FORTUNES BY FATIMBA
By Jerry Rabushka

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FORTUNES BY FATIMA

By Jerry Rabushka

SYNOPSIS: Colleen can't find a man in the modern world, but at a séance with Fatima, she's united with a kindred spirit from 1351. First his spirit, and then...the real thing! "And at a good price for something like that." A chance encounter with him later leads to some unnerving results, as we seek to discover if Fatima's fortune telling is a total fake! A fun and quirky comedy.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(3 female, 1 male, 2 either)

COLLEEN (f) ............................................... A young woman so obsessed with finding “true love” that she loses track of reality and will do anything to find it. (100 lines)

CONVENTIONEER (m/f) ......................... An otherworldly being who presents Colleen with a trophy at the play’s opening. (3 lines)

FATIMA (f) .................................................. A middle aged fortune teller – while she gives off the appearance of wisdom and mystery, she’s also aware that she’s a fraud duping Colleen out of a lot of money. But then again, is she really? (54 lines)

KILE (m) ....................................................... A young man who teams up with Fatima in the effort to defraud Colleen but winds up in her scheme over his head. (45 lines)
PHARO (m/f) ................................................ Silent magical character who Fatima claims to give her the base for her powers. PHA in PHARO should be pronounced like FA in Fa la la la la, not like Pharoah of Egypt. (00 lines)

TROYANA (f) .............................................. Colleen’s friend who has a wisecracking sense of humor and is also a lot more realistic about love and life than Colleen. (27 lines)

PROPS

SCENE 1: A Trophy for the conventioneer to hand Colleen; he can also put an award pendant around her neck instead.

SCENE 2 Menus, some water glasses and other settings for the table in the restaurant; also, a business card for Troyana to hand Colleen.

SCENE 3: Some cards, Colleen needs a purse and some money, a severed head, or a sack that supposedly has the head inside.

SCENE 6: Same as scene two with the addition of drinking glasses.

DIRECTOR’S NOTES

This play thrives on the confusion of the real, the surreal, and the perceived reality, both in the audience and among the characters. The more surreal the set and costumes can be, the more effective the play will be. However, the characters in the play need to see these things as natural, and they need to be presented as such to the audience. This play should have as much glitz, glitter, and glamour as possible, to the point of ostentation.
Scene one, though short, can set a tone, perhaps it’s a dream, perhaps it’s for real, but in any case, Colleen will carry her trophy from this illusion into the reality of scene two.

The rest of the scenes are either at Fatima’s parlor or at the restaurant. On a big enough stage, each of these can be at one half of the stage, or for a smaller venue, a few minor changes can turn one into the other. Both sets basically need a table of some sort, while the décor should reflect either a fortune-telling shop or a nice restaurant.

While Fatima admits she’s a fraud from the start, we also want to believe that perhaps there is some sort of magic at work, and perhaps she does have some sort of powers, so that the audience can be drawn into the scheme along with Colleen. The writer has produced the play twice himself. In one version, Pharo was covered in glitter with blackened eyes, and wearing a grim reaper costume, more or less; in another he was covered entirely, and his face, when revealed, was a gold mask. In any case, he’s kind of strange, but comes across as quite ‘normal’ in the twisted reality that’s part of Fatima’s shop.

This was written to be performed in a very small space, which is why most of the action takes place around a table. For a live production, if you want to stick with one set, one part of the stage can become Fatima’s place, and the other part, the restaurant. Fatima can just as easily be played by a male actor, with a different name such as Faroukh, or Mufassa. You can also throw in extra non-speaking roles at the restaurant, for instance, a busboy, customers, etc., or perhaps some people to applaud her in scene 1.

This script seems to affect people differently; some think Colleen is a total nut case; some hang on her every word, and wish they could have what she wants so badly.

Troyana mostly provides comic relief, to counterbalance Colleen’s obsession; Kile, of course, is a charismatic guy whose plot to earn a few extra bucks backfires on him, leaving him to try and weasel out of this moral and financial predicament he’s helped create.
SCENE 1

SETTING: The entire production should take place in front of some kind of glittering backdrop, like silver foil or the like to create an otherworldly effect...we want to create a feeling that things that might be considered surreal or grotesque in our world are perfectly natural for these characters. The more magical the backdrop and the lighting, and the more 'upscale' it looks, the better the effect.

