got to do something. I can't work with this. You call that Wicked? Come on.

WICKED QUEEN: I'm so sorry. I really am. I think I just got off to a bad start. You see, I went to the dentist this morning, and my tooth really still aches.

SNOW WHITE: Excuses. How about put up or shut up. If I can get through a scene about how great your figure is, you can pretend to be wicked. The one is far more difficult than the other.

MIRROR: Cat fight.

SNOW WHITE: No wonder people are in a perpetual hysteria about the evils of reality TV. This is supposed to look REAL. But believe me when I tell you that it does NOT look real. It looks scripted. And by a bad writer.

DIRECTOR: Let's just give it another try. Come on, people. Places. Places. Queen. Remember. WICKED.

(SNOW WHITE exits while MIRROR and WICKED QUEEN primp.)

WICKED QUEEN: *(Wickedly)* Mirror, Mirror on the wall, who's the fairest one of all?

(MIRROR clears his throat.)

Well?

MIRROR: Now by fair, do you mean "pretty" or "impartial"?

WICKED QUEEN: What do you think I mean? Why would I ask a mirror if I am the most "impartial"?

MIRROR: I'm just saying. Because if you were asking who is the most impartial, I'd probably have to say, "Snow White."

(WICKED QUEEN offers up an enraged scream.)

You dropped a line. Didn't she drop a line?

DIRECTOR: Don't stop. Just keep going. Editing can splice things together to create the tension.

MIRROR: *(Sing-song)* I'm just saying. Because if you were asking who is the most impartial, I'd probably have to say, "Snow White."

WICKED QUEEN: *(Excitedly)* But?

MIRROR: But if you were asking who was the "prettiest," I'd probably have to say, *(long pause)* "Snow White."

(MIRROR makes a motion to remind WICKED QUEEN of her earlier mistake. SHE offers up a bone-chilling scream.)

WICKED QUEEN: No! It cannot be!

MIRROR: Did you want me to lie because if you did –

WICKED QUEEN: Silence! Snow White, get in here.

(SNOW WHITE enters.)

SNOW WHITE: Yes, Wicked Stepmother. Did you call me?

WICKED QUEEN: I just asked the mirror *(forgetting)* about the question that we were wanting to know the answer to and he said that in fairytales, it sometimes happens that the wicked person dies and she probably deserves it because usually –

SNOW WHITE: Is there a question that you are trying to get to?

WICKED QUEEN: Yes, a question. A question.

DIRECTOR: *(Flatly)* I just asked the mirror who's the fairest, and what do you think it said?

WICKED QUEEN: *(Quickly, All tension lost)* I just asked the mirror who's the fairest, and what do you think it said?

SNOW WHITE: It said you, Wicked Stepmother, surely, for you are the fairest in the entire land. The way your hair curls, just so, around your face and creates the most pleasing frame. *(SNOW WHITE delivers the next lines with zero sincerity.)* The way your lithe figure calls to mind a Degas painting. And the length of your eyelashes. Shut up. I'd kill for those eyelashes.

DIRECTOR: Snow, come on. Don't be that way. You're ruining the scene.

SNOW WHITE: Don't talk to me like that. I can walk out of here anytime I want to. My husband is rich. I don't need this job.

WICKED QUEEN: Well, neither do I.

MIRROR: Yes, you do.

WICKED QUEEN: I know. Can't you just muster up a tiny bit of sympathy? My husband died, and I'm so misunderstood. Think how it feels to be me.

SNOW WHITE: So you're a hag. Big deal.

WICKED QUEEN: Easy for you to say. You're desirable. And you have eight men dying to be near you. What have I got? A mirror. Big whoop.

MIRROR: Thanks.

WICKED QUEEN: I'm so sorry. I didn't mean it that way. You are great. Just great. A great friend. Sometimes you just don't know when to hush.

MIRROR: Do you want me to lie?

WICKED QUEEN: Not lie. Sugarcoat. I say, "Who is the fairest?" You say, "Well, you are looking pretty darn good." Not a lie exactly.

MIRROR: But not the truth.

SNOW WHITE: Shut up. Shut up! Me. Make it about me. Me. Let's talk about me. Me. Me. Me. Me. I want this all to be about me. Me. Me.

(SHE finally takes a big breath, and THEY all looked stunned.)

DIRECTOR: Oh, my Gosh. I've got it. I can't believe I didn't think of it earlier. Switch places.

SNOW WHITE and WICKED QUEEN: What?!

DIRECTOR: Switch.

SNOW WHITE: No, I won't do it.

DIRECTOR: Why not? Imagine the credits. *Snow White as The Wicked Queen*. You're following will be even greater than it was right after your miracle resurrection. I'm telling you. They will say, "What an actress! She's the Marilyn of reality TV."

