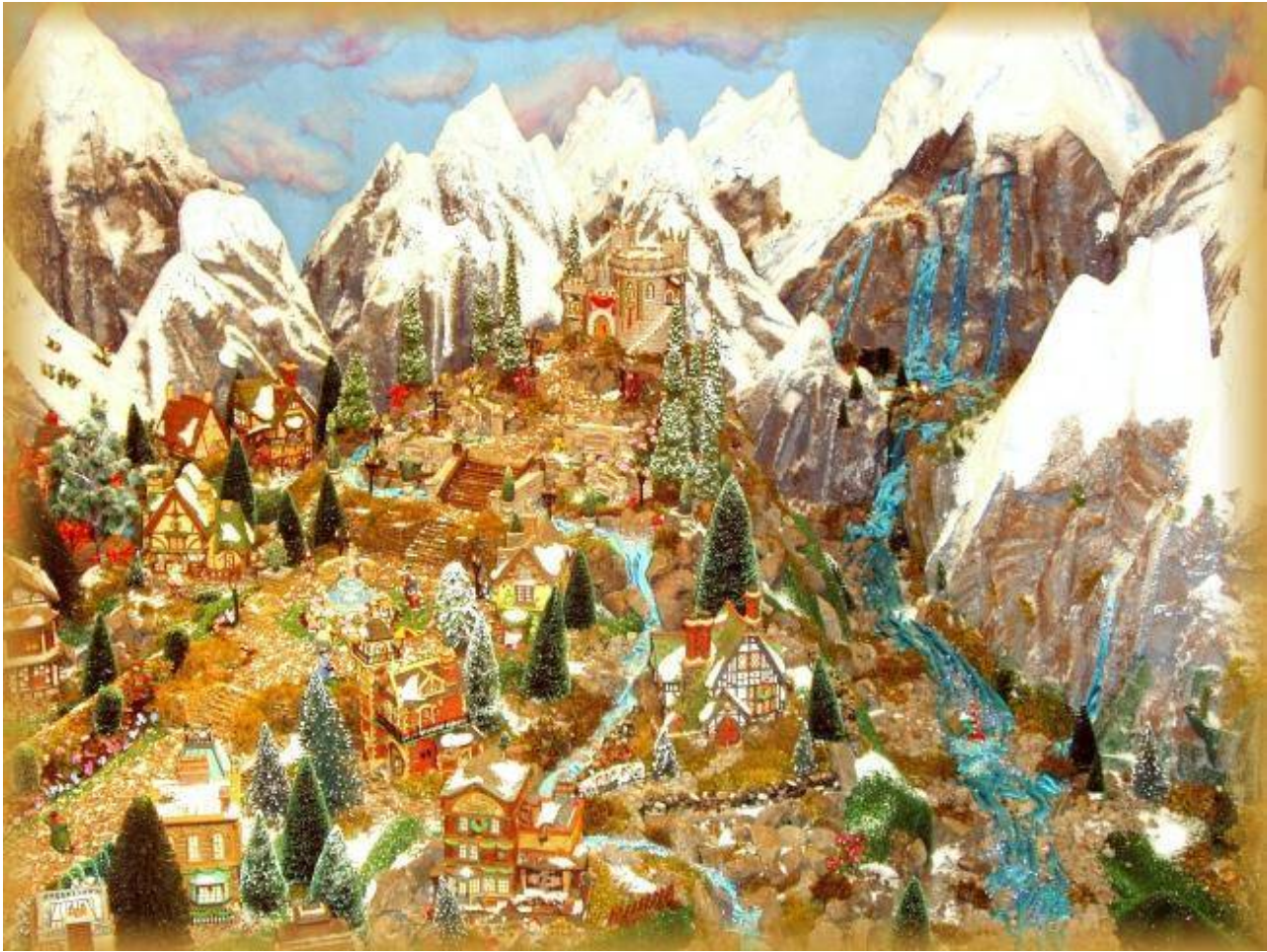


The Enchanted Ring

The Enchanted Ring
by Steven M. Overton

A Princess's Adventure
Bedtime stories for the Child in all of us
From The Tales of Belouria



