

The Real Temple

by

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DESCRIPTION

All of life is a journey, and Lorenzo finds this out literally when, in a waking dream, he falls through his mirror into a slightly wacky King Arthur-world that takes him on a search for beauty, strength, and wisdom. The play is done in vaudeville style, complete with Three Knights in a Daze, the nasty Grapunzel-Dunzel, the Saggin' Dragon, King Sale-O-Man, and the Voice of Density. (This could also be done by high school students.)

CHARACTERS

- Lorenzo, very, very ordinary teenager; he becomes KING D'ARTHUR
- Maria, Mother of LORENZIO -- feisty; good-humored
- Three Knights In A Daze, LORENZIO's helpers -- they should be dressed as outlandishly as possible; everything they do should be reminiscent of the Three Stooges
- The Voice of Density, a narrator and commentator; is not seen
- Lady Gretchen Grapunzel-Dunzel de Blanche du Bois avec C'est Moi, *an imprisoned beauty -- speaks in a "Blanche DuBois" accent from A Streetcar Named Desire*
- The Saggin' Dragon, a rich old dragon who wishes for better days
- King Sale-O-Man!, an entrepreneur from ancient times who is selling wisdom
- Other characters for various scenes

SETTING

- A nice place somewhere in America
- A vaguely medieval land

TIME

- Fluid

MISCELLANEOUS

- Choice of music is open
- A microphone for DENSITY
- A microphone for SALE-O-MAN!

Note 1: This play is meant to be done broadly, going for all the laughs and jokes and mugging and funny business that one could go for. Do not be shy.

Note 2: Equally so, sound/music and lighting effects should be big and broad.

Note 3: If there is no fly space, stagehands will need to move the scenery off. This should be done with choreography, so that it blends with the action on the stage.

Note 4: *Casting:* All parts, except for LORENZIO and MARIA can be cast from either gender.

The Real Temple

Scene 1

Pre-show music out. The bedroom of LORENZIO. LORENZIO is standing in front of a full-length mirror doing "muscle poses." He is a very ordinary-looking eighth-grader. There are muscle magazines around. The "mirror" is actually an empty frame so that the audience can see him clearly. There is a window frame with curtains, a picture, perhaps an overhead light: all of these are flown in and will fly out at the end of the scene; they will return at the end of the play. There is also a dresser. Music is playing in the background; LORENZIO may be singing along, perhaps even dancing a little.

As LORENZIO looks at himself in the mirror, he can do various funny things: slap his gut, suck in his gut, pick at his hair and nose, etc. MARIA enters with a basketful of clothes, which she puts down and begins to fold and put away in the dresser.

LORENZIO

Mom!

MARIA

Sorry. Didn't knock, spit, say "right on!" three times, and do the secret touchdown dance.

MARIA proceeds to do all of it.

LORENZIO

Mom!

MARIA

Now am I allowed?

LORENZIO

You get weirder by the yard every day.

MARIA

But I'm not boring.

LORENZIO

No, just weird.

MARIA

You prefer boring?

LORENZIO

I am boring.

MARIA

You're not boring.

LORENZIO
Mom, you're bugging me! A little privacy,
please?

LORENZIO slumps to the floor and begins riffling through one of the magazines.

MARIA
You like how they look?

LORENZIO
Yeah.

MARIA
Really?

LORENZIO
You don't?

MARIA
I don't know. Kinda lumpy. Tell me what you
like.

LORENZIO
Are you done?

MARIA
Almost.

She leaves the basket and goes to sit down by him.

MARIA
I'm sorry. I just saw your door open, had to
bring the clothes in. I know you need your
privacy. Forgive me?

LORENZIO shrugs his shoulders.

MARIA
I'll take that as a yes. Okay, I'm done. You can
go back. In privacy.

MARIA gets up, gets the basket, and starts to leave.

LORENZIO
Mom?

MARIA
Yeah?

LORENZIO
Think I can ever look like this?

MARIA
Like that?

LORENZIO
Yeah?

MARIA
I suppose anyone could.

