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For Dave and Suzanne and their dogs. And for Dan, who surely knows.

Cast of Characters

MOTHER GOOSE
PAMELA PRUNES, a Fairy Godmother
ORVILLE SMYTHE, a Wolf
GARY RICKENBACKER, a Prince
SYLVIA SMARTLY, a Witch
TRIXIE, a Stage Manager
PHILODENDRON, a Magical Sister
RODODENDRON, a Magical Sister
MALODENDRON, a Magical Sister
ESMERELDA, a Wise Woman
STEVE, a Newsboy
PHIL, a Guard
BEAUTY, as in Sleeping
POPPY, a Wise Woman
PRINCE REG
PRINGLE, a Valet
VINES
PRINCE SNARKY
ZINGO, a Peasant
LARRY, a Peasant
SHMOE, a Peasant
BETTINA, an Ugly Woman
JERRY, another Wolf
PRUNE DANISH
KING SHRIMPTOAST
KING BUNNINGTON
BERTHA RATCATCHER, a Beauty Contestant
STELLA ARMPIT, a Beauty Contestant
FESTERING PUSTULE, a Beauty Contestant

Place

A forest & a castle & some other places, too.

Special Note

The small-cast version of this play begins on Page 61.

Acknowledgments

Mother Goose Is Eaten By Werewolves was first performed by the Chatham Middle School Drama Club on Cape Cod, Massachusetts on May 19, 2006. Patrick Corb stage managed and Karen McPherson directed the following cast:

PAMELA PRUNES Kelsey Morse
ORVILLE SMYTHE,
PRINCE SNARKY Damien Chandler
GARY RICHENBACKER Danny Enriquez
SYLVIA SMARTLY Lilly Kaar
TIXIE, VINES,
KING BUNNINGTON Laura WanaMaker
ESMERELDA Brittany Langlois
STEVE, PRINGLE,
RODODENDRON, LARRY Lyndsi Forgeron
BEAUTY, MALODENDRON,
SHMOE Sydney Whitcomb
POPPY, JERRY Erin Bremser
PRINCE REG, PHIL Arielle Biron
PRUNE DANISH, PHILODENDRON,
ZINGO Ella Shaffer
BETTINA, KING SHRIMPTOAST Molly Davol

MOTHER GOOSE IS EATEN BY WEREWOLVES

(large-cast version)

by Steph DeFerie

(When the audience enters, three seats are already taken—a FAIRY GODMOTHER is sitting with a WOLF, chatting amicably. In another seat, we can see a PRINCE studying his program. Or, alternately, they are standing up near the stage.)

GODMOTHER. So you know one of the werewolves?

WOLF. Yes, we work together down at the plant. I promised I'd come see him. You?

GODMOTHER. Mother Goose and I go way back.

WOLF. I've heard a lot about her.

GODMOTHER. She's a dear. I must say, I'm a little worried about her. "...Eaten By Werewolves." It does give one pause.

WOLF. I'm sure they wouldn't do anything too dangerous. You know, what with all these kids here and all. You wouldn't want a lot of blood and guts flying around. Might put an eye out.

GODMOTHER. *(Shocked:)* Blood and guts?!

WOLF. Just an expression. They probably use a stunt double for the big attack scene.

GODMOTHER. *(Really shocked:)* Big attack scene?!!!

WOLF. And it's only a small pack of werewolves anyway. Six or seven, I think.

GODMOTHER. *(Couldn't be any more shocked:)* Six or seven??!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

(Enter a WITCH from the lobby.)

WITCH. Who owns the carriage?

PRINCE. *(Standing:)* That'd be me.

WITCH. You might want to move it. There's an ambulance pulling in and it's spooking your horses. They say they have to be here for the end of the show.

(The PRINCE exits to the lobby. The WITCH takes a seat.)

GODMOTHER. Ambulance? Oh, dear! I don't like the sound of that!

WOLF. Just a precaution, I'm sure.

GODMOTHER. You really think so?

WOLF. Nothing to worry about.

(The WOLF and GODMOTHER take their seats.)

(The PRINCE returns and sits. The lights dim. The curtain opens. The stage lights come up to reveal a clearing in the woods.)

(There is a pause.)

(There is a bloodcurdling scream off, followed by howls and growls and snarls!:)

(Another pause.)

STAGE MANAGER. *(Off-stage:)* Cue Mother Goose.

MOTHER GOOSE. *(Off-stage:)* No!

Sounds of a scuffle, off.

STAGE MANAGER. *(Off-stage:)* Mother Goose, on stage please, Mother Goose.

MOTHER GOOSE. *(Off-stage:)* No! I won't go on and you can't make me!

STAGE MANAGER. *(Off-stage:)* Get out there!

MOTHER GOOSE. *(Off-stage:)* No!

(Hands appear from off, gripping the scenery in an effort to prevent being forced on stage. More scuffling off. Snarls and the sounds of a struggle.)

STAGE MANAGER. (*Off-stage:*) You're only making the werewolves angry!

MOTHER GOOSE. (*Off-stage:*) I don't care! I've changed my mind! This was a bad idea, a very, very bad idea!

(More snarls.)

STAGE MANAGER. (*Off-stage:*) Look, you knew the score when we started.

MOTHER GOOSE. (*Off-stage:*) You never told me we were using *real* werewolves! Let me out of here!

(The hands disappear. A cloud of feathers blows on from where the hands formerly were. The sound of feet running away, a door slam. This is followed by mournful howling.)

STAGE MANAGER. (*Off-stage:*) Back! Get back!

(The howls turn into growls. The STAGE MANAGER comes running on, looking back with alarm.)

STAGE MANAGER. Don't come any closer! It says in my contract the stage manager is not to be eaten! (*To audience:*) Uh...hello...and welcome to "Mother Goose Is Eaten By Werewolves." I'm afraid there's been a slight problem...technical difficulties, as it were...

(More howls off.)

STAGE MANAGER. (*Nervously:*) ...we seem to be missing a Mother Goose...which is a very big part of the show...so I'm afraid we won't be able to do the play today after all.

(Howls and growls off.)

STAGE MANAGER. You'll have to leave...

(Louder growls:)

STAGE MANAGER. ...and I'd hurry if I were you!

(STAGE MANAGER begins to exit where she entered, changes mind, exits opposite. There is the sound of running feet and a huge commotion which fades out. The stage lights go out. The house lights come up.)

(GODMOTHER, WITCH, WOLF *and* PRINCE *begin to collect their things and stand up to leave.*)

WITCH. Well, that stinks.

WOLF. We're not having a show?

GODMOTHER. What a shame! To disappoint all these lovely children...

PRINCE. Now what am I going to do with the rest of the day (*or night.*)?

WOLF. What a gyp.

WITCH. Well, back to the forest, I guess. (*Slyly, looking around.*) Any of you kids want to come with me and see what a real candy house looks like?

GODMOTHER. (*Hurriedly.*) I don't know if anyone's interested but...I know some stories. If you want, I could tell them and maybe some of you and the performers could act them out...

PRINCE. Oh, I don't know...

WOLF. Why not? There's nothing else to do.

WITCH. (*To GODMOTHER.*) Who put you in charge?

GODMOTHER. Nobody. I just thought...

WITCH. Oh, yeah. I know all about you fairies...

GODMOTHER. (*Insulted.*) I'm a fairy *godmother.*

WITCH. Even worse. Always butting in and ruining everybody's plans...

GODMOTHER. You can tell some stories, too, if you like. Do you know any?

WITCH. Well, of course I know some stories. I'm a witch, not an idiot.

GODMOTHER. I didn't mean to step on anyone's toes.

WOLF. It's a good idea and it's nice of you to offer it.

WITCH. Fine. Suck up to the fairy. You'd think you'd be on my side.

WOLF. Why?

WITCH. You know what it's like to always be put down as the bad guy no matter what you do just because you're a wolf. The wolf and the witch are always bad, the beautiful fairy godmother is always good, blah blah blah.

WOLF. That has nothing to do with it. I was just saying...

WITCH. Yeah, whatever. *(To PRINCE:)* What do you think, Junior?

PRINCE. I don't want to get involved.

(They all look at him.)

PRINCE. If I don't give the right answer, he'll *(Meaning the WOLF.)* eat me or she'll *(Meaning the WITCH.)* turn me into a frog or she'll *(Meaning the GODMOTHER.)* make me marry some horrible princess.

WITCH. Oh, don't be such a baby.

PRINCE. Easy for you to say—you've never had to catch flies for dinner with your tongue.

WOLF. What if we all take turns telling a story? Would that be all right?

GODMOTHER. That sounds lovely.

PRINCE. And no one eats or puts a spell on anyone.

WITCH. These kids probably aren't even interested. They're too "sophisticated" for fairy tales these days, what with their video games and their computer generated special effects...

GODMOTHER. Goodness, it was just a suggestion. I didn't mean to cause such a fuss.

WOLF. Well, let's see what they think. *(To audience:)* Would you like us to tell some stories or would you rather go learn the principal exports of Brazil?

(Hopefully, the audience response is enthusiastic.)

WOLF. The majority has spoken. *(To WITCH:)* If you're not interested, you can leave. No one's forcing you to stay.

WITCH. *(Suddenly sly:)* No, no, I'll help. *(Sinisterly:)* It'll be fun.

PRINCE. Will they mind if we use their things?

GODMOTHER. *(Crossing up to the stage:)* Hello? Is anybody there? Hellooooooo?

