Parable of the Ten Virgins: Play Scripted for Nilakantan Gauri by Prema Sastri

(For permission to perform this play read the note at the bottom)

(Left)Virgins in Waiting
(Right)The Wedding

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

VIRGINS.10.

TOWN CRIERS 2

CROWD.

FRUIT SELLER.1

BEGGARS 2.

SCHOOLCHILDREN.3

SHOEMAKER.1

POLICEMEN.3.

STREET SINGERS 5

OLD LADIES. 2

OLD MEN 2

THE KING. 1

The KING`S ATTENDANTS. SEVERAL.

FIRST ATTENDANT.1

THE QUEEN.1

THE QUEEN`S ATTENDANTS.

FIRST ATTENDANT.1

THE KING`S SON. 1

35 speaking roles.

SCENE ONE.

PLACE. THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE TIME OF JESUS.

TIME.LATE AFTERNOON.

SCENE. A BUSY STREET IN THE CAPITAL.

AT RISE. STREET SCENE. PEOPLE ON STAGE.

ENTER FRUIT SELLER.

FRUIT SELLER. Fresh fruit.Bananas, pomegranates, grapes. I also have olives, and dates.(Arranges his baskets, and goes around soliciting)

ENTER SHOEMAKER.(He is holding a string of shoes(.Addresses. Fruit seller) I hope you have some extra fruit for me.

FRUIT SELLER. I have fruit for anyone who will pay.

SHOEMAKER. You have not yet paid me for the repairs I did to your shoe.

FRUIT SELLER. You just put in a couple of stitches.

SHOEMAKER. Without that your shoe would have come apart.

FRUIT SELLER. Allright, here is a pomegranite for you

ENTER SCHOOLCHILDREN.3

(Children run around)

FIRST CHILD. It is good not to be in school.

SECOND CHILD. The classroom was stuffy.

THIRD CHILD. The thatch on the roof was coming apart.Let`s have fun. No one knows where we are

.ENTER. OLD MEN. (They stare at the children, and shake their heads)

ENTER TWO OLD LADIES.(They look around.)

FIRST OLD MAN;(To schoolchildren)
Why are you on the street?
SECOND OLD MAN> You should be in school.

FIRST CHILD. It is a holiday today.

FIRST OLD LADY. What nonsense. My grandchild went to school today

SECOND OLD LADY. So did mine.

THE OLD MEN AND THE LADIES SHAKE THEIR HEADS IN DISAPPROVAL.

ENTER STREET SINGERS.

FIRST SINGER. This looks a merry place.

SECOND SINGER SINGER. So it is.

THIRD SINGER.Let us look around.

FOURTH SINGER. I am sure the people will love our song

.FIFTH SINGER. . Don`t be so sure about it. In the last town they chased us out.

FIRST SINGER We will sing our latest song;the one we made up in the desert.

SECOND SINGER. First let s eat something.(They go to the fruit seller,and buy fruit)

ENTER THE TEN VIRGINS.

FIRST VIRGIN. This is where we were told to come by the temple priest

.SECOND VIRGIN. It is too crowded here.

THIRD VIRGIN. We will stand to one side, and see what happens.

(The virgins form a group)

ENTER BEGGARS.

FIRST BEGGAR. This is a good place for our trade.

SECOND BEGGAR. Ladies and gentlemen. We are hungry. Give us something.(People move away from them, as they go round.).

ENTER POLICEMEN.

FIRST POLICEMAN. Why are you people making such a noise.? You are crowding the street.

SECOND POLICEMAN. Get out of the way.(raises baton)

FRUIT SELLER. It is market day today.

THIRD POLICEMAN. .Sell your wares in the market, not here.

FRUIT VENDOR. This is my market.(Laughs)Come buy grapes, oranges bananas

SECOND POLICEMAN. I`ll give you oranges.(Snatches an orange from the basket)

FRUIT SELLER.Hey give it back.

SECOND POLICEMAN. I`ll give you this.(Raises baton, and gives a blow

The crowd disperses to a side.The two beggars are in front).

FIRST POLICEMAN. What are you doing.?

FIRST BEGGAR. Begging sir. Have you something to give me?.

FIRST POLICEMAN(Raises baton) Yes I have.

SECOND BEGGAR. Have pity on us.

FIRST POLICEMAN. Why should I/ The king will be furious to see the street so crowded. His carriage is due any moment.

SCHOOLCHILD 1 Do we really get to see the king?

POLICEMAN. What are you doing here. ?You should be in school.

SCHOOLCHILD 2. I have to get some things for my mother.(Joins his friend.)

SCHOOLCHILD 3. We will stand in the shade..(They move to a side, trying to look inconspicuous)

OLD LADY 1. What are children coming to these days.

OLD LADY 2 They don`t care about anything.

OLD MAN1.Very true.