LORENZIO
But me?

MARIA
Why not?

LORENZIO
(brings the magazine down)
But me?

MARIA
Honey, what's the matter?

LORENZIO
Nuthin'.

MARIA
(gentle mocking)
Somethin'.

LORENZIO
Nuthin'!

MARIA
Somethin'!

LORENZIO
I'm boring.

MARIA joins him at the "mirror."

MARIA
And just what do you think that means?

LORENZIO
Mom, I don't want adult-speak, okay? Am I boring?

MARIA
Not to me. I think you're really funny.

LORENZIO
(indicating the magazines)
But, you know, I got none of this --

MARIA

They can't scratch their butts.

LORENZIO

Mom!

MARIA

They have to hire butt-scratchers they're so tight. Now how do you think that would look?

LORENZIO

That's what I'd be -- a butt-scratcher.

MARIA

Not any son of mine! You are destined to have your butt scratched, young man!

LORENZIO

I got Dad's genes.

MARIA

Biology isn't everything. I know this will sound stupid, but you can be anything you want.

LORENZIO

Next NBA slum-dunk champ?

MARIA

Oop, well, that's a stretch!

(punches his arm to accent the pun)

Stretch, get it -- ha, ha, ha? 'Fraid that's where your Dad's genes and mine work against you.

LORENZIO

So I can't be anything I want.

MARIA

Toughest thing in life -- knowing how to know what you want. Once you know that, you can get going on your journey.

LORENZIO

What's my journey?

MARIA

That, love of my life, is the hardest thing to know. But, I can tell you this -- it won't be boring. Those kinds of journeys never are.

LORENZIO
(dejected)

Yeah.

MARIA gets up and starts doing muscle poses in the "mirror."

MARIA
You know, some of those babes in there --

(indicates the magazines)

-- I know you look at the babes! -- make me feel boring. How cut they are. Bodies -- such strange things, huh? How am I doing?

LORENZIO gets up and poses with her.

LORENZIO
Like this.

For a few moments they pose together until they break up laughing.

MARIA
You, boring? Hah! Give me your shirt -- I've got another load going in.

LORENZIO takes off his shirt -- he's wearing a white tee-shirt. He hook-shots it to MARIA, who grabs it and slam-dunks it in the basket.

MARIA
Score!

Dances around, high-fives LORENZIO, etc.

MARIA
Hey, if they lowered the basket, we'd all be champs! Catch the later wave, dude!

MARIA dances out of the room. LORENZIO goes back to doing poses in the "mirror." Underscoring music begins.

* * * * *

Scene 2: The Coronation

LORENZIO peers more deeply into the "mirror," posing this way and that. As he does so, the music strengthens and the lights begin to signal that something is going to happen. LORENZIO peers so deeply into the "mirror" that he "falls" through it. When he does, all the scenery flies away, and LORENZIO finds himself suddenly in a very strange place. Music and lights become **really** strange, then everything goes dark except a single spotlight on LORENZIO.

LORENZIO

What? What? Hey, wait a minute. Where am I?
Where am I? Where the h --

But before he can get the curse word out, a trio of voices tells him
to "Sssh!"

KNIGHTS

Sssh!

Three separate lights come up on the three KNIGHTS IN A DAZE.

KNIGHT 1 (MOE)

Be careful!

KNIGHT 2 (LARRY)

Can't use that word!

KNIGHT 3 (SHERRY)

Don't go there!

LORENZIO

All right -- then where the heck am I?

MOE

You're in a very strange place.

LARRY

You are having magical things happen to you.

SHERRY

Pay attention.

LORENZIO

Who are you?

KNIGHTS

We are Three Knights In A Daze.

LORENZIO

What?

MOE

Three Knights --

LARRY

In --

SHERRY

A Daze.

LORENZIO

Sounds a bad punk band.

Suddenly, with volume and force, comes the VOICE OF DENSITY. During the next lines the lights come up completely to reveal the KNIGHTS and LORENZIO.

VOICE

So --

LORENZIO

Who are you? What are you?

VOICE

I am the Voice of Density.