The Enchanted Ring, From the Tales of Belvuria

Published by:

Olde World Puppet Theatre

906 SE Umatilla St

Portland, OR 97202

(503) 233-7723

Visit our website at: **www.puppetmuseum.com**

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2011922565

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Welcome to the Land of Belvuria, a magical place very near and dear to my heart. For over 30 years, I have been writing and designing the Tales of Belvuria for live stage presentation by The Olde World Puppet Theatre. It is with great joy and excitement that I am finally able to bring these tales to book form.

Why a Princess story you might ask? The true Princesses of my life have inspired me with their courage, love, and warmth that come together to make this world a better place in which to live. So to them I dedicate this book. My sister, Valerie; my niece, Danielle; my adopted daughters, Joy and Jessie; my dear friend Shawna, who understands Princesses; and my very own Faerie Princess, Samantha Anne, who helped me establish the world of Faeries and Pixies in this story.

A special thank you to my mother, Bobbie Overton, for her creative suggestions for the new characters and adventures in this new telling of a very old tale; to Jason Ropp for making my original artwork look spectacular; and to Marty Richmond, my lifelong partner, who has edited my jumbled words into a story worthy of print, and who has patiently and lovingly trod down every back road of Belvuria with me since its beginnings back in 1982. Without their dedicated belief in me and in the tales, the editing, the graphic art, and overall design of this new series, would not have been possible.

My thanks to them, to you the readers, and to my audiences who have supported me throughout my career.

Now go and enjoy the story.

Sincerely
Steven M. Overton



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乒乓

喜

Our chapter heading glyphs are the Chinese symbols for Ping Pong and Happiness. In Fact, Ping Pong wears them on his sleeve and collar. They are reputed to be good luck and maybe some of it will rub off on you.

Chapter 7 - The Perfect Gift

The toys all scattered to the four corners of Princess Kathryn's bedroom, as the window drapes left the curtain rod in a sudden burst. 'Splat!' was the sound as Witch, drapes, vacuum, and birthday present all hit the wall.

Enchantra, at that very moment in time resembling a Halloween crash Witch, sighed and shook her head. Slowly each slid down to the ground, Enchantra landing with her feet on the floor.

Then, with arms flapping like a wounded Bat, she fell straight to the floor, landing on her back. The curtain gracefully landed covering her, giving the illusion that she had melted into the floor.

"I'm OK," came the voice from beneath the blue drapes. "I'm OK. Now the thing is—where on earth am I?"

Enchantra peeked out from beneath the drapes.

"Oh my, I seem to be in the bedroom of Princess Kathryn."

As the drapes began to move and hum, Enchantra threw them back, revealing a very sorry little Kirby.

"Kirby, why don't you ever listen to me?"

The Witch shook her head, and a great many thoughts could be heard rattling around inside.

"Kirby, why did we come here?"

A soft 'Vroom,' was the only response from the vacuum cleaner.

"Oh that's right. I remember now. We came here to *get* a gift from Princess Kathryn for *my* birthday."

'Vroom?' asked the little vacuum.

"Yes, yes, of course it is, Kirby. My memory is as sharp as a tack."

Picking herself up off the floor, Enchantra began to look around the charming bedroom. The birthday gift for Princess Kathryn was still strapped to her hip, but long forgotten.

"My, my, what a selection," she laughed. "I think the little Dear has outdone herself! I simply adore everything."

Enchantra began to look over each toy, and noticed a few of them hiding behind the Princess's vanity.

"That would be nice, Oh, I always wanted one of those."

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Eyeing the little mechanical Dragon, she exclaimed. “That’s it. The perfect gift.

“My very own Dragon,” she said as she scooped it up into her bony old hands, clutching it tightly to her breast.