OLD MAN2 Not like they were in our day.

STREET SINGERS. Did you say the king was coming this way.?

FIRST POLICEMAN. I did.

SHOEMAKER. Perhaps he may buy some shoes from me.

SECOND POLICEMAN. The king buy shoes from you. That is a joke.(Laughs)

STREET SINGERS. The king is coming. Let us dance and sing.

SINGERS SING. THE CROWD DANCES.

FIRST POLICEMAN. Enough(Turns to virgins)Who are you.? VIRGINS.(Together) We are the keepers of the flame.We bring light.

SECOND POLICEMAN. Stay together then. Let us see the light.(Laughs)

ENTER TOWN CRIERS with a roll of drums

TOWN CRIER.Listen to me all you people. (The mob is silent and looks at him)

I have great and important news for you..

CROWD. Tell us. Tell us.

TOWN CRIER. The king`s son Liam is going to get married.

THE CROWD CLAPS, WAVES ITS HANDS AND DANCES AROUND THE STAGE.

SECOND TOWN CRIER. Wait. There are some special invitees. (He goes to the virgins)You ladies. You have been invited to the wedding feast to light the courtyard. Be sure that your lamps are burning bright.

VIRGINS. We will.

FIRST TOWN CRIER . The prince is going to marry the fair Sara.There will be a great feast. Liam and Sara are a fairy tale couple.

FIRST VIRGIN. Will the queen be coming now.?

SECOND TOWN CRIER. Yes she will.

SECOND VIRGIN.Are we invited to the feast?

FIRST TOWN CRIER. You are.The king and his company will get down near the statue, and walk this way.

THIRD VIRGIN. Is the prince as handsome as they say.?

SECOND TOWN CRIER. He is.

FOURTH VIRGIN. Will the prince`s friends attend the wedding?.

FIRST TOWN CRIER. He has many friends. They will come.

FIFTH VIRGIN. Are they also princes?.

FIRST TOWN CRIER. A prince`s friends can only be of his rank. They are all princes from various countries.

SIXTH VIRGIN. Will there be music? 2

SECOND TOWN CRIER. The best in the land.

SEVENTH VIRGIN.Are there any dancers?

FIRST TOWN CRIER. There will be dancing till dawn.

EIGHTH VIRGIN. Oh how lovely.(Claps her hands.)

NINTH VIRGIN> We are so fortunate.

TENTH VIRGIN. We will have a wonderful time..

SECOND TOWN CRIER Be ready with your lamps. The prince comes to the palace hall at midnight.

EXIT TOWN CRIERS. WITH ROLL OF DRUMS

FIRST POLICEMAN. The king and his court are coming.Stand back. (The crowd moves back.)

THE KING, THE QUEEN,AND THEIR ATTENDANTS CROSS THE STAGE. THEY GREET THE CROWD. THE CROWD IS RAPTUROUS.EXIT KING AND ENTOURAGE

FIRST POLICEMAN. Now all you people clear the street.

FRUIT SELLER. But I haven`t sold any fruit.

SECOND POLICEMAN. That`s your bad luck.

BEGGARS. You did not let us go near the king.

THIRD POLICEMAN. It is our job to keep the likes of you away.

STREET SINGERS. We wanted to sing, but we gazed in wonder instead.

SCHOOLCHILDREN. We will say we were invited to the wedding, and could not attend school

.OLD GENTLEMAN. Oh what it was like to be young.The young prince will be getting a beautiful bride.(Starts singing. The other old people join in.)

FIRST POLICEMAN. Off with you. All of you.

(They herd out all the people..The stage empties.)

FADE OUT

. FADE IN.

It is late at night in the outer chambers of the king`s palace. The ten virgins are on stage.,in two groups.They are

carrying lighted lamps.

BRIDAL MUSIC. THE VIRGINS SING.AND DANCE

FIRST VIRGIN.I never dreamed I would be given such a great honour.

SECOND VIRGIN. To be invited to a prince`s wedding.

THIRD VIRGIN. We are truly chosen.

FOURTH VIRGIN.God has blessed us.

FIFTH VIRGIN. Let us be ready for the prince.We will trim our lamps.

THE FIVE VIRGINS TEND JARS OF OIL AND THEIR LAMPS.

SIXTH VIRGIN. I feel as if I could dance.(Dances a few steps)

SEVENTH VIRGIN. I long to sing.(Sings a few bars.)

EIGHT VIRGIN. The queen will be wearing a beautiful gown.(Walks a few steps as if trailing a gown.)

NINTH VIRGIN.There will be pearls and gems sewn on to it. (mimes studying the gems on her gown.)

TENTH VIRGIN. I bet the prince will look handsome, and have handsome friends.(Looks into space, dreamimg.)