(Enter STAGE MANAGER, rather shredded.)

STAGE MANAGER. Shouldn't you all be gone by now?

GODMOTHER. And what is your name, dear?

STAGE MANAGER. Trixie, why?

GODMOTHER. Could we ask you a favor, Trixie?

PRINCE. Excuse me. What happened to the werewolves?

STAGE MANAGER. I shot them with tranquilizing darts and locked them in their dressing room. They won't wake up for hours, we're all perfectly safe.

GODMOTHER. That's good. Now, we thought that we might...

PRINCE. You're sure they're sleeping? There's no way they can wake up and get out?

STAGE MANAGER. No, no, everything's under control.

GODMOTHER. What a relief! Now, Trixie, would it be possible for us to...

PRINCE. They're not just pretending to be asleep are they, and then when your back's turned they open their eyes and you didn't realize they had a key to the door all along...

STAGE MANAGER. No, I'm quite sure they're really sleeping and everything is fine. It's perfectly safe for you to vacate the premises.

GODMOTHER. Yes, well, now that we've settled that, would you mind actually if we stayed here for a bit and told our own stories to the audience and had your lovely performers act them out?

STAGE MANAGER. Oh, I don't think that's a...

GODMOTHER. It's not for us, you understand...

STAGE MANAGER. We couldn't pay you or anything.

GODMOTHER. No, no, we wouldn't expect that...

STAGE MANAGER. I don't think we could risk the sets getting damaged...

GODMOTHER. It's just that it's for the children, you know, I don't think you want to disappoint all the poor little children, do you?

(GODMOTHER gestures to the children, encourages them to make sad faces.)

GODMOTHER. You wouldn't want them all sad and crying, would you?

(GODMOTHER encourages children to cry.)

STAGE MANAGER. It's just that there's insurance liability...it's not really up to me...

GODMOTHER. Crying and crying as if their dear little hearts would break...Could we at least ask the actors?

STAGE MANAGER. *(Reluctantly:)* Well, okay... *(Calling off:)* Hey, you guys!

(Enter ACTORS.)

STAGE MANAGER. This lady here...

GODMOTHER. Fairy Godmother.

STAGE MANAGER. This fairy godmother here wants to know if you'd be interested in acting out some stories for the audience...

GODMOTHER. Seeing as you're here and they're here and we've all of us nothing else to do.

ACTORS. *(In unison:)* Oh, we don't know...

GODMOTHER. It's for the children...

ACTORS. *(In unison:)* Well, seeing as it's for the children, okay.

GODMOTHER. *(To STAGE MANAGER:)* There, you see?

STAGE MANAGER. All right, all right!

GODMOTHER. *(To ACTORS:)* Thank you, thank you!

(ACTORS exit.)

GODMOTHER. *(To the audience:)* Dry your eyes, my deary-dears, do not weep and wail. We shall have some lovely fairy stories after all.

STAGE MANAGER. *(Calling:)* Bobby, bring the lights back up.

(The stage lights come up, the house lights go out.)

GODMOTHER. That's wonderful, thank you so much.

STAGE MANAGER. *(Under her breath:)* Yeah, yeah, it's always stupid spoiled children are our future, always getting what they want, nobody ever cares about the stage manager...

(STAGE MANAGER exits.)

WITCH. How'd you do that, put some kind of spell on her?

GODMOTHER. No, no, you can get away with anything if you say it's for the children. We could persuade them to paint their faces blue and dance the hula naked if we said it was for the children.

WITCH. "For the children," eh? That's good to know.

(The GODMOTHER, WITCH, PRINCE and WOLF climb onto the stage. They introduce themselves to each other as they do.)

GODMOTHER. How do you do, I'm Pamela Prunes.

WOLF. Orville Smythe, that's Smythe with a "y."

PRINCE. Prince Gary...

WITCH. Let me guess, Charming.

PRINCE. No, Rickenbacher.

WITCH. Sylvia Smartly, pleased to meet ya.

WOLF. So what do you want us to do?

GODMOTHER. (*Gesturing off:*) Perhaps you might just go off there and wait with the actors and find some costumes and props and then just act out what I say.

(WITCH, PRINCE and WOLF *exit.*)

GODMOTHER. (*Calling:*) Bobby, be a dear and just follow along with the lights as best you can, all right, sweetie? Now, let's see. What would be a good story to start with? "Sleeping Beauty" has always been my favorite. (*Calling:*) How does that sound to everybody? "Sleeping Beauty?"

WITCH. (*Entering:*) Ooooh, jeez! "Sleeping Beauty?" What a moron!

GODMOTHER. She is not a moron.

WITCH. She is too a moron. They tell her only one thing in the whole world can hurt her and she goes right out and looks for it. That's the definition of moron in my book. Besides, who's going to play her? There's a witch in this story and I'm playing her.

PRINCE. (*Entering:*) Well, don't look at me. There's a prince in this story and I'm playing him.

WOLF. (*Entering:*) Well, don't look at me. There's a wolf in this story and I'm playing him.

WITCH. There aren't any wolves in "Sleeping Beauty."

WOLF. Sure there are. I'll point him out to you when we get to that part.

GODMOTHER. Don't worry, one of the actors will be happy to do it. Let us begin.

(WITCH and PRINCE *exit.*)

WOLF. I'll cue you about the wolf part.

(WOLF *exits.*)

GODMOTHER. Once upon a time, there was a king named Good King Walter...

(*Enter WOLF with a crown on his head. HE carries a second crown with a woman's wig attached.*)

GODMOTHER. ...and a queen called Good Queen Possum. (*She looks around:*) Queen? Where is the queen?

WITCH. (*Off:*) I'm not playing the queen! I have to get into character! I'm coming on in a minute as the misunderstood witch!

GODMOTHER. You mean *wicked* witch.

WITCH. (*Off:*) I meant what I said! And if you don't like it, I'll turn you into a wart!

GODMOTHER. So who's going to play the queen?

(*WITCH pushes PRINCE on.*)

PRINCE. Oh, no! I'm playing the prince.

GODMOTHER. The prince doesn't come on until the end.

PRINCE. I don't mind waiting.

GODMOTHER. But we need you.

PRINCE. What about the other actors?

WOLF. They've gone out for coffee.

PRINCE. (*Looking at WOLF:*) I should at least get to play the king.

WOLF. I called it first.

(*Everyone looks at PRINCE expectantly.*)

PRINCE. Oh, for heaven's sake...

(*PRINCE grabs the crown, jams it on his head, stands there glowing.*)

GODMOTHER. Was that so hard?

WOLF. You look lovely.

GODMOTHER. Once upon a time, there was...

WOLF. A king!

GODMOTHER. ...and...and...

PRINCE. (*Grumpily:*) ...and a queen.

GODMOTHER. Look, if you're not going to do this right, don't do it at all. It is for the children, after all...

PRINCE. All right, all right!

(PRINCE sashays over to a stump, sits, crosses his legs daintily.)

PRINCE. *(In a high voice:)* And a queen.

(WOLF crosses to stand behind PRINCE.)

GODMOTHER. Although they were happy, their lives were not complete. More than anything, they wished for...

PRINCE & WOLF. ...a child.

PRINCE. *(Regular voice, alarmed:)* Really? A child? Are you sure?

WOLF. I'd trade everything for a little boy or girl of our very own.

PRINCE. *(High voice again:)* Perhaps we could adopt...!

GODMOTHER. And after much praying and wishing, the queen finally gave birth to a beautiful baby girl.

PRINCE. No!

(A doll wrapped in a blanket is thrown out from the wings. WOLF or PRINCE catches it.)

PRINCE. *(Relieved:)* Phew! *(Re-crossing legs uncomfortably:)* A difficult birth but well worth it. A child of our own at last!

WOLF. Now our lives are complete.

GODMOTHER. The day of the christening arrived and everyone in the kingdom was invited to come and bring the child a present. The most anticipated gifts were to be given by three magical sisters who lived in the forest – Philodendron, Rotodendron and Malodendron.

PRINCE. What do you think they'll give our little Beauty? Magical presents beyond price?

WOLF. It makes no difference. She has our love and needs nothing else.

PRINCE. Well, we could use some more diapers at least. You can never really have enough diapers.

(Enter the PHILODENDRON, ROTODENDRON and MALODENDRON.)

PHILODENDRON. And I'd rather...

PRINCE. Maybe a supply of diapers that never runs out!

PHILODENDRON. And I'd rather...

PRINCE. Or diapers that magically clean themselves!

PHILODENDRON. *(With a black look:)* And I'd rather...

PRINCE. Or diapers that change themselves.

(Seeing PHILODENDRON's evil look and trailing off:)

That'd really be some...

PHILODENDRON. *(Singing a little song of her own devising:)* "...and I'd rather be a rutabaga than no bega at all!" Helloo helloo and how-de-do! What a lovely day for a christening.

ROTODENDRON. Oh my yes, isn't it just? The day is as perfect as the guest of honor herself. Beauty is easily the prettiest baby I have ever seen.

(She looks at doll, looks at PRINCE, looks at doll, looks at WOLF.)

Thank goodness she takes after her mother. *(To WOLF:)* No offense, your majesty, but pointed ears and all that hair on her face just wouldn't be very flattering on such a sweet little girl.

WOLF. Off with her head!

(ROTODENDRON looks worried.)

WOLF. Just kidding!

PRINCE. What gifts have you brought the princess? Anything diaper-related?

ROTODENDRON. A great big pile of poo!