LORENZIO

Density? Don't you mean "destiny"?

VOICE

Density!

LORENZIO

All right! Density!

VOICE

Because I am one heavy dude!

LORENZIO

Gotcha, dude. Now cut down on the decibels, Density.

VOICE

So --

LORENZIO

So --

VOICE

So -- aren't you the least bit interested in what's happening here?

LORENZIO

Where is "here"?

VOICE

This is your life.

LORENZIO

I was just looking in the mirror --

VOICE

And you fell into your life.

LORENZIO

I fell through the mirror?

VOICE
Dawn comes late to Marblehead.

LORENZIO
And what, exactly, is my life at the moment?

MOE
You have a second chance.

LORENZIO
A second chance.

LARRY
To get your wishes.

SHERRY
So don't blow it.

Enter onto the stage a crowd of people. Pennants and flags, if possible. Cheerleaders could be doing cheers. Music changes into something heraldic, stirring. In short, the director is free to make as massive and gaudy a spectacle as possible. As the VOICE speaks, the audience sees LORENZIO, who begins to swell with pride and purpose.

VOICE
Think big, man, think massive and cosmic! Think Density! Think All-You-Can-Eat! Think 4th of July on caffeine! Think like a king!

LORENZIO
A king! A king!

At his voice, the crowd kneels and becomes silent.

VOICE
How about that?

LORENZIO
I like it!

(looking at himself)

But I think I need some kingly clothes.

KNIGHTS
The Emperor should never be naked!

VOICE
It's coronation time.

Part of the crowd parades past LORENZIO with costumes and weapons of many kinds. He pulls clothes, hats, shoes, a weapon, etc. from the passing throng, dressing himself in a regally outlandish costume.

Others can go through the audience passing out small crowns, like Burger King, or small flags. LORENZIO ad libs as he sees the clothes: "Oooh, I like that," "Nope," etc.

VOICE

Now, everyone -- attention!

Everyone takes a knee. The KNIGHTS exchange places to get close to LORENZIO but crash into each other as they do so.

LORENZIO

These are my knights?

VOICE

Knights chivalric, true and blue.

LORENZIO

I'm stuck with them?

VOICE

They're stuck to you.

LORENZIO

What are your names again?

KNIGHTS

Three Knights In A Daze.

The VOICE takes up a rap beat with "record scratch"; the KNIGHTS move to it. The crowd can participate in it as well, pounding onstage to keep a rhythm.

KNIGHTS

We're the guys who watch your back / We keep your
back from a sneak attack

MOE

My name is Moe.

LARRY

My name is Larry.

SHERRY

You think it might be Curley / But I'm known as
Sherry.

KNIGHTS

We're stuck to you / True through and through /
Protect you and connect you / Let's "Boo-ga-loo"
/ Boo-ga-loo / Boo-ga-loo / Boo-ga-loo / Yeah!

All three draw their swords ineptly and try to cross them in the air, making a mess of the heroic gesture. They look at themselves, then at

LORENZIO, look abashed, and fumble into a kneeling posture before LORENZIO, stepping on each other's lines of praise.

MOE

Oh great dread sovereign --

LARRY

Oh thrice potent master --

SHERRY

Oh sovereign grand commander --

LORENZIO

Enough! I get the point. All right. Get up.

They rise.

LORENZIO

Now, slowly and with great reverence, walk backward and stand over there.

They start to move, bowing and scraping, knocking into each other, etc.

LORENZIO

Go on, go on.

When they reach the point, LORENZIO commands them.

LORENZIO

Stop and do not move!

They are frozen in some ridiculous postures, and the crowd laughs uproariously.

VOICE

(booming)

Silence!

(everyone falls silent)

That's better. Now, would everyone please take up their places for the Coronation Oration, otherwise known as "When The Crown Comes Down." Ready? Hit it.