AT RISE: The play opens with a spotlight on COLLEEN, who is addressing a crowd. Scene one is almost dreamlike. COLLEEN is alone on stage accepting an award; SHE could be in front of a podium. The CONVENTIONEER enters shortly thereafter.

COLLEEN: It has always been my purpose in life to have a love so true that nothing should ever tear it apart or stop our hearts from beating together. I have only wanted to share myself with a man who could look upon me the same way, and the highest goal of our lives would be to bond our two beating hearts as one...I will give anything to find that love and devote myself to it, if it is to be found in this world.

CONVENTIONEER walks in and hands her a trophy...HE or SHE should look a little un-human, like HE died a hundred years ago, and wear a long robe or some outlandish type costume.

I accept this award for all of you out there who believe in love as I do. Beyond all time, all space, and all-purpose of life, it is the only feeling of the heart that can endure forever, and therefore the only sentiment that I could ever pursue.

CONVENTIONEER: It is because you have the purest heart that we give this award to you. No one else could ever deserve it.

COLLEEN: What good is it to accept this award, but more recognition of my pain?

CONVENTIONEER: It is only by recognizing it that you can ever conquer it. Everything in this life has its price. Even love has its price. If you are willing to pay it, you'll find what you desire.
COLLEEN: It would not hurt to pay it, therefore there would be no price. Just a reward.

CONVENTIONEER: Then you will find your empty heart filled. For any pure heart there is a reward, and that reward can only be love.

BLACKOUT / END OF SCENE 1

SCENE 2

AT RISE: Lights up to a table in a restaurant...TROYANA is sitting there. COLLEEN goes to join her.

TROYANA: Colleen! Come on, sit down! They’ve already poured the water. (SHE sits.) Did you see that new little busboy they got here? He is so cute!! I’m on my third glass already!


TROYANA: I’d rather go out with him first, then hear about him. Otherwise, I’d never date anyone at all. (Sees her trophy.) What’s that?

COLLEEN: This? It’s like it came out of a dream. I have won this, but it has won me nothing.

TROYANA: Where did you get that from?

COLLEEN: The Convention of Love. I was judged the one who would give the most.

TROYANA: The most what? Or should I even ask?

COLLEEN: The most of my heart. The most of my life, just to find true love as it has never been found before....

TROYANA: Is this an emotional recovery group?

COLLEEN: No...it’s for those of us who don’t want to recover from our emotions, but rather give into them. I have searched so long for a man who would live for love, and despair of finding him.

TROYANA: So have we all. But frankly, I’d be happy with a man who picks up his socks once or twice a week. We’ve all chased the fantasy, only to find that the end result wasn’t quite the same as the initial presentation.
COLLEEN: Troyana, you are so down on love! Sure we have looked, but we have only looked in this world, in this time, and in this land. The quest is incomplete.

TROYANA: The quest is the same all over. And it has never been successful.

COLLEEN: I know it can be done.... This proves I am the one to do it. But I don’t know where to go from here.

TROYANA: I would go to Fatima.

*Accent the second syllable of FATIMA.*

COLLEEN: Who’s she?

TROYANA: She is one who can take you into another time, or another place. She is all knowing, all-powerful, and can transport souls through time and space. Or so she claims.

COLLEEN: Well, can she, or can’t she?

TROYANA: You know MaryAnn? She sent her on a trip to a 15th Century renaissance ball - though the way she dances I have no idea why she’d bother. And she has put me in touch with my mother, the spirit of Selena, a sports fantasy with Deion Sanders, and the ghost of Elvis.

COLLEEN: So Elvis IS dead, then.

TROYANA: He sings like it, at any rate...but if you can trust anybody, I would trust her. *(Takes out a business card.)* Here. She’s not cheap, and she’s a bit intimidating to the uninitiated, but I think you’ll get what you want.

COLLEEN: It is the only road left untried...I must take it.

TROYANA: Now as I said, she’s not cheap....

COLLEEN: If she can help me, I will need nothing more in life than this.

*BLACKOUT / END OF SCENE 2*
SCENE 3

AT RISE: FATIMA should be at the same table, maybe with a cloth over it, or just another table on another part of the stage. Her place should be mysterious, with candles and an otherworldly decor. Glitzy and glittery, but tasteful. There needs to be a screen somewhere near it, or somewhere that KILE can go to and appear from later. Around the table are FATIMA, PHARO, and KILE, playing cards. After a couple of plays, KILE wins the hand.

KILE: Got you again!