(WOLF and PRINCE look startled.)

Just kidding! *(To audience:)* Two can play at that game.

MALODENDRON. Your Majesties, we have brought the most wonderful presents anyone could ever want. So just a heads up that we're going to expect some very nice thank you notes.

PHILODENDRON. I bring halibut! No, not halibut. Hash, hush-puppies, hairpins, harpies, hyenas! Wait, wait. Hiccups, hydrangeas, health! Yes, I bring her health, good, great health that she may enjoy all her days. To bind the spell, I need everyone's help. *(To audience:)* Clap your hands with me and say, higgeldy-piggeldy health, it's so much better than wealth! Ready? "Higgelty-piggelty health, it's so much better than wealth!" Now everyone scream at the top of your lungs! *(After they are finished:)* That last part isn't necessary, I just think it's fun. And now I'm done.

PRINCE. Well, it's not diapers but it is very nice. What else you got?

RODODENDRON. Jumping beans! Jolly Green Giants! Jellyfish, Jupiter, jiggling jugs of gelatinous jelly, joy. That's it, joy! I bring her a lifetime of joy! But I need everyone's aid in binding it to her. *(To audience:)* Stamp your feet and say with me, Boy oh boy oh boy, you can never have too much joy! Ready? "Boy oh boy oh boy, you can never have too much joy!" Now everyone blow a raspberry! Like this. *(She demonstrates and after everyone is done:)* That last part is really most unnecessary but I enjoy it immensely. And now I'm finished.

PRINCE. Again, I'm not seeing any diapers but it's the thought that counts, I guess. What else?

GODMOTHER. But before the third wise woman could speak, in burst a wicked witch!

WITCH. *(Bursting in:)* Ta-da!

GODMOTHER. And she cursed the poor little princess with these terrible...

WITCH. Wait wait wait! How do you know I'm a *wicked* witch? Why do you just automatically assume...

GODMOTHER. Well, for heaven's sake, look at the way you're dressed. And haven't there been several incidents involving missing children...

WITCH. Jeez—you eat a few kids and you get the worst reputation. Go ahead.

GODMOTHER. She cursed the poor little princess with these terrible words:

WITCH. I'll teach you not to invite me to your little party!

“Pointy spindle, weaver’s friend...”

Wait a minute. What’s the deal with the spindle? Why am I so obsessed with spindles?

GODMOTHER. I don’t know! That’s just the way the story goes!

WITCH. I don’t think you’re telling this right.

PRINCE. What the heck is a spindle, anyway?

WOLF. A slender rod on which thread is wound.

(EVERYONE looks at WOLF.)

WOLF. *(Dumbing it down for them:)* A pointy stick used in weaving cloth? I thought everyone knew that.

EVERYONE. Oh, a spindle, oh, of course, yes, I thought you said *sprindle*, and there’s no such thing as a *sprindle*... *(etc:)*

GODMOTHER. There you go—you don’t like spinning and this is just your way of channeling your aggression. That’s wonderful motivation.

WITCH. Whatever.

“Pointy spindle, weaver’s friend,
Is Beauty’s foe in the end.
She’ll prick her finger yet will not weep,
Instead for days and days will sleep.
But...”

GODMOTHER. *(Cutting her off:)* Thank you!

WITCH. But I’m not done yet!

GODMOTHER. Yes, you are. It’s my story and I say you are. Thank you.

(WITCH stands pouting.)

WITCH. You've got it all wrong! That's not what happened at all!

GODMOTHER. Look, who's telling this story—you or me?

WITCH. Me, now! (*Raising her arms and putting a spell on the GODMOTHER.*) "Abracadabra, rice-a-roni, the San Francisco treat!" Now, what do you have to say?

GODMOTHER. (*In a monotone, as she is in a trance.*) Yes, you should tell us your version. It's always good to hear both sides.

PRINCE. (*Whispering loudly.*) But she eats children!

WITCH. Not all of them. Just the slow ones who can't get away.

WOLF. The slow ones are the most delicious.

WITCH. Yes, aren't they? I like mine rubbed with butter and salt and just a pinch of rosemary...

PRINCE. (*Nauseated.*) Weren't you going to tell us your side?

WITCH. Oh, yes. (*To PHILO, ROTO and MALO.*) Get lost, you lot.

(PHILO, ROTO and MALO exit.)

WITCH. Once upon a time, there was a nice old woman named Esmerelda who lived in a forest on the edge of a kingdom. She was very wise and very nice but she was not very beautiful so everyone treated her like a wicked witch.

(Enter ESMERELDA.)

(GODMOTHER, WOLF, PRINCE and some ACTORS come together as a mob.)

GODMOTHER, WOLF, PRINCE, ACTORS. Boo! Get away, wicked witch! Go back to wicked witch land! (*Etc.*)

(GODMOTHER, WOLF, PRINCE and ACTORS exit.)

WITCH. One night, Esmerelda had a terrible dream that the beautiful Princess of the land married an evil prince who took her far away and treated her terribly. She awoke shivering at dawn thanking providence that it was just a dream for she knew that the King and Queen had no children. But the very next day, she heard the news she had been dreading.

(Enter a STEVE, a NEWSBOY.)

STEVE. Extra, extra! Read all about it! Disco returns, everybody boogie!

(STEVE boogies.)

WITCH. No, the other news she had been dreading.

STEVE. Queen gives birth to wrinkly, red-faced baby girl! Read all about it! We can only hope she'll grow out of it! Extra, extra!

(STEVE boogies off.)

WITCH. She knew now that it had been no ordinary dream but a premonition of the future. She had to tell the King and Queen so she traveled to the castle and arrived on the day of the baby's christening.

(Enter WOLF as King and PRINCE as Queen and PHIL, a guard. The PRINCE holds a baby. The WISE WOMAN tries to approach but PHIL bars the way.)

PHIL. Halt! What business have you in the castle?

ESMERELDA. I must speak to the King and Queen.

PHIL. Yeah, yeah, that's what they all say.

ESMERELDA. But I am a wise woman.

PHIL. *(Under her breath:)* Not wise enough to put a bag over your head.

ESMERELDA. Pardon?

PHIL. Nothing, nothing, go right in.

(ESMERELDA crosses to WOLF and PRINCE.)

ESMERELDA. Your majesties, I am Esmerelda, a wise woman of the far forest and I have dire news! Your daughter will grow up to marry a terrible prince who will treat her dreadfully and keep her from you! You must not let that happen!

PRINCE. How do you know such a thing?

ESMERELDA. I had a dream.

PRINCE. That's it? A dream?

ESMERELDA. I *am* a wise woman. A dream is all I need.

PRINCE. Yeah, well I had a dream I was playing cards with the cat and you don't see me running to the litter box to tell her.

WOLF. I've never heard of you.

ESMERELDA. I don't get around much.

WOLF. Why should we believe you?

ESMERELDA. For your dear daughter's sake.

PRINCE. Who is this prince? What is his name?

ESMERELDA. I don't know.

WOLF. Where is he from?

ESMERELDA. I...don't know...

WOLF. What does he look like?

ESMERELDA. I can't remember.

WOLF. You're not really very much help, then, are you?

PRINCE. So what do you want us to do?

ESMERELDA. (*Taken aback:*) Well...uhm...

PRINCE. We can't keep her from marrying.

ESMERELDA. Perhaps you could devise a test for each prince who desires her hand...

WOLF. We don't have time for all that nonsense. Be gone! Phil!

PRINCE. Honestly, we must have a word with the guards, they'll let anyone in.

(*PHIL comes and takes ESMERELDA away.*)

PHIL. Dreams about evil princes, indeed. "Oooh, I had a scary dream and I'm all upset." You wanna hear my dream? I dreamed I got fired because an ugly old woman got me into trouble. Off with you, foul witch, before I toss you into the moat!

(PHIL chases ESMERELDA off but she enters again immediately.)

ESMERELDA. There must be a way to protect the Princess. I know! I shall put a spell on her so that only a Prince who is willing to fight and die for her shall win her hand. Now, what have I got on me?

(ESMERELDA looks through her robe, finds a spindle.)

ESMERELDA. A spindle? That's it? It's not much of a present but it will have to do. Now to apply the spell:

“To keep Beauty for her true love's arms
I now endow thee with magic charms.
One prick from you and she will nap
Until the right prince evades the trap
And plants a kiss to break the spell
Then she will wake and all be well.”
Perfect!

(The ESMERELDA crosses back to WOLF and PRINCE.)

ESMERELDA. Your Majesties, I have a present for Princess Beauty.

WOLF. Nice, very nice. Guard!

PRINCE. Diapers!

ESMERELDA. No, guess again.

WOLF. Guard!!!!

PRINCE. Magic diapers?

WOLF. Guard!!!!!!!!!!

ESMERELDA. *(Holding up spindle:)* A spindle!

PRINCE. A spindle?

WOLF. Where is that guard?!

PRINCE. What sort of gift is that for a princess? And it's not even a designer spindle!

WOLF. *(Getting up:)* Fine, I'll do it myself. Off with her head!

ESMERELDA. You want to play rough? I'll give you rough! I'm gonna curse *all* the spindles in the land so that not just Princess

Beauty but *all* the people will fall asleep when she pricks her finger!
Happy now?!

“To keep Beauty for her true love’s arms
I now curse you *all* with magic charms!
One prick from a spindle and *all* will nap
Until...”

(Enter PHIL, pulling his pants up.)

PHIL. Sorry, I had to go to the...you know...