“You know, Kirby, my best friend is a Dragon. Won’t Charlemagne be thrilled to see this?”

Flipping the vacuum cleaner around, she climbed aboard and chuckled, “Contact! Come on Kirby, let’s fly!”

And faster than a Firefly, she raced out the window and into the sky.

The enchanted toys all climbed to the window ledge and sadly waved goodbye to their new little mechanical friend. Just then, a cackle broke through the air, followed by a rather noisy crash with broken branches crunching and a thump.

“I’m OK,” could be heard from off in the distance.

“Come on Sir Sampson, hurry up!” could be heard echoing up the staircase leading to the tower bedroom. The toys all gathered at the door as the Princess burst into the room in excitement.

“I’m hurrying as fast as I can,” came a quavering old voice from below. “Oh, it’s such a pity that youth is wasted on the young.” The sounds of clanking and giant footsteps could be heard in a slow rhythm.

“Sir Sampson, are you ever coming up,” said the very excited but impatient little Princess.

At the top of the stairs a hand in an armored glove appeared, followed by what some might think of as Santa Claus in armor.

Yes, Sir Sampson had a beard as white as snow, and his eyes twinkled behind very large glasses, giving him a sort of wise old Owl appearance.

“Five flights of stairs,” puffed the old Knight, “and you wonder if the view is really worth it!”

“Surprise!” shouted Princess Kathryn, holding out her hand and presenting the Enchanted Ring to Sir Sampson.

“Ah,” said the Knight, looking around the room and back at the incredibly long climb and the ring on the Princess’s hand. “I wonder if I could get banished for what I am thinking at the moment. Oh yes, I’m very surprised,” he said, still puffing a bit. “But couldn’t you have shown it to me downstairs, Dear? It’s a very pretty little ring.”

“Oh, Sir Sampson. It’s not just a pretty little ring, it’s a magic ring. We have to be upstairs so I can show you how it works,” said Princess Kathryn, surveying the now rather untidy room.

“The ring makes all my toys come to life,” she said giggling. “It even makes my little Dragon dance on her tail.”

About this time the Princess began to look closely at her room. Her drapes lay on the floor and her toys were all gathered around the doll house bouncing up and down.

“My Dragon! Now where did she go?”

The toys all began to try to tell the Princess what had happened. Up and down they bounced, as each in turn tried to make signs with hands,



paws and wrinkled faces, to tell the Princess of the events that had taken place.

The little Monkey grabbed the broom from the dollhouse and as the Clown puppet and Puss-in-Boots hurled him high into the air, a vision became clearer to the Princess. The Monkey soared high into the sky only to land smack dab on top of the old Knight's helmet.

“Oh no, you mean the Witch took her? Oh, Sir Sampson, you've just got to go get her back for me,” said the Princess, picking the Monkey off carefully.

A little burst of giggles broke forth from the Princess.

“Oh,” said the Knight gently, “now don't cry. Be a big girl and Sir Sampson will go and rescue your Witch from the Dragon, or your Dragon from the Witch or whatever.”

“I’m not crying,” said the Princess, “and I am sorry for laughing, but you just looked so silly with a Monkey on your helmet—Which gives me a great idea.”

“Oh,” said the Knight, “what’s that?”

“I think I shall go with you, Sir Sampson. I could be lots of help to you, since it was my birthday present that was stolen, after all. Besides, my little brother Aaron has all the adventures, and I think it’s about time I had another one of my very own.”

“Well,” said the old Knight after much thought—about three seconds worth, “you can’t go traipsing after a Witch dressed like that. This might be a very dirty, and not to mention, dangerous job.”

“I see your point,” said the Princess, “you stay here and I’ll be back in a few minutes. In the meantime, you can play with my remaining toys,” she said as she dashed from the room.

“Oh, fantastic day,” sighed Sir Sampson, “Here I am ready to go on a mission, and I’m left to play with toys.

