The Hero Squad
vs.
The Princess Snatchers

by Will Ledesma

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DEDICATION

With thanks to Sonia (for the inspiration), Dan (for the awesome show), and Rex (for the term gobulophobe).

STORY OF THE PLAY

This show is a superhero story about a team of four friends from the fictional metropolis of Metro Valley, Iowa. The Hero Squad literally stumbles across a plan by the nefarious criminal mastermind Nikolai Oshgoshbgoshnikov that somehow involves a mysterious kidnapped princess. Once the princess learns the heroes' true identities, she is determined to join their cause fighting for justice. The heroes, however, gently remind her that she is a princess, and superhero work just isn't safe for princesses. Meanwhile, Oshgoshbgoshnikov blackmails the city's established and arrogant hero, the Good Knight John-Boy, to help in his plan to kidnap the princess and vanquish the Hero Squad. The Good Knight, or the GKJB, has grown pretty tired of the Hero Squad stealing his spotlight. Nikolai has an ace up his sleeve in that he knows the GKJB's one weakness, so with the help of a couple of bank-robbing bottlenose dolphins, John-Boy manages to recapture the princess. As a final clash between the heroes and the villains unfolds, everyone learns a valuable lesson in dreams, acceptance, and judging others based on appearances.

It's a large-scale adventure that can be effectively presented in a small-scale theater, and children go absolutely bananas for it. The play has a running time of 60-70 minutes.

The Hero Squad vs. The Princess Snatchers played to all sold-out houses in Oklahoma City University's Stage II series September 27-29, 2007. Director was Andra Conger. The cast was as follows:
3D: Matt Shultz; LINDY: Shae Orrick; PRINCESS: Rachel Brownjohn; SLAPSHOT: Mindy Pierson; IRON LUNG: William Steuernagel; JOHN-BOY: Adam Peterson; NIKOLAI: Brad Nations; GINA GIZMO: Julia Knapp; Ninjas/Henchmen/Ensemble: Julia Knapp; Clay Burch; Mel ReMine; Dan Schmocker; Leslie Pyron; Wendy Evans; Isaiah Werner.

It premiered professionally on January 28th, 2009, at the A. D. Players Rotunda Children's Theater in Houston, TX. The production was directed by Will Ledesma. Assistant director was Natalie Frances Lerner. Stage manager was Hannah E. Smith. Scenic and prop design was by Stormy Mitchell. Costume design was by Laurie Arriaga. Sound design was by Natalie Frances Lerner. Lighting design was by Angela Washenfelder. The cast was as follows:
GINA GIZMO: Jennifer Dean; 3-D: Jason Shane Bergstrom; LINDY: Katharine Weatherly; IRON LUNG: Travis Hayes; SLAPSHOT: Abby Bergstrom; GOOD KNIGHT JOHN-BOY: Craig Griffin; NIKOLAI OSHGOSHBGOSHNIKOV: Stephen Hurst; PRINCESS: Sarah Cooksey; BOTTLENOSE BOY: Will Ledesma; BOTTLENOSE GIRL: Jennifer Dean.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Cast: 7 and 13 actors. See doubling options next page.)

LINDY: A superhero, co-leader of the Hero Squad. Kind, nurturing, often the peacemaker of the group; acts at times like the team mom, and like any good mother she can get almost frighteningly serious when the situation demands it.

3-D: Another hero, co-leader of the Hero Squad. Strong, dependable; always takes an active leadership role on the field of battle, but never dominating; very likely the most "legit" of the Hero Squad; remains level-headed in difficult situations. Wears "interesting" glasses.

THE IRON LUNG: A third hero. Not the brightest lad in the world, but thoroughly sincere; friendly and trusting to just about anyone; fiercely loyal and protective of his friends; a bit of a soft spot for pretty girls and his sister, Slapshot.