(the wise virgins attend to their lamps:the foolish virgins laugh and chatter among themselves)

FIRST VIRGIN.It is past midnight. I can see the lights have gone out in the city’

SECOND VIRGIN. Look, the people In the courtyard are sleeping.(Light on stage shows slumbering people.

THIRD VIRGIN. We dare not sleep.

FOURTH VIRGIN. We will walk and keep awake.

FIFTH VIRGIN. We must be ready when the time comes

THE VIRGINS ON THE OTHER SIDE ARE LYING DOWN HALF ASLEEP. SUDDENLY ONE OF THEM WAKES UP.

VIRGIN SIX. Look, our lamps have gone out.

VIRGIN SEVEN. What shall we do?

VIRGIN EIGHT.Look inside the jars.There may be some oil in them.I forgot. We did not bring extra jars.

VIRGIN NINE. The other group seem to have their jars full.

VIRGIN TEN. Let us ask them to give us some oil.

THEY APPROACH THE OTHER VIRGINS

VIRGIN TEN. Dear sisters, our lamps have gone out. Can you give us some from your jars?

VIRGIN ONE. Sorry dear sisters. We do not know when the prince will come. We have hardly enough oil for our own jars.

VIRGIN NINE. Please do help us.

VIRGIN TWO. We would like to, but we are helpless.

VIRGIN.EIGHT. Don`t be so cruel.

VIRGIN THREE. We don`t mean to be, but we have to first do our own duties.

VIRGIN SEVEN. Give us just a little.

VIRGIN TWO. We cannot. The prince may come any time. Go quickly to the market place, and get more oil.

VIRGIN SEVEN. You are being mean. You can spare each of us a little oil, just a little.

THIRD VIRGIN. We cannot.

(The foolish virgins weep and wail, and get into a frenzy.They turn on the wise virgins)

NINTH VIRGIN. We will take it from you..

(There is a scuffle. The wise virgins hold on to their jars)

VIRGIN SIX. We will have to get some oil.How foolish we were not to bring extra jars of oil.

VIRGIN SEVEN Let. us go quickly, before the prince comes.

EXIT FOOLISH VIRGINS.THERE IS A SOUND OF REVELRY. ENTER THE KING, QUEEN, ATTENDANTS AND PRINCE

KING. It is dark, on one side of the courtyard. Luckily, There is light on the other. We will go that way.

VIRGINS TOGETHER. Welcome your majesties.

KING. Come with us.

 THE VIRGINS FOLLOW THEM. THE PRINCE GOES OFFSTAGE. PREPARATIONS ARE MADE FOR THE WEDDING.GARLANDS ARRANGED, CHAIRS DRAPED WITH SILKS ETC.

ENTER FOOLISH VIRGINS, THEIR LAMPS BLAZING BRIGHTLY. THEY SEEK ADMITTANCE.THE KING SENDS AN ATTENDANT,

ATTENDANT. What do you want?. The King is busy.

SEVENTH VIRGIN. We were asked to attend him.(The attendant goes to the King,and whispers to him. The king comes to the door.)

KING. Who are you?

VIRGIN SIX. We are the virgins sent to light your way.

KING. I did not see any light. Did you O queen?

QUEEN. I did not. The ladies with the lamps are already with us. The rest of the hall was dark.(Turns to her attendant) Is that not so.

QUEEN`S ATTENDANT. Yes, your majesty. It was so dark on one side,we nearly tripped on our gowns.

KING. Where were you.?

VIRGIN TEN. We had gone to fill our laps with oil

.KING> You made your king wait, while you went to fill your lamps You should have brought oil with you.. You lazy, stupid creatures, I do not know you. I do not want you here. Go from hence,You should have been prepared for me like your sisters. They will be richly rewarded. (To Attendants) Send them out.

ATTENDANT. You heard what the king said. Go from here.

ATTENDANTS HUSTLE OUT THE FOOLISH VIRGINS.

The KING TURNS .THE PRINCE HAS ENTERED WITH HIS BRIDE.

MUSIC.KING GESTURES TO THE WISE VIRGINS.)

You waited for me, prepared your lamps for me, and lit my way. Come now and join in the ceremony..(MUSIC….FESTIVITY…..BLACK OUT) END OF PLAY

PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.

A note on production.

The script should run to ten to twelve minutes, or more.

There are song and dance sequences,a scuffle and other forms of action, which would altogether take about six minutes.Action has been mixed with dialogue to prevent a young audience from getting bored and restless..

This parable could easily be put in modern times. It depends on the production requirements, and the producer.

There are thirty five speaking parts, with a possibility of adding as many players as required on the stage in the crowd scene.

In the courtyard sequence,it is possible to use figures moving upstage, people waiting for the king, people in various stages of slumber. The prime action could be by the virgins own stage, possibly even using the apron.

The script leaves room for innovation. Finally, the presentation is up to the interpretation of the director.

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