“Say, you’re kind of cute,” Sir Sampson said to the toys. “Gitchie, gitchie, goo,” he said to the now circling toys. “You’re so cute.”

“Now, Ping Pong, it’s odd that Sir Sampson never got a clue from their little frowns and hands on their hips,” said Sterling. “The toys all jumped onto him sending him crashing to the ground. Each of the toys cheered in turn, as they pinned the Knight down.”

“Are you having fun,” said the Princess as she reappeared in the doorway.

The Knight blinked in confusion from under the mound of toys.

“Yes, a wonderful time,” he said with a sarcastic snip.

“Wait—who are you?” he asked the young Knight in the doorway.

Into the room marched the Princess, now in full tunic, boots and armor.

“I’m dressed for the adventure,” said the Princess, jumping up onto the little vanity bench.

‘Now that is a sight to behold,’ thought the old Knight, for there before him stood the Princess, shining brightly like a young version of Joan of Arc.

“Where on earth did you get that tiny little suit of armor?” he asked.

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“Oh, I borrowed it from my brother,” said the Princess. “He won’t even miss it, we’ll be gone for such a short time.”

“Besides,” she explained in her most sincere voice, “we always borrow each other’s things. That’s what brothers and sisters do, after all.”



“Wait a minute,” said the Knight, still pinned underneath the toys like Gulliver on his travels.

“Is that the glint of a crown I see under that helmet? No, absolutely not—no crown.”

“But I just got it today,” said the Princess with a tad bit of a whine in her voice.

“No crown, Your Highness. It will have to stay behind, besides it makes the helmet fit crooked on your head.”

With a long sigh she said, “All right, I’ll take it off. Can I wear it on top of the helmet?”

“No, definitely not, put it away this instant,” said the Knight, as he finally peeled himself up from under the toys.

“Oh all right,” agreed Kathryn as she helped the old Knight to his feet.

“Wait here, I’ll be right back.”

Out of the room she darted, to lock the crown away in her jewelry box, safe from the clutches of her little brother.

Sir Sampson eyed the toys nervously as they again began to corral him to the wall.

“OK, can we get on with this?” he shouted after the Princess.

“Why, of course,” she said, reentering the room to find him now up on the vanity bench totally surrounded.

Picking up each toy in her arms, the Princess put them all into her toy box.

“Oh, I wish you toys would stop,” she said.

“Oh, I wish, I wish you toys would stop, too,” said the Knight.

The toys began to crawl back out of the box.

“Nope,” said the Princess, “no such luck. Oh well, we’ll deal with them later, after we have rescued my little Dragon.”

As the Knight beat a hasty retreat to the stairs, he tripped on the little Camel’s tail.

“Come on, Princess Kathryn, time to goooooooooooooo.”

He fell into the stairwell—Rattle, crash, bang, boom, went the Knight as he tumbled head over heels down the stairs, one by clanking one.

From up the staircase echoed, “I’m OK,” in a rather quavering voice.

“Oh well, at least he’s faster going down the stairs than he is coming up. I’m coming, Sir Sampson,” she said as she entered the staircase.

“Wow! Beginning a new adventure, and on this, my ninth birthday.”



Meet The Characters of Belvuria

Inhabiting the enchanted land of Belvuria is a colorful cast of unforgettable characters. Let's take the Royal family for instance. King Humphrey rules the land with an iron fist, that is until his lovely but ditzy wife takes government matters into her own hands. There's never a dull moment when Queen Selina enters into the picture.

Then there are the two adorable royal children, Princess Kathryn and the little Prince Aaron. These two pampered yet naughty children weasel their way into your heart as they stumble through one madcap adventure after another. After all children are children, and these two are real enough to take home, although I wouldn't recommend it.

High in his lofty tower, Chester, the cantankerous old wizard, files away his magic potions and spells in his never ending collection of books, and books, and books. Why any wizard would use apple cores in a spell is one of life's great mysteries. Chester's sister Hester often drops in to visit and like all family get togethers, things have a tendency to go awry.