WOLF. Get her!

(PHIL chases ESMERELDA off.)

WITCH. And they chased her out before she could finish up with the part about the kiss and explain why she did it in the first place. So you see, she was really trying to help the kid, not hurt her. Is everyone clear on that point?

GODMOTHER. *(Still entranced:)* Oh, yes, now I understand.

WOLF. Well, since you put it that way...

PRINCE. We didn’t know that part of the story.

WITCH. Yes, well, nobody ever tells it that way, do they. So now that you know what’s really going on, I guess you can keep going. *(To GODMOTHER:)* “Abracadabra, zip-a-dee-doo, it’s magically delicious!”

(GODMOTHER returns to normal.)

GODMOTHER. I should be very angry at you for that.

WITCH. I did it for the children.

GODMOTHER. Very well then, I’m willing to overlook it but just this once. May I continue?

WITCH. Be my guest.

GODMOTHER. And after delivering this terrible curse...

(A look from the WITCH.)

GODMOTHER. ...this terrible *misunderstood* but well-intentioned curse, the witch disappeared in a puff of smoke.

WITCH. Give me a break.

GODMOTHER. ...uh, was chased out before she could finish or explain.

WITCH. Thank you. Disappearing in a puff of smoke takes some effort, you know.

(WITCH exits.)

WOLF. What shall we do, what shall we do?! She's only a few days old and already our little Beauty is cursed!

(Enter PHILODENDRON, ROTODENDRON and MALODENDRON.)

MALODENDRON. Fear not! You forget that I have not yet granted my gift.

PRINCE. Finally, diapers!

WOLF. Don't listen to her! Fix the curse!

MALODENDRON.

"I cannot undo another's curse,
But I can keep things from getting worse.
To break the spell? Just one kiss
From her true love to our pretty little miss."

(MALODENDRON sticks out her tongue toward the ES-
MERELDA, off.)

ESMERELDA. (*Sticking her head in:*) I would have said that if I'd had the chance.

(ESMERELDA's head exits.)

WOLF. That was wonderful...

PRINCE. Not seeing any diapers here!

WOLF. ...but we're not going to take any chances. By royal proclamation, let the word go forth that no spindles may remain in the kingdom from this day forward.

PRINCE. That's going to make weaving cloth rather difficult. I hope you don't mind walking around without any clothes on.

WOLF. It'll be worth it to insure our Beauty's safety.

PRINCE. (Unconvinced:) I don't know. Have you ever taken a good look at yourself naked? It's not really a pretty sight...

WOLF. You're not a very good mother, are you.

PRINCE. Now I'm getting parenting advice from a wolf?

GODMOTHER. So all the spindles were brought to the borders of the kingdom and tossed over.

(The STAGE MANAGER enters with a basket of spindles. She turns, tosses them off.)

STAGE MANAGER. For the children.

(STAGE MANAGER exits.)

ESMERELDA. (Sticking head in again:) Think you can outsmart me, do you? We'll see about this!

(ESMERELDA's head exits.)

GODMOTHER. Years passed. People ran out of clothes but Beauty grew into a lovely young lady. Her parents were very proud of her.

(PRINCE throws the doll off. PRINCE and WOLF put on ratty old bathrobes.)

(Enter BEAUTY with a piece of paper.)

BEAUTY. Hello, Mother. Hello, Father.

PRINCE. Darling daughter, you are so good and kind to everyone, so smart and full of life. Everyone loves you.

WOLF. And so they should or they'll have to tell me why not.

BEAUTY. Can you help me? I have a question.

PRINCE. Certainly, daughter dear. Do you want to know the secret to happiness?

WOLF. It's not where babies come from, is it, because that's really more of a mother thing...

BEAUTY. No, see I'm doing this crossword puzzle and I need a seven letter word for "a pointy stick used in weaving cloth," first six letters are "S-P-I-N-D-L" and I can't get the last letter. It's not a word I've ever heard before. Do either of you know what it is?

(WOLF and PRINCE quickly start to exit.)

WOLF. Nope, sorry, no idea at all.

PRINCE. Never heard of it and don't ever ask us again. See you at supper!

(WOLF and PRINCE exit quickly.)

BEAUTY. Well, that was weird. So much for parents knowing everything. "Spindl-o?" "Spindl-i?" "Spindl-a?" "Spindl-u?"

GODMOTHER. Beauty began to ask everyone in the castle if they knew the answer.

(BEAUTY walks about the stage looking around.)

(SHE peers off.)

GODMOTHER. She surprised someone in the shower...

(A scream off. BEAUTY looks in a new spot.)

GODMOTHER. She surprised someone in the kennels...

(Barking off. BEAUTY looks in a new spot.)

GODMOTHER. She surprised someone in the shower again...

(Another scream off.)

ESMERELDA. *(Sticking her head in, which is covered in a shower cap:)* Look, why don't you go to the top of the tallest tower and give me a break?! *(Withdraws:)*

GODMOTHER. But the King and Queen had forbidden anyone to even speak the word... *(She whispers:)*...spindle... *(normal voice:)*...so poor Beauty could not finish her puzzle. Having looked everywhere else, Beauty took the showerer's advice and went up to the top of the tallest tower and found a little room she had never been in before.

(Enter POPPY, an old woman. She sits on a bench, takes out a spindle, spins thread on it. BEAUTY crosses to her.)

BEAUTY. Hello, old woman.

POPPY. Hello, little girl.

BEAUTY. I've never seen you before.

POPPY. I'm in the middle of a game of hide and seek. I'm hiding.

BEAUTY. How long have you been hiding?

POPPY. 12 years. It's so nice of you to visit me.

BEAUTY. *(Taking out a box of cookies:)* Actually, I'm selling these cookies...

POPPY. *(Taking box and tossing off:)* I bought some at the office. Is there anything else I can do for you?

BEAUTY. Do you know this word – “S-P-I-N-D-L-?”

POPPY. “S-P-I-N-D-L-E?” Spindle?

BEAUTY. *(Filling in the blanks on her paper:)* Oooooohhhhhhhh, spindle! Yeah, that fits. Thanks. Say, what's that?

POPPY. *(Handing BEAUTY the spindle:)* That's odd. I thought everyone knew what a spindle...uh oh. Your name wouldn't happen to be Beauty by any chance, would it?

BEAUTY. Yes, why?

POPPY. Carefully, very carefully, can you hand that back to me, please?

BEAUTY. What's wrong?

POPPY. *(Trying to be casual:)* Oh, nothing, nothing at all, certainly nothing to do with a terrible curse or anything, no, why would you ask?

(BEAUTY gives back the spindle.)

POPPY. Phew! That was a close one. I won't do anything that stupid again.

ESMERELDA. *(Off:)* Ding dong!

POPPY. Who is it?

ESMERELDA. *(Off:)* Delivery man!

POPPY. Come in!

(Enter ESMERELDA. She is dressed as a delivery man and carries a package wrapped in brown paper.)

ESMERELDA. I have a package here for... *(Reading label:)*...Princess Beauty?

BEAUTY. That's me.

ESMERELDA. Sign here.

(ESMERELDA has BEAUTY sign paper, hands her the package.)

POPPY. That's odd. How did you know she was here?

ESMERELDA. Says right there on the label—"Princess Beauty, Top Tower Room, Today Only."

BEAUTY. May I open it?

POPPY. Of course, dear, it is your package.

(BEAUTY opens box.)

POPPY. You don't look like a delivery man. You look sort of...wise womanish...to me.

ESMERELDA. Yeah, I get that a lot.

POPPY. Who is it from?

ESMERELDA. "Spindles R Us."

POPPY. This can't be good.

(BEAUTY has the box open and takes out a spindle.)

BEAUTY. Look, it's another one of those spindle things.

POPPY. This is not natural. Who sent it?

ESMERELDA. Doesn't say. Don't worry—have a lollypop.

(ESMERELDA gives POPPY a large lollypop. It looks suspiciously like a spindle with a fake candy top. SHE exits.)

POPPY. May I please see that?

(BEAUTY give POPPY the spindle.)

POPPY. Another close call. What could possibly happen next?

(A hand reaches out from off and pulls on a rope. A rain of spindles falls onto an empty part of the stage [to avoid injury].)

POPPY. Goodness! I've heard of plagues of locusts and frogs but never a shower of spindles! Beauty, stay away from those. They're very dangerous.

BEAUTY. They don't look dangerous.

POPPY. They are to you. Didn't your parents ever have that talk with you? The spindle talk?

BEAUTY. No. Is something wrong with me?

POPPY. No, nothing! Just don't touch any more spindles! My heart can't take it! Here, have a lollypop instead.

(POPPY hands BEAUTY the lollypop.)

BEAUTY. Ow, it scratched me!

(BEAUTY holds up a hand.)

POPPY. Oh, that's not so bad.

(POPPY takes the lollypop back and the head comes off the stick.)

POPPY. Wait a minute! This isn't a lollypop! It's a spindle!

BEAUTY. I pricked my finger on it. Don't worry, it's just a... *(She yawns)* ...sleepy.

POPPY. No! No no no no no!

BEAUTY. Can I take a nap here?

(BEAUTY pushes POPPY off her bench and sits.)

POPPY. No! You're not tired! You're full of pep and energy! Let's play a game of tag! Have a glass of chocolate milk!

BEAUTY. Wake me for dinner.

(BEAUTY lies down on the bench.)

POPPY. You're yawning! Stop yawning! *(She yawns:)* Now I'm yawning! I don't want to be yawning! I can't... *(yawns again:)*...be yawning!

