

Princess Grace of Knockedown, Christmas Version Cast List

3-5 Male, 3 Female, 1 M/F, and Extras (M/F)

TOWN CRIER (M) Dan of Rather by name, he announces for the Court. He should have a good sense of delivery and physical humor; touchy if anyone demeans his line of work.

JESTER (M/F) A comedian of the court who often speaks before thinking—or filtering.

SERVANT GIRL (F) Charity by name, she is a lowly kitchen girl.

KING (M) The long-suffering father of Grace. He is desperate to get his daughter married while the castle is still standing.

QUEEN (F) The long-suffering mother of Grace. She is desperate to get her daughter married while they still have a dowry.

PRINCESS GRACE (F) Do not let the name fool you. She is anything but graceful. This actress will need to be very good on clumsiness and physical humor.

HORACE, THE DANDY (M) He should be dressed to the nines and pompous.

MALCOLM, THE DURABLE WIDOWER (M) Obviously older than the other two suitors. He should also be good on physical humor.

RASPUTIN (M) Allegedly immune to pain, he's been poisoned, shot, stabbed, drowned, hanged, shot again, drowned again, and frozen. But he hasn't met Grace.

**If you are short on actors, suitors can be played by the same actor.*

EXTRAS (M or F) Various courtiers or servants at the banquet.

Sample Pages

FANFARE AND WELCOME

(When guests have been seated, a second BRASS FANFARE will signal all entertainers to clear the hall. Lights up; JESTER enters and greets guests as he makes his way to the main stage.)

JESTER:

Welcome good lords and ladies fair!

The Christmas spirit's in the air!

Our noble king will soon arrive;

The year is 1625! *(Loud crash off-stage. JESTER looks side-stage, hesitates then continues.)*

Here in the village of Knockerdown,
I am the jester—of great renown.
So, may the mirth that fills this hall
Amuse and delight you, one and all.

(Loud crash and screams off-stage. JESTER looks side-stage, hesitates then continues.)

So, welcome, oh most honored guests— *(Loud crash off-stage. SERVANT GIRL rushes in.)*
Charity, what on earth is going on back there? I am welcoming the guests!

SERVANT GIRL: She's back!

JESTER: She? Who she?

SERVANT GIRL: Princess Grace! *(Looks around frantically.)* Quick! Is there a suit of armor around here?

JESTER: *(Panicky.)* Princess Grace? But, she wasn't due to return until Christmas Eve! I'm finally off of my crutches!

SERVANT GIRL: That was the plan, but before the sleigh could get across the river, Grace broke the ice.

JESTER: Started a conversation with the driver?

SERVANT GIRL: No. She broke the ice.

JESTER: But how—

SERVANT GIRL: Don't ask! *(To herself.)* I think I saw some chain mail in the armory! *(Exits quickly.)*

JESTER: *(To himself.)* Luckily, I hid a breastplate in my room. *(Loud crash off-stage.)*

(Various SERVANTS run through looking panicked. Various "Out of my way," "I get the helmet," etc. After they exit, BRASS FANFARE.)

JESTER: And I bet the King and Queen don't know yet. *(Shrugs.)* Well, they're on their own. I'd better get geared up. *(Starts to exit then stops.)* Oh, I almost forgot. *(Loudly as he shouts to the back of the hall.)*

Ready the meal and heat the wassail!
Bring forth the meat and finest of ale!
Grab some armor! Singers appear!

The King and his court are drawing near! (*Exits quickly.*)

Court processional follows and wassail toasts . . .

KING: (*Stands and holds up her cup.*)
Lords and ladies of the town,
Welcome to the Castle of Knockerdown!
The night is young; the season's airy.
Forget your cares and now be merry.
Hear my toast, and hear it well.
To all of you, I say wes hale!
[Louder.] Drink hale!

COURTIERS: (*Stand and loudly say.*) Drink hale!

COURTIERS & AUDIENCE: (*Encourage audience to join in.*) Drink hale! Drink hale!

QUEEN:
And may the season's joy impart
The reason for a merry heart!

*(If desired, SINGERS sing final verse of **Gloucestershire Wassail**. Lights down on main stage. The **first course is served** and ambient entertainers entertain guests at tables. After guests have had some time to eat, lights up on main stage. JESTER enters and action begins.)*

QUEEN: Milord, has the new Town Crier arrived yet?

KING: He was due to arrive today.

JESTER: (*Looks side-stage.*) Ah, I believe he has arrived, Sire.

TOWN CRIER: (*Enters and bows.*) My King, permit me to introduce myself. I am Daniel of Rather, your new Town Crier.

KING: Daniel of Rather? Small town, is it?

TOWN CRIER: Rather.

QUEEN: We are delighted to meet you! And . . . thank you for coming on such short notice.

TOWN CRIER: (*Bows again.*) I am honored to serve the King.

JESTER: I'm not sure "serve the King" is the right phrase. Buffer the King? Protect the King? Be a stunt double for the King?