FATIMA: I have the worst luck. One more time, Kile. (Knock at the door.) Oh, she’s here. (They clean up the cards. PHARO wears something like a monk’s outfit, or at least something with a hood that can cover his head entirely. FATIMA covers him up.) Get back where you belong. (KILE scurries behind the screen.) Come in!

COLLEEN: (Enters.) Hello....

FATIMA: Good afternoon, Colleen. I’m Fatima. Please sit down.

COLLEEN: I can’t now. I’m too nervous. I can’t believe it can finally happen.

FATIMA: Tell me once more what it is you wish of me...

COLLEEN: My friend Troyana said you could bring me true love, out of this place, or out of this time.

FATIMA: That I can do. Depending on how badly you want it. If it is not in your heart, I cannot bring it to you.

COLLEEN: It is in my heart. It is the only thing that is in my heart.

FATIMA: A love addict, then.

COLLEEN: Some may say.

FATIMA: It may be true. I play cards incessantly, and I have seen some give their soul for a pair of queens. It’s not different in love. And, the stakes are no higher.

COLLEEN: It is different. There is no higher plane than love.

FATIMA: If you believe so. But some would get just as much pleasure out of four aces. And the chances of finding those four aces are far greater than finding your one king.

COLLEEN: But can you do it for me? Is there no man on earth who can match my heart song for song?
FATIMA: Let me look at you, my child, so I may determine the earnestness of your enterprise. There is one who would have such as you, but I dare not call him unless you are certain. He will not disappoint you, though I fear you may displease him. And he has waited far longer than you.

COLLEEN: I can be no more certain of this. And if you are truly one with the spirits, you will see this in my heart.

FATIMA: I am gazing inside you...and I believe you to be true. Sir Kile has been searching for over six hundred years. He has yet to find a love that suits him. His spirit is wandering, and he is waiting for me to bring him together with a mate for his starved soul. I believe you to be honest in your quest, as I know he is in his...I can unite his spirit to yours and have him fill up the emptiness in your heart.

COLLEEN: Do you really think it can happen?

FATIMA: If you have faith in yourself, it is all you need.

COLLEEN: I have always had faith. This is what I have wanted all my life. I have been as hungry as Sir Kile, and were I to walk the earth in spirit for six hundred years, I would never give up the search for love that I have begun in this pitiful existence I lead now.

FATIMA: This is a very taxing enterprise for me, digging backwards into the centuries. We must go back to 1351. My price is a dollar a year.

COLLEEN: A dollar a year.. is there no one from... 1890?

FATIMA: I thought you said you wanted the real thing. There is only one man who can match your intensity; who plays at love like I play at cards.

COLLEEN: I am prepared. The money is useless if you are spending it with a broken heart.

SHE lays down some money in front of FATIMA, who greedily puts it into her bag.
FATIMA: It’s such an awkward business, taking money in the spirit world. I wouldn’t do it if I could win a game of cards. But we all have our passions, and we pay for them. Sit down, Colleen. I need your full cooperation. You must be very quiet until he speaks to you. Then you may say what you like. (The lights go low, but we still need to be able to see these people. Some strange music starts up in the background.) In the search for love we cross the barrier of time and place, and bring forth the one man who can give to this one-woman wine for an empty glass, banquet for an empty table, and spirit for an empty soul. The only man of all the centuries worthy of such a love as given by Colleen, the only woman who can give herself totally and utterly to serving the passions of the heart. I call upon you, Sir Kile, to reveal yourself to us. Madame Fatima has found the one to end your bloodless years of wandering. To unite, over time, that which nature could not. Close your eyes, and when you open them, he will appear before you.

KILE steps out from behind the screen in Medieval garb. Put a spotlight, strobe, or another kind of effect on him. The more magical his appearance can be, the better.

KILE: Colleen...
COLLEEN: Kile...
KILE: Colleen, my love.
COLLEEN: Kile? My only one! But I feel I have seen you before!
KILE: In your dreams, you have. Just as I have seen you. I have fallen through over six hundred and forty years of emptiness to finally be close to you.

COLLEEN: Could you accept my love as I wish to give it to you?
KILE: And return it. It is only in you that this heart can finally rest. Your love will fill me like wine...

COLLEEN: In a silver goblet...
KILE: Our symbol of love...
COLLEEN: You are my trophy...
KILE: The centuries could not keep us apart, though I have waited outside of time for one such as you to walk upon the earth, now that I am no longer of this world, I have finally found the only reason I would have worked to remain here.

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