(BEAUTY falls asleep.)

POPPY. Nooooooooo!!!!!! *(It trails off into another yawn:)* Wake up! Oh, dear, what have I done?

(POPPY falls asleep where she is sitting.)

GODMOTHER. And then everyone and everything in the whole castle fell asleep. Not just Beauty but all the servants and the nobles, the King and the Queen, the cat in her basket and the dogs in their kennels, the ponies in the yard and the fly on the door knob. Even the water in the fountain fell into a deep, deep sleep.

ESMERELDA. *(Sticking her head in:)* In your face, King Walter and Queen Possum! I knew I could pull it off! *(Withdraws.)*

GODMOTHER. Years went by and since people were afraid to go into the cursed castle, the trees and grass and vines grew over the place, hiding it from view, and eventually, everyone forgot it was even there. The whole story passed into legend.

(The STAGE MANAGER throws a blanket of vines over BEAUTY, hiding her from view. A wall of vines comes on.)

GODMOTHER. But one day, Prince Reg and his squire from far, far away rode into the kingdom.

(Enter PRINCE riding a wooden stick horse. PRINGLE, his valet, enters, walking behind him.)

PRINCE. Well, loyal Pringle?

PRINGLE. *(Unenthusiastically:)* My name is Yancy.

(A pause.)

PRINCE. *(With a look:)* Well. Go on.

PRINGLE. Doo-doo-da-doo! Doo-doo-da-doo!

GODMOTHER. Why do you sound like a dying rooster?

PRINGLE. He makes me do it to announce his arrival.

GODMOTHER. Well, stop it. It's very annoying.

PRINGLE. (*To PRINCE:*) You see? I told you. (*To GODMOTHER:*) Thank you.

PRINCE. (*Looking around:*) I've heard stories of a beautiful princess who once lived in a castle near here.

PRINGLE. An enchanted castle, I believe.

PRINCE. I don't see any castle.

PRINGLE. Well, d'uh, you wouldn't. It's *enchanted*. (*To GODMOTHER:*) Honestly, you see what I have to work with?

PRINCE. We must search valiantly for the castle and the princess.

PRINGLE. Because, why? (*Singsong:*) You can feel in your heart she's your one true love and you can only be happy if you're together forever?

PRINCE. Well, yeah, it sounds stupid if you say it like that. Say it like this. (*Passionately:*) "Because I can feel in my heart she's my one true love and I can only be happy if we're together forever." Doesn't that sound better?

PRINGLE. (*Unenthused:*) Oh, yeah. That's made all the difference.

PRINCE. Besides, Pringle, it's not just that. I want to break the spell and free all the people in the castle. It's not just about one wonderful girl but her parents and the stinky peasants and the animals and the insects and the flowers and the...

PRINGLE. Yeah, yeah, we get it. And my name is Yancy.

PRINCE. I'm handsome, brave and pure of heart. This should be easy as cake.

PRINGLE. You mean pie.

PRINCE. What?

PRINGLE. When something is easy, the expression is, "Easy as pie."

PRINCE. I thought that was "This will be a piece of pie."

PRINGLE. No, that's "This will be a piece of cake."

PRINCE. But I'd rather have pie.

PRINGLE. There is no pie!

PRINCE. So can we have cake instead?

PRINGLE. There isn't any cake either!

PRINCE. But I thought you said there was a piece of cake?

PRINGLE. I did!

PRINCE. Oh, so you ate it!

PRINGLE. I didn't eat anything!

PRINCE. So where's the pie?

PRINGLE. *(Inspired:)* It's in the castle! With the cake! The beautiful princess made both!

PRINCE. *(Drawing his sword:)* Take heart, faithful Pringle. We shall soon have pie and cake! And maybe some milk to wash it down with because I hate when they serve pie and there's nothing to drink...

PRINGLE. *(Going to one side and sitting down:)* Knock yourself out.

(The PRINCE begins hacking at the wall of vines.)

VINES. Ow! Quit it! Stop that, I say! Ouch!

PRINCE. *(To PRINGLE:)* Do not be afraid, loyal Pringle. I will defend you from the magical talking vines. *(He continues dancing about and hacking at the vines:)* This must be the right place. Why else would these enchanted vines grow here?

(The VINES are trying to get away but the PRINCE pursues them.)

PRINGLE. It's fairy tale land. You can't go five feet without tripping over something enchanted.

PRINCE. Back, get back, wretched vines! Let me through, let me through! I must find the beautiful princess and her pie!

VINES. Ow! Who's stopping you? Just go and quit hitting me!

(The wall of VINES withdraws to one side.)

PRINCE. Pringle...!

PRINGLE. Yancy.

PRINCE. I've done it! I've found the castle!

PRINGLE. You rock.

PRINCE. Now to find the beautiful princess and her assorted pastries!

(PRINCE walks all about, perhaps even into the audience.)

GODMOTHER. And so the prince searched all through the castle looking for Sleeping Beauty.

PRINCE. And her baked goods. Wait, all these beauties are awake. *(Looking at a man:)* And some ain't even that beautiful!

PRINGLE. Then you're not looking in the right place, are you.

GODMOTHER. Finally, he climbed the highest tower and there she was, the one he had searched so long for.

(The PRINCE returns to the stage and finds BEAUTY.)

PRINCE. Here she is!

PRINGLE. *(Unexcited:)* Whoop-de-doo.

PRINCE. *(To BEAUTY:)* Wake up, my sweet one. Your Prince Reg is here! Arise, Beauty. *(To PRINGLE:)* She won't wake up.

PRINGLE. Well, d'uh, she's *enchanted*. Remember?

PRINCE. So what should I do? *(To GODMOTHER:)* Any hints?

GODMOTHER. According to the Prime Directive, I'm not allowed to interfere.

PRINCE. Just a little tiny eeny weeny little hint?

VINES. *(Whispering:)* What about a kiss?

PRINCE. Really? A kiss? Well, I don't know what good that'll do, but okay.

(PRINCE kisses PRINGLE, looks at BEAUTY.)

PRINCE. It didn't work—she's still asleep.

VINES. The princess, you silly prince, kiss the princess!

PRINCE. Oh, kiss *the princess!* Well, now, that makes more sense. But not until she's had a breath mint. She has been sleeping for a long time.

(PRINCE puts a mint into BEAUTY's mouth and kisses her. She wakes up.)

PRINGLE. Oh, my goodness, he did it!

BEAUTY. Who are you?

PRINCE. I'm the prince who has broken the spell and set you free.

BEAUTY. How long have I been asleep?

PRINCE. Years and years and years.

BEAUTY. Thank you for saving me.

PRINCE. You're welcome. And now there is something very important I must ask you. Beauty...

(WOLF enters.)

WOLF. Wait a minute...

PRINCE. Where is the cake?

WOLF. Wait just a cotton-picking minute here!

BEAUTY. What cake?

PRINCE. Or pie, I'll take cake or pie.

BEAUTY. Did I miss something while I was sleeping?

WOLF. Wait wait wait wait!!

GODMOTHER. And everyone lived...

WOLF. Don't say it! The story's not over! You skipped my part!

(Enter WITCH and PRINCE.)

EVERYONE. There aren't any wolves in "Sleeping Beauty!"

STAGE MANAGER. Okay, so I guess you're all done now. Bu-bye!

PRINCE & WOLF. No! We still have to tell *our* side!

GODMOTHER. What do you mean, *your* side?

WOLF. She (*Meaning the WITCH:*) got to tell her side. What about us?

PRINCE. The exciting prince part!

WOLF. The wolf bit!

STAGE MANAGER. All right, all right! So who goes next?

PRINCE. (*Wildly waving his hand in the air:*) Me! Me! Pick me!

STAGE MANAGER. Fine, don't have a seizure, go ahead.

PRINCE. Finally! A chance to tell the Prince's side of the story! We have been silenced far too long!

(*EVERYONE looks at him.*)

PRINCE. Nobody ever cares about us. We just come galloping in at the end, kiss the beautiful princess and ride off into the sunset to live happily ever after. No one gets to hear *our* story, *our* hopes and dreams. No one ever asks what *we* want, what makes *us* tick. But now, I have the spotlight! Now, you must all listen to me!

(*A pause.*)

GODMOTHER. Go ahead, dear. What did you want to say?

PRINCE. (*Looking in his pockets:*) I've written it all down somewhere, all my notes and...just waiting for this opportunity...a yellow piece of paper...thought I had it right here... (*Makes a sound of exasperation*) ...can't believe I've lost it...!

WOLF. Maybe you left it in your other tights.

(*OTHERS wait expectantly.*)

PRINCE. It was right here! (*To audience:*) Has anyone seen a yellow...

WITCH. Oh, for pity's sake, just tell your story. We haven't got all day.

PRINCE. (*Giving up the search:*) Fine! Everybody off and come on when I need you. (*Under his breath:*) Wouldn't want to waste anybody's valuable time or anything...

(Everyone except PRINCE exits.)

PRINCE. ...all these years I've been putting up with your stories over and over again...

WITCH. *(Off:)* Look, if you don't start, I'm going to turn you into a newt!

PRINCE. *(Making a face at WITCH:)* Once upon a time...

WITCH. *(Off:)* I saw that!

PRINCE. Once upon a time, there was a very handsome prince named Prince Snarky...

(Enter PRINCE SNARKY strutting proudly with a crown on his head.)