Everyone immediately forms into ranks and patterns -- these are up to the director, but they should have several levels, with people in figures on the floor, standing, and elevated: symmetrical but goofy. As they chant the following words, a crown and a Prince Valiant wig are flown in, which LORENZIO will unhook and put on. If they cannot be flown in, then someone comes onstage with them hanging from a long pole. The VOICE should be in on the chant. This could be done en masse or in choral parts, and there should be stylized

movements to reinforce the words -- again, these should be funny and silly.

ALL

Oh dread and potent lord / Please don't sit down
on your sword

LORENZIO looks at them questioningly. They all shrug their shoulders and smile.

ALL

That's right -- that's what we said. Do you get
the point?

Massive groan at the pun.

LORENZIO

(to the VOICE)

These are the sacred words?

VOICE

When in Rome --

ALL: Oh dread and potent lord / Please don't sit
down on your sword / If you should hurt your bum
/ We'd all feel sad and glum / Instead, stand
strong and tall / And be a king for all / And if
you do your work / Then we won't call you a jerk.

LORENZIO

(loud whisper)

I thought I was supposed to get a little respect.

VOICE

This is respect -- you should hear them when they
don't like someone.

ALL

If we don't like what you do / Then we'll chop
off your head, too / Ain't it fun to rule a mob?
/ Hope you like your job.

By this time LORENZIO has his wig and crown on.

ALL

Hail, King D'Arthur! May your rama-lama-ding-
dong always last real long! May your doo-wacka-
doo be always kind to you!

LORENZIO

(addressing the crowd)

Thank you for this honor --

VOICE

That's enough.

LORENZIO

Wait a second. I want to speak to my people.

VOICE

Can't. You have work to do.

Lights change.

LORENZIO

What's going on?

VOICE

Being king is not all beer and skittles.

ALL

Nuh-uh!

VOICE

You have to earn your keep!

ALL

Sis-boom-bah!

VOICE

If you want to keep your crown, you have to go on a quest.

ALL

(like the commercial)

Be all that you can be!

VOICE

You have three tasks to perform.

ALL

Three -- count 'em, three!

LORENZIO

A quest?

VOICE

You have to find true beauty, strength, and wisdom.

LORENZIO

That doesn't sound so hard.

VOICE

You will begin immediately on your quest for true beauty.

The KNIGHTS clank forward.

MOE

It's our duty --

LARRY

To follow you --

SHERRY

So Rooty-toot-tooty!

KNIGHTS

(inept dance moves)

Let's "Boo-ga-loo."

LORENZIO

Let's go.

The crowd exits as LORENZIO waves at them. The KNIGHTS jockey to get close to him, try to lift him on their shoulders, knock each other about, etc. Lights change.

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Scene 3: The Quest for Beauty

In the scene change, a ladder is brought out; this is GRAPUNZEL-DUNZEL's "tower." GRAPUNZEL-DUNZEL stands on it; she carries a coil of braided rope that will become her "hair." It should be about 20' in length and braided from a rough, heavy rope. It should also be attached to a cap of sorts that can be taken off. She also wears a white half-mask that has on it an exaggerated cosmetic face: big eye-lashes, red cheeks, etc. -- an exaggeratedly feminine face, like a doll. If it can be dared, balloons for bosoms.

LORENZIO and the KNIGHTS enter from the back of the house to music, and as they do, the VOICE narrates their journey. They are riding hobby horses.

VOICE

And, lo, they traveled through many a strange country in search of true beauty -- but it seemed in really short supply.

LORENZIO

Let's stop here -- I'm bushed.

MOE

(pulling on his hobby horse)

Hi-ho, Silver --

LARRY

Whoa, Paint.

SHERRY

Easy, Trigger.

Of course, they bump into each other and into LORENZIO.

LORENZIO

I told you guys, at least a ten-foot buffer zone!
That last pig pile we had about snapped my back.

MOE

Sorry about that, boss. My fault -- I "gee'd"
when I should have "haw'd."

LARRY

Gee, what a shame!

SHERRY

Haw did you do that?

They laugh.