Turn up the temperature with a family of fire breathing dragons, some colorful gypsies and a very spunky old gal who goes by the name of Mother Goose. Then watch as harmony is thrown out the window with no rhyme nor reason.

You just never know who you're going to meet high up in the clouds over Belvuria. Braces of bats, exotic birds and dragons grace the air, all the while dodging eccentric witches on brooms and vacuum cleaners. It's always a treat when the graceful firebird flames through the evening skies just before twilight.

Topping off the tales of Belvuria are our very own storytellers, Sterling the Royal court jester and his lifelong sidekick Ping Pong the Panda. Traveling around Belvuria in a little rolling cart leads them both deeper into each story. Sterling's tales of old weave us into an enchanting land with some incredible adventures. It's his magic storytelling of old that strikes the glow in all our hearts.

As it says in their theme song, there were smiles
that followed them throughout the land.



The Tales of Belvuria

I'll Show You

When the mischievous Prince Aaron is caught red-handed ruining Princess Kathryn's toys, he's sent to his room!
But with the help of the wizard's magic chest, Aaron gets his revenge - unleashing all manner of goblins and ghouls at his terrified sister!
But, wait a minute - how do you shut this thing off?
Can the royal children figure out how to end the spell before it ends them?

No Rhyme. Nor Reason

Prince Aaron and Princess Kathryn's book of Mother Goose rhymes will never be the same with Mother Goose snatched from its very pages -
Just who kidnapped Mother Goose and why?
Into the Land of Rhyme they journey - Watch out Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew - these two super sleuths are hot on the trail.

The Baby Dragon Finds a Job

Pieces of gold begin to mysteriously disappear from King Humphrey's treasure room.
The King decides to take drastic measures and orders a tall mail-order dragon.
Was the king shorted on the deal or did he really check small economy-size by mistake? Will Chelsey, the Baby Dragon get the job and will he be able to catch the mysterious thieves?

All in a Knight's Work

When Sir Sampson, the oldest knight in the world meets Chadsworth, one of the last dragons left in the world, the trouble begins.
Both must retire unless they duel each other.
Armor flies and wings beat in one of the strangest battles ever seen, as they work together to convince their bosses that neither should retire.

The Firebird

While playing with a feather from the Firebird, Princess Kathryn and Prince Aaron suddenly find themselves caught in the middle of this dramatic Russian fairy tale.

Dreams in the Sand

Princess Kathryn and Prince Aaron find a Sphinx buried in the sand in the castle garden. Chester, the Court Wizard, dreams them back to ancient Egypt, to teach them a history lesson.

(Approved by the Egyptian Department antiquities for presentation to Egyptian school children.)



Witch Key

Little boys can often get into so much trouble, and so it is with our little Prince Aaron. How did he get himself locked into a cage by Enchantra the Witch?

I don't think he likes the idea of being a snack for her dragon either. Can his babysitter, Sterling the Court Jester, find the key to the cage and free him in time? Witch key is it?

Coming soon in book form and on DVD.

The Enchanted Ring

It's Princess Kathryn's birthday and everything seems to be going just fine.

However, trouble soon arrives with Enchantra the Witch, riding Kirby, her vacuum cleaner, taking a present rather than giving one - the stuffed dragon, the Princess's favorite, of course.

Can our Princess and her friend Sir Sampson the Knight, with the help of the Pixies and Faeries, retrieve the missing toy to make our story right?

We shall see - it could mean a visit to the Witch's cottage.



The Land of Belvuria

Some say that Belvuria exists only within the realm of your imagination.

Others believe that if you sail out into the great green sea and are lucky enough to pierce through the swirling mists; you will find it.

Protected for centuries by these mists of illusion rise the majestic snow-capped mountains of Belvuria.



