Some students bus tables. Some sell merchandise. But ISU apparel, merchandising, and design junior, Kassidy Kilcoyne, chose a more magical endeavor.

Ethos:

What does being a Disney princess performer entail?

Kassidy Kilcoyne: I work for Storybook Adventures Princess Parties of Iowa, and we basically just go to events around Des Moines and hang out with kids. We do birthday parties, hospital visits, meet and greets — whatever the client wants. We even went to Dance Marathon this year.

Ethos:

What is your schedule like?

KK: It's very flexible. Each girl plays a different princess, so if one is specified, she goes. Right now Elsa and Anna are in the highest demand so they get booked almost every week. However if they don't know which they want, we have a Facebook page Tracie (our boss) posts about job opportunities and it's first come, first served. We try to rotate so everyone goes out at least a few times a month.

Ethos:

How did you become a Disney princess performer?

KK: In 2013, I followed social media accounts of other performers. I thought it was so cool. When I saw Storybook Adventures, I messaged them saying it'd be a dream come true to work for them. Then I got an audition.

Ethos:

What was the audition process like?

KK: It was fun! I was told to show up with little makeup and to prepare a princess-related short story. I made up a story about Ariel's fins turning purple from Kool-Aid. Tracie loved it and asked if I could do a Scottish accent. I did it and she said, "Great, you're my Merida!"

Ethos:

So you started as Merida (from Pixar's "Brave"), but do you play any other characters?

KK: Yes. When you're first hired you're trained to be one princess. You learn her mannerisms, her story, how she does her hair and makeup — everything. Once you're an expert on one, you can be promoted to another. I currently have three: Merida, Ariel and recently, Snow White.

Ethos:

Are there any physical requirements to play a princess?

KK: Yes and no. You don't have to be a specific size, most costumes range from a 2 to 10. Which I like because I feel we are role models so for young girls to see various sizes can be princesses — positive body image is important. That being said, you do need to have "princess-y" features like big doe eyes. You need to be able to transform yourself into different characters.

Ethos:

How long does it take you transform into a princess?

KK: I usually get ready two to three hours in advance. Each character requires unique makeup and a wig. You also need false eyelashes, and pink or clear nails, which takes some time. The dresses alone take 20 minutes to get into between the hoop, corset and bustle.

Ethos:

Beside the hair, makeup and costumes, do you do anything else to get into character?

KK: I actually make it a point to watch my character's movie 24 hours before an event. It's a good refresher, and when you're in character you have to know everything – like Merida's brothers names. I'll also listen to the soundtrack when I'm driving to get in the mindset.

Ethos:

Do you ever get tired of re-watching the movies and listening to the same songs?

KK: Never. I love Disney, I live it 24/7. I've been to Disney World, Land, Disney Paris and Disney cruises. My room is decorated with it, and someday I hope to work for them either as a character performer or as a merchandiser. I'm actually got accepted to the Disney College Internship Program for the summer!

Ethos:

Which character is your favorite to play?

KK: Ariel. I like Merida because she's spunky, but to me, Ariel is the epitome of a Disney princess. Her dress is beautiful, she's fun and she was my favorite growing up so I know her story the most.

Ethos:

Is there a character you want to play but haven't gotten the chance?

KK: I'd love to be Moana, but that's not feasible. So I'd have to say Aurora. I love her curly hair, plus her pink dress is beautiful — if I could just try on that gown I'd be happy. I'd also like to be Cinderella since she's the most iconic; everyone knows her.

Ethos:

What's the best part of being a princess?

KK: The fact I get to be a kid's best friend for the day. They'll tell you their life stories, share their secrets — it's magical. They look up to you so much. You get to bring smiles to adults' and kids' faces and it's incredible. I get to make dreams come true.

"A lot of people think it's childish to love Disney, but that doesn't faze me. I get to do what I love. I get to transform and make people's dreams come true. I wouldn't trade it for anything."
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