LORENZIO

Stop it! No more stupid puns! No more "Knock,
knock" jokes. No more "a priest, a rabbi, and an
iguana" jokes. No more --

(in a pouty, whiny voice)

"I should be first this time! No, it's my turn!
No, Larry always gets to ride point and say,
'Watch out for the dead griffin on the right.' "
No more "He's touching me! He's touching me!
Oooh, cooties!" You guys are the most ridiculous
knights a king could ever have!

They look crestfallen.

VOICE

Don't you think you're a little hard on them?
Isn't he, folks?

KNIGHTS should encourage the audience to go "Awww" in sympathy.
LORENZIO cuts it short.

LORENZIO

(to VOICE)

Butt out, oh ponderous poo-bah.

(to the audience)

Don't encourage them.

(to KNIGHTS)

If we weren't in the middle of some god-forsaken
disenchanted forest, I'd go right over to
Knights-For-A-Day and trade you in.

VOICE

Awww.

More encouragement of the audience by KNIGHTS.

LORENZIO

I'm warning you!

KNIGHTS continue to look crestfallen and woe-begone.

VOICE

Give 'em a break. What'd'ya say, good people?
Thumbs up if you agree.

LORENZIO

All right -- all right!

(to audience)

You can put your thumbs away. Just be careful
where you put them.

(to KNIGHTS)

You're not that bad. You're all smarter than,
than -- a fire hydrant, and that counts for
something in this world, right?

(to the audience)

Satisfied?

KNIGHTS signal the audience that it is not enough, but LORENZIO
catches them. They retreat back to their "crestfallen" look.

LORENZIO

We'll camp here. Now, where are we going to find
true beauty?

GRAPUNZEL

(she waves)

Yoo-hoo!

LORENZIO

Great -- now we have a screech owl! Bring it on,
bring it on -- make it worse!

GRAPUNZEL

(even stronger)

Yoo-hoo!

LORENZIO
(muttering)

Having the saddle rash wasn't enough --

KNIGHTS catch sight of GRAPUNZEL and are enraptured, signaled by a musical trill of some sort.

MOE
Boss, I don't think it's a screech owl.

LARRY
Not at all.

SHERRY
Not by a mile. Not by a mile and three-quarters.

GRAPUNZEL
Hello, there.

LORENZIO
Don't interrupt me -- can't you see I'm whining?

KNIGHTS drop their horses and move in a rapture toward GRAPUNZEL.

LORENZIO
Where are you going?

LORENZIO sees where they are headed, and he, too, is enraptured: musical trill.

MOE
Oh, lady sweeter than Nutrasweet.

LARRY
Oh, breeze softer than Downy.

SHERRY
Oh, beauty hotter than jalapeños.

GRAPUNZEL
I do declare, you boys are going to spoil me.

(spying LORENZIO)

But who are you, mon chevalier?

LORENZIO
Ding K'Arthur -- I mean King D'Arthur. Ring of the Tound Kable -- uh, Ting of the Kound Rable --

LARRY
Good goin', boss.

LORENZIO
(spitting it out)
King of the Round Table.

GRAPUNZEL
And may I sit at your table?

ALL
Yes, please do.

They all sit, staring up at her.

VOICE
And thus she began her tale.

GRAPUNZEL
I am just a poor young thing from the South who
has had to depend upon the kindnesses of strong,
handsome, virile, turbo-charged men like
yourselves.

They all bay at the moon like dogs.

ALL
Yowwww!

MOE
What is your name, oh felicitous filly?

GRAPUNZEL
My name -- It is does not rank high among the
stars -- My poor humble name is Lady Gretchen
Grapunzel-Dunzel.

SHERRY
And how did you get trapped in this nasty, nasty
tower?!

GRAPUNZEL
Therein lies a tale of woe.

ALL
Oh, no!

GRAPUNZEL
The nasty Baron de Blanche du Bois avec C'est Moi
stole me from my father and locked me in this
tower to protect my ravishing and unparalleled
beauty from ever being enjoyed by any other man
or beast.

ALL
(a lá Stanley Kowalski)
Grapunzellllllll!

GRAPUNZEL

Music to my ears.

LORENZIO

How may we help you, dangling damsel?