PRINCE SNARKY. Oh, yeah! Digging the prince, everybody's digging the prince!

PRINCE. ...who was a very bad prince.

PRINCE SNARKY. Get out!

PRINCE. He was lazy and mean and a bully. He liked to make fun of people and order his servants about and make life generally miserable for everybody.

(Enter SERVANTS—ZINGO, LARRY and SHMOE.)

PRINCE SNARKY. You there! Servants! Zingo! Move the castle three inches to the left! Larry! Teach my cat how to play checkers! Shmoe! Make me a suit out of butter. Now, you ugly servants, now!

ZINGO, LARRY, SHMOE. Yes, your highness.

PRINCE SNARKY. And when you're done, go sit in the kennels.

ZINGO, LARRY, SHMOE. The kennels, my lord?

PRINCE SNARKY. That's where the *dogs* live, isn't it? *(Barking at them:)* Ruff ruff ruff!

ZINGO, LARRY, SHMOE. Yes, your highness.

PRINCE SNARKY. Here's a joke I just made up. What's hideously ugly, has 6 arms and legs, bad breath, body odor and has to do exactly what I say?

ZINGO. A dragon?

PRINCE SNARKY. *(Patiently:)* No, guess again.

LARRY. *(Thinking hard:)* A dragon?

PRINCE SNARKY. *(Kindly:)* No. Think harder.

SHMOE. *(Happily:)* A dragon!

PRINCE SNARKY. No. Give up? *(THEY nod:)* You three! *(Laughs:)* Pretty good, eh?

ZINGO, LARRY, SHMOE. Very witty, my lord.

(They exit.)

PRINCE. One day, the prince went out riding.

(A stick horse is thrown on and PRINCE SNARKY catches it and gallops about on it looking out into the audience.)

PRINCE SNARKY. You, stop picking that. You, tuck in that shirt. You, comb your hair. You, pay attention. You, get your finger out of your nose, you don't know where it's been! What are you, five? Six? Act your age!

(Enter BETTINA.)

PRINCE. Suddenly, his horse reared up and threw the prince to the ground!

(PRINCE SNARKY falls to the ground in front of BETTINA.)

PRINCE. There was an old woman standing on the path.

PRINCE SNARKY. You, there! Ugly old woman! How dare you scare my noble steed! Get out of my way, you toad!

BETTINNA. For shame! That's no way to talk to a poor, old woman named Bettina.

PRINCE SNARKY. *(Thundering:)* Do you know who I am?!

BETTINNA. A very rude young man?

PRINCE SNARKY. I am the prince and you will show me some respect!

BETINNA. (*Singing:*) “R-E-S-P-E-C-T! Find out what it means to me!” Here’s a riddle—what must you give away in order to receive?

PRINCE SNARKY. Ugly old women?

BETINNA. No. Respect.

PRINCE SNARKY. (*Sputtering in rage:*) Why, I oughta...!

BETINNA. Keep that up and you’ll give yourself a stroke.

PRINCE SNARKY. I will put you in chains and lock you up in my deepest, darkest dungeon! You will never see the light of day again!

BETTINA. For what crime?

PRINCE SNARKY. For scaring my horse by being so hideously ugly!

BETINNA. I’m not so ugly.

PRINCE SNARKY. You are!

BETINNA. Am not.

PRINCE SNARKY. Are to!

BETINNA. Am not!

PRINCE SNARKY. Are to!

BETINNA. Not!

PRINCE SNARKY. To!

BETINNA. Not!

PRINCE SNARKY. To!

BETINNA. Not too what?

PRINCE SNARKY. Ugly!

BETINNA. There, see? You said it yourself—I’m not too ugly.

PRINCE SNARKY. Aaaaah!

BETINNA. And even if I am, it's not a crime to be ugly.

PRINCE SNARKY. It is now! By royal proclamation, all ugly people must now be locked away so as not to offend the beautiful people!

BETINNA. You know, you have a very poor attitude and should be taught a lesson.

PRINCE SNARKY. And who's going to teach it to me? You? Oh, I'm so scared.

BETINNA. As a matter of fact, yes. You picked the wrong lady to mess with, Junior, because I am a witch!

“To look at you, no one would guess
Your soul is such an awful mess.
Your face is fair and oh, so bright
But your soul is foul and quite a fright!
This contrast must be rectified.
Let the surface match what is inside.
So say goodbye to your beautiful face
As ugliness now takes its place!”

(Some sort of special effect. PRINCE SNARKY becomes ugly, probably by donning a mask.)

PRINCE SNARKY. *(Feeling his face:)* What's happening? What have you done to my beautiful face?

BETINNA. From now on, your face will show everyone how ugly your heart is.

PRINCE SNARKY. I'm ugly?!

BETINNA. All that nastiness *inside* of you is now *outside* of you! Try that on for size.

(BETTINA starts to exit.)

PRINCE SNARKY. Wait! How can I break the spell? You've got to give me an out.

BETINNA. Oh, very well. I suppose it is the traditional thing to do.

“To reverse the curse, you must follow this plan —

Just give a kiss to whoever you can.”

PRINCE SNARKY. (*Delighted:*) That’s it? That’s all? Just a kiss? I’ll just pay some poor peasant girl to close her eyes and do the deed.

BETTINA. I wasn’t finished.

“Before the kiss, you will have to shout—
‘One kiss from me turns you inside out!’”

PRINCE SNARKY. My kiss will turn someone inside out? That’s gross!

BETTINA. That’s life. Good luck, sweetie!

(*BETTINA exits.*)

GODMOTHER. (*Sticking head in:*) I know what’s going to happen! I know what’s going to happen! (*Pulling head out.*)

PRINCE. Shhhh! And so the poor prince had a long time rue his rude behavior.

(*PRINCE SNARKY “rides” his horse around the stage, looking at the audience.*)

PRINCE. Although he rode far and wide, he could find no one who would let him kiss them. Everyone soon heard of his terrible curse and those who hadn’t, heard it from him.

PRINCE SNARKY. (To audience member:) Really? You’ll kiss me? Fantastic! (In a loud “possessed” voice:) “My kiss will turn you inside out!” Shoot! Lost another one!

PRINCE. Even the promise of gold wasn’t enough to lure anyone to help him.

PRINCE SNARKY. Wealth! Wealth beyond your wildest dreams! For just one little kiss—what a deal! Anyone? Darn.

PRINCE. But as the days went by, something began to happen to the prince. As people turned away from his ugly face and snickered, he began to understand how much pain he had caused when he had done the same thing to others.

(*Enter ZINGO, LARRY and SHMOE.*)

ZINGO. Oh, what's wrong with his face?

LARRY. He looks like a monster!

SHMOE. What a hideous mistake of nature.

PRINCE SNARKY. Shut up! It's not my fault! I'm not a monster!

PRINCE. He had quite given up all hope of ever breaking the curse when one day, he overheard an interesting conversation.

(During the following, BEAUTY enters and lies again on the bench, asleep, a blanket of vines covering her. The VINES return to guard her. ESMERELDA also enters.)

SHMOE. She's sound asleep and no one can wake her up.

ZINGO. She's enchanted.

SHMOE. You can say that again.

ZINGO. She's...

SHMOE. *(Quietly to ZINGO:)* That's just a saying. *(Regular voice:)* Nothing's gonna wake up that child.

LARRY. You could march a brass band right by her and she'd just keep right on snoring.

ZINGO. The whole castle's that way. Every single body.

LARRY. Poor little thing.

SHMOE. And where did you say she is?

LARRY. Over the mountains and over the sea, at the far end of the forest.

ZINGO. The sweet lamb.

SHMOE. The precious dear.

LARRY. I heard she's drooling all over her pillow...

ZINGO, LARRY, SHMOE. Ewwwww!

(ZINGO, LARRY and SHMOE exit.)

PRINCE SNARKY. The unsuspecting solution to all my problems!

PRINCE. So the prince began his journey to find the sleeping girl.

PRINCE SNARKY. (*Riding about:*) I can kiss her and she won't even know! It's perfect!

PRINCE. But as he traveled, he began to feel guilty.

PRINCE SNARKY. Can I really go through with it? How can I turn an innocent girl inside out and make her a monstrous outcast like myself?

PRINCE. Finally, he found the enchanted castle where the sleeping girl was waiting.

PRINCE SNARKY. (*Hacking at vines:*) Back, vines, get back!

VINES. Ow! Ow!!!! Why are people always hacking at me?

ESMERELDA. Who're you?

PRINCE SNARKY. I'm Snarky, an ugly prince. Who're you?

ESMERELDA. I'm Esmerelda, the ugly wise woman who put the spell on the princess. How'd you get through the vines?

PRINCE SNARKY. Whacked 'em with my sword.

ESMERELDA. Fair enough. I suppose you want to kiss her.

PRINCE SNARKY. You'd think so.

ESMERELDA. So what's stopping you?

PRINCE SNARKY. I'm cursed. If I kiss her, I'll become handsome again but she'll turn inside out.

ESMERELDA. You don't say. Let me get this straight. Handsome prince who insulted a witch, so she turned him ugly and cursed his kiss that will break the spell.

PRINCE SNARKY. Exactly. But I can't do it to her. I can't curse her, even to save myself.

ESMERELDA. So you've learned your lesson, have you?

PRINCE SNARKY. I guess I have. (*With a big sigh:*) I'd rather stay ugly forever than do this to her.

ESMERELDA. Right. So kiss me.

PRINCE SNARKY. What?