KING: (*To JESTER.*) Be silent for the King?

QUEEN: (*To TOWN CRIER.*) What he means is that we've had some difficulty keeping our Town Criers.

JESTER: (*Interjects.*) Oh, we have no trouble keeping them. In fact, they have their own ward in the hospital.

QUEEN: Well, our Town Criers do have an excellent health insurance plan.

JESTER: If you want to plan to ensure your health, run.

TOWN CRIER: I don't understand.

KING: (*Glares at JESTER.*) You will. (*Sighs.*) Jester, explain to our new Town Crier the situation. I don't want him to enter our service blind.

JESTER: Maybe blindfolded with a cigarette.

KING: Jester.

JESTER: Yes, your Highness. (*JESTER bows.*)

TOWN CRIER: (*To JESTER as they exit.*) So, if I may ask, what happened to the last Town Crier?

JESTER: Well, he did something stupid.

TOWN CRIER: What was that?

JESTER: He tried to announce the arrival of Princess Grace at the joust.

TOWN CRIER: Isn't that his job?

JESTER: Yes.

TOWN CRIER: What happened?

JESTER: Got a spur lodged in his spleen.

TOWN CRIER: Really? How did—

JESTER: Don't ask.

TOWN CRIER: And the Town Crier before him?

JESTER: Couple of hedgehogs in the knee.

TOWN CRIER: And before him?

JESTER: A frog in his throat.

TOWN CRIER: Well, that's not so bad. I've had that problem –

JESTER: No. A frog. Lodged in his esophagus. He almost croaked.

TOWN CRIER: Wow.

JESTER: You bet, wow. Princess Grace put the “crier” in Town Crier. *(They exit.)*

SERVANT GIRL: *(Wearing a pot on her head, she enters nervously and bows before KING.)* Your majesty.

KING: Why are you wearing that ridiculous pot on your head?

SERVANT GIRL: The armory was fresh out of chain mail, your majesty.

KING: That could only mean –

SERVANT GIRL: Princess Grace . . . has returned early.

(ALL at ROYAL TABLE drop utensils suddenly and look afraid.)

KING: She's returned?

QUEEN: But . . . I thought we had another week!

KING: What happened?

SERVANT GIRL: Before or after the ice broke?

KING: *(Looks to QUEEN then back to SERVANT GIRL.)* Never mind that. Has someone stuffed the clappers in the jingle bells?

SERVANT GIRL: Yes, your Highness.

KING: Dulled the needles on the Christmas tree?

SERVANT GIRL: Yes, your Highness.

KING: Wrapped the roasting chestnuts in asbestos and snuffed the open fire?

SERVANT GIRL: I'm afraid not, Sire, but I will make sure someone does.

QUEEN: So, where is Grace?

SERVANT GIRL: She is on her way to the hall. I think. (*Looks around nervously.*) May I get back to the kitchen now?

KING: What, you think you'll be safe there? Your goose is already cooked. Foolish child.

QUEEN: Yes, you may go. (*To KING.*) I was so looking forward to a . . . quiet dinner. What will we do now?

KING: (*Beat.*) It's the Christmas season: the season of miracles, right?

QUEEN: Yes.

KING: And a romantic season, right?

QUEEN: That's what the diamond commercials say.

KING: Then, we must get her married off. I will have the Town Crier announce that we are allowing suitors to call during the holiday. All unmarried noblemen of royal blood. (*Beat.*) Scratch that. All eligible bachelors. (*Beat.*) Scratch that. All breathing males with a life insurance policy.

Later, we find out what happened to Grace . . .

TOWN CRIER: I beg your pardon, Sire, but has the princess been this way all of her life?

KING: No, I'm afraid it's mostly my fault. We made the classic blunder and neglected to invite the evil fairy Maleficent to the christening.

QUEEN: It was during the Christmas season—you know how busy one gets.

KING: In any case, because of the busy holiday, we neglected to invite her.

QUEEN: But because the King is very adept in politics, he managed to smooth things over at first, so she stayed for snacks.

KING: However, in my attempt to welcome her officially, I tripped and spilled my egg nog on her new gown.

JESTER: (*Laughing.*) The yoke was on her!

QUEEN: (*Glares at JESTER.*) It was no laughing matter, and those who laughed at her certainly didn't help the situation.

KING: "Clumsy" was the word that came to her mind, and in her anger, she put a curse on Grace.

TOWN CRIER: So, she was destined to be clumsy the rest of her life?

JESTER: Yes, if you would categorize a hurricane as "clumsy."

KING: She was destined to be very beautiful, but very clumsy—a danger to anyone who got near to her.

TOWN CRIER: So, is there any way to break the spell?

QUEEN: The spell can only be broken when Grace finds something to hold onto.

TOWN CRIER: (*Beat.*) So, what does that mean?

JESTER: No idea. The evil fairy couldn't give us something specific like breaking the spell with the kiss of true love, or fitting her with a glass slipper, or throwing the ring of power into molten lava.