GRAPUNZEL

Well, this wicked old curse the Baron put on me could be broken if one of you can scale this tower and rescue me.

Beat as they survey the task.

MOE

Uh, how can we do that? It's as smooth as glass.

LARRY

I'm sort of afraid of heights.

SHERRY

And I'm afraid of people who are afraid of heights.

LORENZIO

Is there any way you can help us?

GRAPUNZEL throws down the coil of rope, her "hair" -- it should make a big thud when it falls. They look at it, pick it up, examine it.

GRAPUNZEL

Just climb up my hair -- and you will have pleasure unlike anything you have ever, ever known.

MOE

Wow -- look at how beautiful this -- this -- hair is!

LARRY

(feeling it, unwilling to admit what it is)
It's so, so, so -- I can't think of a word for it.

They start fighting over the "hair"; GRAPUNZEL's head bobs as if it is being pulled by their tussle.

GRAPUNZEL

Señor Knights -- please!

MOE

Me first.

LARRY
Nah-uh, knucklehead -- me first.

SHERRY
That's where you're both wrong -- move over.

GRAPUNZEL
Boys!

LORENZIO
Hey! Who's the king here?

They desist but continue to jab and poke each other.

LORENZIO
This king job has to have some perks other than
the three of you. I will rescue the fair Lady
Gretchen Grapunzel-Dunzel de Blanche du Bois avec
C'est Moi.

LORENZIO does a series of ten funny stretches, etc. to get ready to go
up the rope. KNIGHTS counts out one to ten.

VOICE
She'll pass her expiration date before you get up
there!

LORENZIO
Here we go!

The KNIGHTS pick him up slowly so it looks like he is actually
ascending.

GRAPUNZEL
Oh, yes, I know you can do it. I know that "you
the man"!

But when LORENZIO gets to a certain height, the cap slips off and the
"hair" tumbles down. They all fall down.

GRAPUNZEL
Oh -- oh -- oh -- damn!

LARRY
What happened?

MOE
She lost her head --

LARRY
Well, some of it.

SHERRY
You mean none of it was real?

LORENZIO
Explain this, dear Gretchen Grapunzel-Dunzel de
Blanche du --

Now using some outrageous foreign accent -- French or German would be
good.

GRAPUNZEL
I know my name!

LORENZIO
Well?

GRAPUNZEL
All right, so it isn't real!

MOE
I'm -- I'm -- shocked.

SHERRY
I feel violated.

LARRY
You mean all that glitters is not gold?

Triumphal music.

LORENZIO
Then, who are you?

GRAPUNZEL takes off the mask. Her hair is slicked back, and she pulls
out of a pocket a handlebar moustache, which she puts on: she now
becomes the classic villain in a melodrama, a *la Snidely Whiplash*.

GRAPUNZEL
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

MOE
It's the evil Baron!

If GRAPUNZEL has a balloon bosom, she should also take out a pin and
pop the balloons through the cloth of the dress.

GRAPUNZEL
Ah, music to my ears!

LORENZIO
I demand --

GRAPUNZEL
You demand nothing!

MOE
Why, oh why, oh why, oh why --

GRAPUNZEL

Because I am tired of all you so-called knights -
-

(pronounces it as "kah-nites")

-- cruising --

(pronounced "cah-roosing")

-- around my cah -- cah -- cah -- castle grounds,
crushing the carrots, casting caca everywhere,
all mystical visions and bad body odor!

LORENZIO

So you get us to climb up there --

GRAPUNZEL

And then I simply cut the rope!

LARRY

You're not beautiful at all!

GRAPUNZEL

And I suppose you're MCAS material. Now get out
of here and go home where you belong! And leave
the hair there -- do you have any idea how much
that stuff costs today?

They retreat.

GRAPUNZEL

(maniacally)

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

The play continues as they encounter Strength (The Saggin' Dragon) and
Wisdom (King Sale-O-Man). LORENZIO finally finds out that beauty,
strength, and wisdom are not endowed from the outside but must be
forged from the inside, from heart and spirit.