ESMERELDA. Turn me inside out. Then you'll be handsome again and can kiss my Beauty and wake her up and marry her and everyone will live happily ever after.

PRINCE SNARKY. Didn't you understand a word I've said? Inside out? Means nothing to you?

ESMERELDA. Come on—here's your big chance! I know the risks. Go ahead!

PRINCE SNARKY. All right. If you say so.

(PRINCE SNARKY kisses ESMERELDA. HE returns to his normal self while she becomes beautiful.)

PRINCE SNARKY. Look at you! You're beautiful! What happened?

ESMERELDA. I ain't a wise woman for nothing, sonny. That witch didn't mean inside out literally, she meant the same thing that happened to you—that the face will reflect the heart. It was a gift she gave you, not a curse. See all the goodness in my soul?

PRINCE SNARKY. It's lovely.

ESMERELDA. I know! So are you. Now go on and kiss Beauty—you are the worthy one she has waited for.

(PRINCE SNARKY kisses BEAUTY. She wakes up.)

BEAUTY. Mom! I'm up from my nap. When's dinner? *(To PRINCE SNARKY:)* Who're you?

(PRINCE SNARKY, BEAUTY and ESMERELDA talk together silently.)

PRINCE. And so Beauty awoke. And she felt sort of indebted to the prince for waking her up so she took him out for ice cream and then they went on a date to play miniature golf and then...

(Enter WITCH, WOLF, GODMOTHER and STAGE MANAGER.)

WITCH, WOLF, GODMOTHER, STAGE MANAGER.
(Quickly:)...they got married and lived happily ever after!

WITCH. Enough already.

WOLF. Sheesh!

GODMOTHER. You've got to work on your endings, dear.

STAGE MANAGER. Keep it short and snappy, that's what they like. And speaking of endings...

WOLF. Oh, no you don't! It's my turn now!

EVERYONE. But there aren't any wolves in "Sleeping Beauty!"

WOLF. That's what you think. Stand back and watch me work.

(Everyone but WOLF exits.)

WOLF. Once upon a time, as all good tales begin, there was a wolf named Jerry.

(Enter JERRY, a wolf.)

JERRY. Hi, Orville.

WOLF. Hi, Jerry. He was just your normal sort of wolf, nothing special. One day, he was walking through the woods and he came upon a beautiful young woman who was sitting all alone and crying.

(Enter PRUNE DANISH. She wears a tattered dress and sits crying.)

WOLF. You and I might have seen a gal in trouble but Jerry saw lunch so he pounced!

(JERRY pounces on PRUNE DANISH.)

WOLF. Instead of begging for her life, which is what the wolf expected, the woman stuck out her arm.

PRUNE DANISH. *(Sticking out her arm:)* I'm sorry I'm so small and skinny, Mr. Wolf, and will not make you a very good meal but please eat me up as quick as you can and put an end to my sorrow.

WOLF. This was not the sort of thing the wolf usually heard from his meals, so he was curious.

JERRY. Pray, beautiful girl, tell me your name and how such a beautiful girl as yourself came to be so sad.

PRUNE DANISH. Well, it's like this. My name is Prune Danish and my poor dear mother died when I was born. My father and I lived alone quite happily for years until one day, he remarried. My step-mother was a horrid, fat, ugly woman and she had a horrid, fat, ugly daughter. They both were both very jealous of my beauty and hated me from the start but tolerated me for my father's sake. When he died, they instantly changed and cruelly treated me like the lowest slave.

JERRY. That's terrible!

PRUNE DANISH. Yesterday, we heard that King Shrimptoast is traveling throughout the land in search of a wife. He will be coming to our town soon and my step-mother was so afraid that he would fall in love with my beauty and ignore her daughter that she banished me here to the woods to be eaten by wild animals!

JERRY. What a horrible woman!

PRUNE DANISH. I am so lonely and full of despair that I want only to die so go ahead and eat me up. It's too bad my step-mother and sister are not here as they would make you a much more delicious meal but alas, they are at home, alone and unprotected by men-folk.

WOLF. And these words gave the wolf an interesting idea...

JERRY. And just where would this home happen to be?

(JERRY and PRUNE DANISH exit.)

WOLF. And that night, there was a terrible commotion as Jerry ate both the step-mother...

(A scream off.)

WOLF. ...and the step-sister.

(Another scream off.)

WOLF. But he liked Prune Danish so he didn't eat her at all.

(Enter JERRY and PRUNE DANISH.)

PRUNE DANISH. Thank you so much, Jerry. How can I ever reward you?

JERRY. My full stomach and your lovely beauty are reward enough. Good luck, Miss Danish.

(JERRY exits. Enter KING SHRIMPTOAST.)

WOLF. When King Shrimptoast came to the town, he heard all about the terrible wolf attack. He met with Prune Danish to offer his sympathy and her beauty won his heart.

(KING SHRIMPTOAST crosses to PRUNE DANISH, gets onto one knee to propose.)

KING SHRIMPTOAST. Lovely Prune Danish, will you marry me?

PRUNE DANISH. Oh, yes, your majesty.

(They hug. KING SHRIMPTOAST gives crown to PRUNE DANISH. She puts it on.)

WOLF. And so they were married and Prune Danish became the Queen of all the land.

(Enter ZINGO, LARRY and SHMOE.)

ZINGO, LARRY & SHMOE. All hail good Queen Danish!

WOLF. When King Shrimptoast died from a tragic pogo stick accident...

(KING SHRIMPTOAST falls over dead. ZINGO, LARRY and SHMOE drag HIM off.)

WOLF. ...Danish became the ruler of all the land. And she was a terrible ruler. She cared only for herself and not for her people. She taxed everyone to buy herself fine things.

(Enter ZINGO, LARRY and SHMOE. PRUNE DANISH crosses to them.)

PRUNE DANISH. Come on, cough up that money. I need some new drapes.

SHMOE. But I need firewood and nasal decongestant!

WOLF. She was selfish and greedy and vain and generally unpleasant to be around.

ZINGO. But it was a terrible harvest and if I give you all my money, I'll starve!

PRUNE DANISH. So starve already! I need to pay my hairdresser! Look at these roots!

LARRY. I need this money to feed my starving children!

PRUNE DANISH. I don't care! I need to feed my interior decorator!

(Enter JERRY.)

WOLF. The wolf saw what was happening and realized he'd made a terrible mistake. He went back to Prune Danish's home and listened to the village gossip.

SHMOE. What a shame that wolf didn't eat Prune Danish.

LARRY. Of all the people to be eaten, the hardest working, most honest, humblest two women around here.

ZINGO. I'll bet that evil Danish tricked the wolf into eating her step-mother and sister. She was very clever.

SHMOE. And wolves are very stupid.

WOLF. Hey! If only the wolf had known what a terrible person Prune Danish really was, he wouldn't have listened to her lies.

JERRY. How could I have been so stupid to believe her? I thought she was telling the truth because she looked so sad and beautiful. Only a jerk would fall for that.

(JERRY hits his head with his fist.)

JERRY. Stupid, stupid, stupid!

LARRY. So I guess this is all the wolf's fault then. If he hadn't eaten the wrong people...

ZINGO. ...we wouldn't have such a wicked Queen. If I ever get my hands on him...

SHMOE. ...bam, zoom, to the moon, Alice!

(ZINGO, LARRY and SHMOE exit.)

WOLF. The wolf realized it was up to him to make things right.

JERRY. But what can I do? She's the Queen and I'm just a wolf. I've got to think very hard.

WOLF. He traveled throughout the length and breadth of the land, visiting other kingdoms and talking to many people, coming up with many schemes until finally, he found the perfect plan.

(He does. A light bulb appears over his head.)

JERRY. Ah ha! I've got it!

(JERRY takes out a piece of parchment and a quill, scribbles a note and drops it on the floor. PRUNE DANISH walking by, waving and smiling, trips on it.)

PRUNE DANISH. Who left this here?! Somebody's begging for a... *(Reading it:)* Wait a minute, what's this? "Beauty Contest?! Every 100 years, yadda yadda yadda, the kingdom of Dragonwyck...celebrated beauty contest...every unmarried maiden required to enter...statue of winner...worshipped by citizens..." And this is the year?! Why wasn't I told about this?! I *love* beauty contests! I am so all over this! Servants, pack my stuff! I'm off to Dragonwyck!

(PRUNE DANISH exits.)

WOLF. Now you or I might have looked into this rather odd once-every-hundred-years beauty pageant but Prune Danish was thinking only of how beautiful the winning tiara would look on her head. She couldn't get started fast enough.

(Enter PRUNE DANISH with suitcases.)

PRUNE DANISH. Dragonwyck, here I come!

(PRUNE DANISH makes a circuit of the stage carrying her suitcases.)

WOLF. Prune Danish traveled many days and many miles. When her servants couldn't keep up with her, she left them behind and pushed on alone. Finally, she arrived on the very day of the contest!

(Enter KING BUNNINGTON.)

WOLF. She went immediately to the king and introduced herself.

PRUNE DANISH. You must have heard of me—I'm Queen Prune Danish—and I have come to enter your "Once-In-A-Century Beauty Contest."

KING BUNNINGTON. I'm King Bunnington and that's not a very good idea.

PRUNE DANISH. What, scared I'll beat your local girls?

KING BUNNINGTON. No, it's just that...

PRUNE DANISH. Is there anything in the rules that says I can't compete?

KING BUNNINGTON. No, but...

PRUNE DANISH. Then, sign me up!