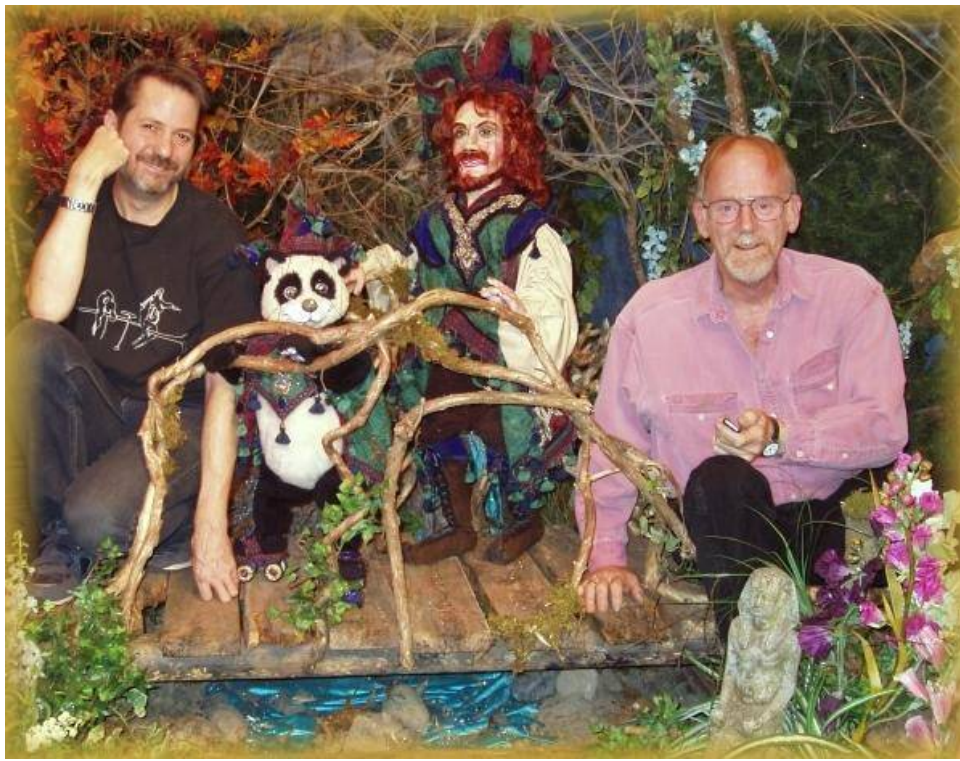
Under a rainbow moon lies a land where the faerie tales of old still exist.

Dragons fly gracefully through the skies as Unicorns prance unhindered on the gnarled old paths of an ancient forest.

Glittering palaces of playing cards sit high above babbling waterfalls, and Gypsies dance with Fireflies to the strains of the music of long ago.

Adventure awaits behind each rock and flower, guarded closely by Faeries, Pixies, and Wizards.

It is a place to set your heart free and wander again the paths we leave behind as children.



Behind the Book

Author **Steven M. Overton**, is a classically trained artist and Master Puppeteer, puppet builder, and award-winning costume designer. He and co-author Donna Janvier wrote the original Tales of Belvuria for performance by the Olde World Puppet Theatre. Now retired from live performing, Steve has turned his attention to writing books and creating movies based on those original stories. He is the voice of Sterling, the Court Jester.

Martin Richmond edited the story. He also assists in the creation of our innovative puppets, stages, sets, and lighting, as well as our video and computer magic. He is the voice of Ping Pong, the Panda.

Jason Ropp of Dragon Theater Puppets (www.dragontheater.com) took Steve's illustrations and made them look as wonderful as they do in the book. Still performing live in the Pacific Northwest, Jason's theater features original stories about Knights, Dragons and non-stick cookware.

Keep checking our website: www.puppetmuseum.com for the latest information about *Witch Key*, our first movie on DVD, as well as more books in this series, colorbooks and other fun things to download.