SNOW WHITE: Really?

DIRECTOR: Really?! This is a great idea.

MIRROR: No, it isn't. It'll cause her (*motioning to WICKED QUEEN*) psychological trauma. And it'll send her (*motioning to SNOW WHITE*) ego . . .

DIRECTOR: You don't care about her. You're protecting your Queen.

MIRROR: Are you accusing me of being partial?

(*DIRECTOR motions WICKED QUEEN offstage. MIRROR wipes at SNOW WHITE's cheeks and dabs at her hair in an effort to help her to appear to her best advantage.*)

SNOW WHITE (WICKED QUEEN): Don't touch my hair.

MIRROR: It's in the script.

SNOW WHITE (WICKED QUEEN): Mirror, Mirror on the wall, who's the fairest one of all?

(*MIRROR clears his throat.*)

Well?

MIRROR: Now by fair, do you mean "pretty" or "impartial"?

SNOW WHITE (WICKED QUEEN): That line is completely unnecessary.

In fact, I think you might consider cutting the mirror altogether.

MIRROR: Hey!

DIRECTOR : I'll take it under advisement.

(*SNOW WHITE screams.*)

What are you doing?

SNOW WHITE (WICKED QUEEN): I'm picking it up there.

MIRROR: You've skipped over all my lines!

SNOW WHITE (WICKED QUEEN): So?

DIRECTOR: Cut. Cut. Cut.

SNOW WHITE (WICKED QUEEN): How am I supposed to keep my momentum with all of these useless pauses?

DIRECTOR: This isn't working.

(*WICKED QUEEN reenters and MIRROR helps her to primp.*)

Happily Never After - Page 16

SNOW WHITE (WICKED QUEEN): What isn't working?

DIRECTOR: You. This performance.

SNOW WHITE (WICKED QUEEN): My performance. What is wrong with my performance?

DIRECTOR: You're just too wicked.

(SNOW WHITE picks up the crude weapon and turns it on the whole group.)

SNOW WHITE: Now, you listen to me. I am very cranky today. Cranky.

My dresses haven't been fitting that well lately.

MIRROR: I knew it.

SNOW WHITE: Shut up! And apples used to be my go-to dieting food. But now –

WICKED QUEEN: Sorry.

SNOW WHITE: And the prince isn't a good kisser.

WICKED QUEEN: No.

SNOW WHITE: Yes.

WICKED QUEEN: You poor thing.

SNOW WHITE: I know! You have no idea how difficult it is to be a has-been princess. *(SNOW WHITE sinks onto the throne.)* I thought being a queen was going to be so great, but it's not! It's affecting my whole life. Princesses are beloved. But Queens, Queens are . . . fairy tale aftertaste.

WICKED QUEEN: I know exactly what you mean. All I ever hear is "Play Wicked." "Play Wicked."

SNOW WHITE: And it's even worse when your husband owns a production company like this one. Mediocre productions make mediocre actresses. And I'm better than that. I should have married Spielberg.

WICKED QUEEN: I tried to tell you.

SNOW WHITE: No, you didn't.

WICKED QUEEN: Yes, I did. It was your sixteenth birthday. We'd just had boar heart pate and apple crumb cake, and I said, "You should marry Spielberg." And you said, "What? Are you kidding? I'm not going to marry some lackluster director who takes zero risk and has the depth of a spoon of water."

SNOW WHITE: If only I hadn't run away. I could have been anybody I wanted to be. Now I'm this. The pretty face of a ridiculous TV show.

WICKED QUEEN: It's not that ridiculous. It's all in what you make of it.

SNOW WHITE: Can you cut it out with the smarmy optimism.

WICKED QUEEN: You're so unpleasant.

SNOW WHITE: I'll show you unpleasant. Now, I'm going to go to the bathroom, and when I get back, it's all business.

(SNOW WHITE exits. MIRROR primps the queen.)

Happily Never After - Page 17

WICKED QUEEN: I can't believe it's come to this.

MIRROR: It was bound to happen.

WICKED QUEEN: Do you have the apple?

MIRROR: Who do you think you're dealing with? (*MIRROR pulls out a shiny apple.*)

DIRECTOR: When she falls, everybody pull back so I can get the shot of her dropping to the floor.

WICKED QUEEN: I just feel really bad about this. If there were any other way-

(*SNOW WHITE reenters.*)

SNOW WHITE: Okay, people. Let's get this done. I'm not feeling so well.

WICKED QUEEN: Are you alright? You look so pale, sweetie. Maybe we should take a break.