SLAPSHOT: Iron Lung's little sister, also a hero. Smallest, youngest (teenager), and loudest of the team; spunky, energetic, with a bit of a short fuse; a hockey fanatic, she always wears roller blades and knee and elbow pads and carries her hockey stick. She never uses her stick as a weapon, however, as she's the first to admit, hockey sticks are dangerous! Known to act rashly when riled up, but her bark is always worse than her bite.

NIKOLAI OSHGOSHBGOSHNIKOV: A nefarious evil Russian warlord. Fancies himself as the meanest man in the entire world, but is more taken with the idea of being evil than the actual practice of it. Somewhat of a buffoon; has a vast array of resources, henchmen, and gadgets at his evil disposal; will stop at nothing to "save" the world, by which of course he means to rule it. His plans are always convoluted and would probably work if not for the great leap in logic that undermines his entire way of thinking. Anyway, he's probably not really sure what he would do with the world if he ever did conquer it.

GOOD KNIGHT JOHN-BOY: The city's premiere superhero; big, strong, proud, and self-centered. Known as the "best hero ever," GKJB is more concerned about his press and his image, however, than truth and justice, but he is still *very* good at what he does and has always been a big, mace-wielding, armor-plated thorn in evil's side. Very much a loner.

THE PRINCESS: Mysterious royal from an undisclosed European country; lives life undercover as a commoner so that she may live among her people; cares very deeply for others and has a strong, some may say an overactive, sense of justice; naivety is her super-power.

GINA GIZMO: A voice-over. Can easily be changed to GARY GIZMO with some pronoun changes.

BOTTLENOSE BOY: Bank robber.

BOTTLENOSE GIRL: Other bank robber.

4 NINJAS: Deadly assassins from the East.

DOUBLING OPTIONS: *For the smallest possible cast, have Nikolai, John-Boy, and the Princess all double as Ninjas and have 3-D and Lindy double as the Bottlenose Boy and Girl, respectively. Also, Gina Gizmo can be a pre-recorded sound cue to further reduce production cast size.*

SETTING

The action of the play occurs within three days. Locales vary throughout the metropolis of Metro Valley, Iowa, including the park, Nikolai's evil lair, the Hero Squad headquarters, and a few city streets. It is current day.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Please use your imagination to make this production as lavish or as minimal as your production requirements will allow. Suggestions for more simplified versions of the two major "fight scenes" can be found in the playwright's notes at the end of the script.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: The play opens in a park somewhere in the major metropolis of Metro Valley, Iowa. There is nothing unusual about the peaceful scene before us until the voice of GINA GIZMO, the Hero Squad's automated technical help, booms over the speakers.)

GINA GIZMO: Hey, gang, this is Gina Gizmo, with a level-six emergency for all superheroes! That's right; I've got a level-six emergency, so all heroes, please report at the beep. *(A beat.)* Beep.

(What follows is a spectacular choreographed tableau not unlike a Saturday morning cartoon show theme song. As each HERO is individually "introduced," they burst onstage, show their stuff a little bit, and hit a strong, character-driven pose. The whole business lasts little more than thirty seconds.)

GINA GIZMO: *(Cont'd.)* Well, it looks like introductions are in order! Time to meet the Hero Squad! First up: he's really big and pretty strong, he fights for right and pummels wrong, put your hands together for my man, 3-D! Up next, loud and rowdy, small and quick, it's the little girl with the hockey stick. Let's hear it for Slapshot! He may not be the brightest of the bunch, but he's a real team player who loves to eat lunch. Ladies and gentlemen, The Iron Lung!

SLAPSHOT: *(Proudly.)* That's my big brother!

GINA GIZMO: And finally: she's sweet, she's graceful, she's a real pal. All around, she's one of my favorite gals. Say hey to Lindy! Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the Hero Squad!!!

LINDY: All right, everybody here?

3-D: The gang's all here, Lindy. Okay, Gina, what's the scoop?

GINA GIZMO: Big problem, 3-D. Looks like some nasty ninjas are on the loose in the city!

End of Freeview

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