

Happily Ever After Toxic Masculinity

By Sandy Maranto

NOTES:

Who hasn't ever wondered what happened to the characters from our most beloved fairy tales *after* "they all lived happily ever after?" In her send-up of the toxic masculinity exemplified by a few of the world's most notorious and infamous princes from classic children's stories, playwright Sandy Maranto shines a spotlight on the ever-changing landscape of toxic masculinity. Under her hysterical microscope, Maranto soon reveals that the princes we knew from our youth are all either divorced or seperated; thus, the reason they find themselves seeking help at the Obsolete Prince Therapy Center. One thing is clear: the world has redefined "male gender roles" amidst today's new cultural definitions of what it truly means to be 'masculine.' This comedic play is perhaps best suited for a male performer; however, Maranto gives permission for the roles to also be portrayed by a female, if desired. This satire may be entered in Humorous Interpretation, and the performer(s) should not be afraid to go "over-the-top" with their characterizations of each prince. Be sure, however, that each prince is clearly defined both physically and vocally, so that the audience can easily distinguish each character throughout the performance. This is a very funny play for talented comedic performers!

Setting:

Inside the Obsolete Prince Therapy Center. Envision a therapy center, if run by a state agency.

Characters:

Phillip: *Loosely-based on the prince from Hans Christian Andersen's Sleeping Beauty. He's a rather proper, flowery prince in words and mannerisms. He's the type of person who is too royal in his own mind to get his hands dirty. He's an extreme metrosexual. He pretty much defines the word highfalutin.*

Eric: *A prince, loosely-based on the prince from Hans Christian Andersen's The Little Mermaid, who is more down-to-earth than Phillip. He's more of a modern-day guy. He's an aging Generation-X-type of man. He's also noticeably pudgy; in fact, he's what would be considered overweight by any health professional's standards.*

Flynn: *A prince for the millennial generation. He's sincere, authentic, and truly wants to help people. He has a man bun and wears skinny jeans.*

Female Voice: *An employee at the therapy center.*



At Rise: *Three chairs are on stage in a row facing the audience. One chair has a woman's hiking boot on it. PHILLIP and ERIC are seated on the two chairs on*

either side of the hiking boot. There's light background noise resembling that of a busy, bureaucratic office playing, and then an intercom breaks through and quiets the background noise with the following announcement from a FEMALE VOICE OFFSTAGE:

FEMALE VOICE (OS): Mr. Charming, please report to window number three. Paging Mr. Charming for window number three.

ERIC: I didn't know Charming was here.

PHILLIP: *(Picking up the woman's hiking boot from the chair beside him)* Oh, he's here all right. *(Places the boot back on the chair)* He's using the facilities. I saw him enter there with some hairspray and toothpaste. You know Charming. He won't dare approach that window, since there's a fair maiden there, unless his hair is perfectly coiffed and his teeth sparkle like freshly fallen snow atop the highest mountain peak reflecting the glorious light shining down from the orb of life hung in the sky, as if painted there by Monet himself.

ERIC: Orb of life?

PHILLIP: *(Clarifying)* The sun, gentle fellow. Charming is not going to approach any member of the fairer sex, unless his teeth are shining like a snowy mountaintop reflecting the sun.

LIGHT AND SOUND CUES: Just as Phillip finishes his last line, a spotlight shines downstage right close to the curtain, and a soft but clearly audible "ping" sound is heard followed by a pre-recorded chorus of angelic voices singing "Ah, ah, ah!!!"

FEMALE VOICE (OS): Oh, my, how your teeth shine like a snowy mountaintop reflecting the sun, Mr. Charming.

LIGHT CUE: The spotlight goes off.

ERIC: *(Picking up the hiking boot that is on the chair positioned between Eric and Phillip)* What's this all about?

PHILLIP: Ever since his divorce from Ella, the sad lad has been desperately searching for a mate who can appreciate the breadth and depth of his self-perceived greatness; however, gentle ladies of today do not generally run around in glass slippers. *(Taking the hiking boot from Eric)* This boot serves as a reminder to Charming of the time that he followed three young maidens, who were on a hiking adventure, into a canyon. He awaited them to take their slumber, and then he approached their tent. He believed that if he could make off with one of their hiking boots, he could return later and delight the young lass by slipping it onto her foot, thereby solidifying their true love. Tragically, when the young maidens awoke to Charming scurrying away with one of their boots, they attacked him. One of the three lasses wrestled and hogtied him, while another held him at gunpoint. This allowed the third to go find a park ranger. He was arrested for stalking and thievery and thrown into a dungeon.

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ERIC: Wow. How long was he in there?

PHILLIP: Just a short period of time. Charming can't last too long without his grooming products. He has a very strict skincare regimen. Eventually, the guards could take no more of his caterwauling about his need for his *Ulta* beauty cream, so they released him. After that day, he vowed to keep a lass's hiking boot with him always in hopes that it might help him refrain from making such errors in judgment in the future. (*Setting the boot back down on the chair*) Poor, poor Charming. He hasn't had much luck with ladies in the new millennium.

ERIC: Well, the *young maiden* at window number three seems to be enamored by him.

PHILLIP: I wouldn't bet any shillings on that. These days, he has a way of wearing out his 'charm.'

LIGHT AND SOUND CUES: Just as Phillip finishes his last line, a spotlight shines downstage right close to the curtain, and a soft but clearly audible "ping" sound is heard followed by a pre-recorded chorus of angelic voices singing "Ah, ah, ah!!!"

FEMALE VOICE (OS): No, Mr. Charming! For the last time, I do NOT want to try on the hiking boot you brought with you! Please, move it along, or I'll have to call security!

LIGHT CUE: The spotlight goes off.

ERIC: So, uh, I was sorry to hear about you and Aurora.

PHILLIP: Thank you so much, kind prince, for your condolences. I think deep down I always knew that our romance would fail to withstand the test of time. If I'm being honest with you and myself, I knew the moment she opened her mouth that our relationship would eventually come to a close.

ERIC: How did you know that so soon?

PHILLIP: Eric, my good man, I dare say that you've never slipped your tongue into the mouth of a maiden who's been at slumber for one hundred years.

ERIC: Can't say that I have.

PHILLIP: It is not an ideal situation. Our divorce is the only one ever in the history of Happily Ever After Land to be granted on the basis of halitosis.

ERIC: Hate to say it, but your reason for divorce seems a little 'superficial.'

PHILLIP: You hate to say it, yet you did. Hmmm. So. Really? Superficial, you say? Since you brought up the topic of superficiality, I heard through the fairy tale grapevine, that you left Ariel because of her, oh, how shall I put this delicately? Because of her widening *mermaid* tail.

ERIC: (*Sarcastically*) Thank you for putting it delicately. Okay. So maybe I'm superficial, too, but when I met Ariel, she was this beautiful, perfectly shaped, gorgeous redhead. Her main pleasure in life was simply pleasing me. Then one day, I noticed *something* about her.

PHILLIP: (*Making a hand gesture along with his words*) Her widening tail?