SNOW WHITE: I'm fine. I'm a professional. I can get through this.

WICKED QUEEN: Maybe I should hold a cool compress to your head for just a few minutes. You don't want to look washed out.

SNOW WHITE: Washed out? (*To MIRROR*) Come here you.

MIRROR: Pale. Pale.

WICKED QUEEN: Here, darling. Just a few bites.

(*SHE takes the apple from MIRROR and extends it to SNOW WHITE.*)

SNOW WHITE: Apple? No!

WICKED QUEEN: Can't be helped. We ate all the bananas earlier.

SNOW WHITE: I can –

MIRROR: Pale. Pale.

SNOW WHITE: Oh, my gosh. I've got to put my best foot forward. This could be my last chance. I've got to be a Marilyn.

WICKED QUEEN: One little bite. You'll feel so much better.

MIRROR: And you'll look so much better.

DIRECTOR: And you'll act so much better.

(*SNOW WHITE takes a deep breath and then a huge bite.*)

WICKED QUEEN: There. There. Don't you feel better?

SNOW WHITE: I feel – (*SHE falls to the ground.*)

DIRECTOR: Get out of the money shot. Get out of the money shot. And that's a wrap.

WICKED QUEEN: I told you I could play wicked!

MIRROR: Shocked the heck outta me!

DIRECTOR: Let's get lunch.

(*THEY all step over SNOW WHITE on their way out the door.*)

HAPPILY NEVER AFTER

CHARACTERS

CINDERELLA: A modern girl

ALFRED: A modern boy (and Cinderella's estranged husband)

SCENE: A modern girl's apartment.

TIME: The present.

SCENE ONE

(CINDERELLA sits cross legged on the couch. SHE is making a list of grievances. After a minute, SHE looks up and uses her hand as a visor to shield her eyes from the lights.)

CINDERELLA: Oh, gosh. Hi! I didn't see you out there. I hope you haven't been waiting long. I hate that – when you go to the theater and the actors are just oblivious – like there's a fourth wall or something.

(CINDERELLA stands awkwardly for a moment.)

Oh, I got it. Let me tell you what I'm doing. I'm making a list of grievances. The other day, you know, I was just lying around watching those old Meg Ryan / Tom Hanks movies, and I've seen them, just, 100 times, so I started thinking about other things. You know how that happens. You're remotely interested, but not fascinated. So you start thinking about lasagna and laundry and last night's painful date or whatever. Some of you might be doing that right now. And unless something happens to draw you back, your – BANG – drawn away forever. And that's exactly what happened to me. I'm watching, and Meg Ryan is working in her little bookstore and I'm thinking about her bookstore, and then I'm thinking about the books on the shelves and then I'm thinking about stories in the books until – BANG – I'm thinking about my own story. And I'm thinking about my story and I start thinking about how many variations there are on that story and how that's not really fair. For instance, in this one the coach that I take to Alfred's ball is the product of the magical transformation of a pumpkin. I mean, come on, do people really believe that? And here's one... *(Awkward pause)* I probably should have introduced myself... I think I should have introduced myself. That was a bad line to drop. Oh, well. Nothing more to do for it now.

(CINDERELLA runs down into the audience to shake the hands of several patrons.)

Happily Never After - Page 19

Cinderella. Cinderella. Hi! Cinderella. Cindy. Hi! Cinderella. Hi, I'm Cinderella.

(CINDERELLA returns to the stage.)

Okay. Now. I think that this is a great time for you to take out your programs. That's right. Your play program. Okay. Got it?

(CINDERELLA leans forward.)

Ewww. Did you put gum in your's? Gross. Plus, I heard that there's NO gum allowed in the _____. Or flash photography. Though I've never really understood that rule. I mean, why?

(CINDERELLA suffers through a very long and awkward pause.)

Okay. So... on the back of your program, you'll find a space that's labeled "List of Grievances." I'd like for you to write down the grievances that you have with your own story, and while you're doing that, I'll just be over here figuring out where my train derailed, and then we'll all move forward together.

(CINDERELLA pauses to allow patrons to begin the task.)

Ma'am, why aren't you writing? You don't have a pen? Okay, ma'am. This is a theatre. Chances are some nerd sitting near you has an extra. Like this guy. Sir, do you have an extra pen? Help her out, would you?

(CINDERELLA moves to the couch and pulls a script from behind a pillow.)

Ok. *(Reruns past lines)* Didn't see you there. Meg Ryan. I'm Cinderella. Dropped. Pumpkin. Ah ha ha ha. Here it is. Pumpkin.

(CINDERELLA counts on her fingers throughout the next... Snipping off of heels and toes. Mice. Happily Ever After.)

Ok, got it. Shhhheewww. And that's just the beginning, that pumpkin is. Look. In this book, my wicked stepsisters actually cut off their heels and toes to try to fit into the slippers. I mean, gross. That is so grim. To tell you the truth, they didn't even try on the slipper. Alfred took one look at them and said, "Nope. It doesn't fit. I can tell from here." To tell you the truth. It was a real disappointment for them. Especially Ramona. You know, she has that skin condition, and that lazy eye doesn't help anything. I mean, sure, I wanted the shoe to fit me, but I'm into the whole self-esteem movement, so... And mice! Come on. Do these reinventors know me at all? And it makes no difference if they're

Happily Never After - Page 20

animated. I get that all the time. But my biggest grievance. Bar none. Biggest. The messed up ending. I mean, I go out and meet someone, and I'm like "Good to meet you. Cinderella Termaine." And they -

(A patron stands and takes a photograph using a flash.)

They say, "Isn't it 'Charming' now?" What? Did you -

(Another flash.)

Hey, that's really annoying. I'm all in character. Playing this particular Cinderella when -FLASH- that's all gone and I'm a little blind and I have no idea of which Cinderella I am -

(A third flash. CINDERELLA confiscates the camera.)

"Isn't it 'Charming' now? What? Did you keep your maiden name? That's pretty progressive feminism-y of you." So then I have to explain - about the divorce, about the retelling in which I live happily ever after. You see, in the original it was Happily Never After. Pretty important mistake, don't you think?

(Big sigh, and CINDERELLA looks like she's forgotten her lines again. SHE returns to the crowd.)

Okay Sir. Let's see what you've got here.

(CINDERELLA looks at his program.)

Sir, where are your grievances? Weren't you on task? I really counted on you to complete the task just in case I... oh... forgot my lines or something.

(The doorbell rings.)

Oh, thank goodness. I'm going to let you off this time, but Sir, come on, in the future, please help the actors out. This is tough work. I mean, I don't get dirty or crawl around in ashes or make my own ball gown or anything, still... these lights are intense. And all this flash photography. I don't know.

(Doorbell.)

(Irritably) Coming... Oh, hi Alfred.

ALFRED: Hi, whatcha doin'?

CINDERELLA: Oh, I'm just in a play.

Happily Never After - Page 21

ALFRED: Really?

CINDERELLA: Yep. I'm really good, too.

(ALFRED shields his eyes and looks out into the audience.)

Why are you here?

ALFRED: I had something to talk to you about, but I feel a little self-conscious now.

CINDERELLA: Oh, then use the script.

(CINDERELLA hands the script to ALFRED.)

We're just right... here.

ALFRED: Do you think they'll mind at all? I mean, isn't that a little amateur?

CINDERELLA: Oh, they won't mind at all. They are a super considerate audience. Most of them. Except him (*guy who didn't write in program*) and him (*guy with camera*).

ALFRED: Okay. I came to talk to you about the possibility of buying a goat. I really need one. Hey! I don't need a goat. What is this?

CINDERELLA: This is the version of the story that we're using. Right here.

ALFRED: But I came to tell you that -

CINDERELLA: I know. I know. You want to buy a goat. What do you need a goat for, Alfred?

ALFRED: I've been very lonely. Lonely? Come on, Cinderella.

CINDERELLA: Lonely? I guess you should have treated me a little nicer.

ALFRED: What did I -

CINDERELLA: That's not the line.

ALFRED: I don't want-

CINDERELLA: Oh, really? Let's talk about the things that I didn't want. I didn't want to get married in the palace. I wanted to go to Vegas. I didn't want to order the dinner every night. Sometimes I wanted you to take me out to dinner. Paparazzi be darned. I didn't want to walk in on you and Snow kissing and who knows what else.

ALFRED: It was just a kiss! I told you. I had to kiss her. Did you just want me to let her stay dead?

CINDERELLA: That's funny. Because I heard that the apple dislodged when Dopey and Stu dropped the coffin.

ALFRED: Hearsay.

CINDERELLA: Oh, is it? Read -

ALFRED: I'm not going to read from this script. I'm just tired of the convolution. I kissed Snow because I thought it was the thing to do at the time. Clearly, it wasn't. I'd take it back if I could. In fact, I am.

CINDERELLA: Am what?

ALFRED: Taking it back. I'm taking it back.

(ALFRED runs to a bookshelf, searches for a volume, opens it, and rips out a few pages.)

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from HAPPILY NEVER AFTER by Amy Zipperer. For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:

**Brooklyn Publishers, LLC
P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406
Toll Free: 1-888-473-8521 • Fax (319) 368-8011
www.brookpub.com**