KING BUNNINGTON. You're sure?

PRUNE DANISH. Sure I'm sure, what're you, king of the idiots?

KING BUNNINGTON. It's your funeral.

WOLF. Now, you or I might've wondered why King Bunnington tried to talk her out of it but Prune Danish didn't think twice. She was too busy getting ready.

PRUNE DANISH. *(Opening bags and putting on dress, make-up, etc.:)* These Dragonwyckians aren't going to know what hit them. I'm going to win this thing hands down. Can you believe the citizens memorize the names of every winner since this thing began? They're treated like national heroes! Finally, a place where beauty is recognized for what it is—the most important thing of all! I'm home!

(Enter BERTHA RATCATCHER, STELLA ARMPIT and FESTERING PUSTULE. All are dressed in gowns but all look horrible.)

KING BUNNINGTON. Let the judging of our four finalists begin!

(In turn, each contestant sashays downstage, waving and smiling, turns slowly, returns to original spot. PRUNE DANISH is last.)

KING BUNNINGTON. First up, we have Bertha Ratcatcher. Bertha is the daughter of Frank and Sadie Ratcatcher. She is wearing a lovely dress made of burlap sacking and rat fur. Her hobbies include catching rats and talking to rats. Her best friend is her rat, Ratty. Isn't she a dream? (*Encourages applause.*) Next, we have Stella Armpit. Stella runs the village wash pit. She says she can identify any stain just by licking it. Isn't she a treat in a gown she's made herself out of underwear that's been left at the wash pit? Stella enjoys gossiping and training fleas for her flea circus. Let's give her a big hand. Now, let's meet Festering Pustule. Festering is a beggar. Her usual begging ground is on the village dung pile but she can also be seen out by the dump on sunny days. Her ensemble is made entirely out of human hair that she has collected over the years. When she's not begging, Festering likes to pick her scabs and shout things at people only she can see. (*She does.*) What a treasure! And finally, we have an out-of-towner this year, Prune Danish. Prune is the ruler of her own kingdom, isn't that unusual, and we couldn't be happier to have her here with us today. Her dress is custom-made of the finest silks, jewels and satins. She spends all her free time looking in the mirror, well, don't we all? Show her how much we appreciate the effort she's made. And there you have them, our Miss Dragonwyck contestants for this year! Very nice! And now, it's time for the judging. Vote by your applause. Who likes Bertha Ratcatcher? And Stella Armpit? Anyone for Festering Pustule? And once again, Prune Danish.

(The other contestants and the KING are clearly rooting for PRUNE DANISH to win as they encourage the audience to applaud the loudest for her.)

(If, for some reason, PRUNE DANISH does not receive the loudest applause, she should threaten the winner and the winner should happily give the tiara to her.)

KING BUNNINGTON. And the winner is...Prune Danish!

(KING puts a tiara on PRUNE DANISH. EVERYONE congratulates the winner—tears, smiles, hugs all around. PRUNE DANISH makes a brief victory lap around the stage, waving.)

(KING takes out a long sash, really more rope than sash. He wraps it around PRUNE DANISH, pinning her arms to her sides.)

KING BUNNINGTON. Don't forget your sash. (*Perhaps singing to a tune he has made up:*) "Isn't she lovely? Pretty as a picture, our Beauty Queen! One in a million, every hundred years, the loveliest ever seen!"

PRUNE DANISH. Thank you, thank you. This sash is a bit tight.

KING BUNNINGTON. And now it's time to fulfill your winner's duties.

PRUNE DANISH. Posing for my statue? Presiding over a banquet in my honor?

KING BUNNINGTON. Not exactly.

(KING whispers in Prune Danish's ear.)

WOLF. Now, you or I would've had a lot of questions by now. Why was the contest held only once every hundred years? Why were all unmarried maidens required to enter? Why did they all look so horrible and obviously not want to win? Just what the heck was going on? But Prune Danish only heard "beauty contest" and that was it. She never stopped to think about the name of the kingdom which was *Dragonwyck*...

(PRUNE DANISH receives very nasty information from KING.)

PRUNE DANISH. Noooooooooooooooooo!!!!!!!

(A gag is put in her mouth and she is dragged off by KING, BERTHA, STELLA and FESTERING.)

WOLF. And what do dragons eat every one hundred years when they wake up from their naps? Yes, maidens and only the most beautiful maiden in the kingdom will satisfy their appetites. That's why no one wanted to win and that's why the winner was treated like a hero—they were, after all, saving everyone in the kingdom with their sacrifice.

(A terrible noise off! No more strangled screams. Enter KING, BERTHA, STELLA and FESTERING, straightening themselves up and brushing themselves off. A huge burp from off.)

KING BUNNINGTON. All hail, good Prune Danish! Three cheers for our hero!

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

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Cast of Characters

PAMELA PRUNES, a Fairy Godmother

ORVILLE SMYTHE, a Wolf

GARY RICKENBACKER, a Prince

SYLVIA SMARTLY, a Witch

A STAGE MANAGER

Place

A forest & a castle & some other places, too.

Special Note

The large-cast version of this play begins on Page 9.

MOTHER GOOSE IS EATEN BY WEREWOLVES

(small-cast version)

by Steph DeFerie

(When the audience enters, three seats are already taken—a FAIRY GODMOTHER is sitting with a WOLF, chatting amicably. In another seat, we can see a PRINCE studying his program.)

GODMOTHER. So you know one of the werewolves?

WOLF. Yes, we work together down at the plant. I promised I'd come see him. You?

GODMOTHER. Mother Goose and I go way back.

WOLF. I've heard a lot about her.

GODMOTHER. She's a dear. I must say, I'm a little worried about her. "...Eaten By Werewolves." It does give one pause.

WOLF. I'm sure they wouldn't do anything too dangerous. You know, what with all these kids here and all. You wouldn't want a lot of blood and guts flying around. Might put an eye out.

GODMOTHER. *(Shocked:)* Blood and guts?!

WOLF. Just an expression. They probably use a stunt double for the big attack scene.

GODMOTHER. *(Really shocked:)* Big attack scene?!!!

WOLF. And it's only a small pack of werewolves anyway. Six or seven, I think.

GODMOTHER. *(Couldn't be any more shocked:)* Six or seven??!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

(Enter a WITCH from the lobby.)

WITCH. Who owns the carriage?

PRINCE. *(Standing:)* That'd be me.

WITCH. You might want to move it. There's an ambulance pulling in and it's spooking your horses. They say they have to be here for the end of the show.

(The PRINCE exits to the lobby. The WITCH takes a seat.)

GODMOTHER. Ambulance? Oh, dear! I don't like the sound of that!

WOLF. Just a precaution, I'm sure.

GODMOTHER. You really think so?

WOLF. Nothing to worry about.

(The WOLF and GODMOTHER take their seats.)

(The PRINCE returns and sits. The lights dim.)

(The curtain opens. The stage lights come up to reveal a clearing in the woods.)

(There is a pause.)

(There is a bloodcurdling scream off, followed by howls and growls and snarls!:)

(Another pause.)

STAGE MANAGER. *(Off-stage:)* Cue Mother Goose.

MOTHER GOOSE. *(Off-stage:)* No!

(Sounds of a scuffle, off.)

STAGE MANAGER. *(Off-stage:)* Mother Goose, on stage please, Mother Goose.

MOTHER GOOSE. *(Off-stage:)* No! I won't go on and you can't make me!

STAGE MANAGER. *(Off-stage:)* Get out there!

MOTHER GOOSE. *(Off-stage:)* No!

(Hands appear from off, gripping the scenery in an effort to prevent being forced on stage. More scuffling off. Snarls and the sounds of a struggle.)

STAGE MANAGER. *(Off-stage:)* You're only making the werewolves angry!

MOTHER GOOSE. *(Off-stage:)* I don't care! I've changed my mind! This was a bad idea, a very, very bad idea!

(More snarls.)

STAGE MANAGER. *(Off-stage:)* Look, you knew the score when we started.

MOTHER GOOSE. *(Off-stage:)* You never told me we were using *real* werewolves! Let me out of here!

(The hands disappear. A cloud of feathers is blown on from where the hands formerly were. The sound of feet running away, a door slam. This is followed by mournful howling.)

STAGE MANAGER. *(Off-stage:)* Back! Get back!

(The howls turn into growls. The STAGE MANAGER comes running on, looking back with alarm.)

STAGE MANAGER. Don't come any closer! It says in my contract the stage manager is not to be eaten! *(To audience:)* Uh...hello...and welcome to "Mother Goose Is Eaten By Werewolves." I'm afraid there's been a slight problem...technical difficulties, as it were...

(More howls off.)

STAGE MANAGER. *(Nervously:)* ...we seem to be missing a Mother Goose...which is a very big part of the show...so I'm afraid we won't be able to do the play today after all.

(Howls and growls off.)

STAGE MANAGER. You'll have to leave...

(Louder growls:)

STAGE MANAGER. ...and I'd hurry if I were you!

(STAGE MANAGER begins to exit where she entered, changes mind, exits opposite. There is the sound of running feet and a huge commotion which fades out. The stage lights go out. The house lights come up.)

(GODMOTHER, WITCH, WOLF *and* PRINCE *begin to collect their things and stand up to leave.*)

WITCH. Well, that stinks.

WOLF. We're not having a show?

GODMOTHER. What a shame! To disappoint all these lovely children...

PRINCE. Now what am I going to do with the rest of the day (*or night*)?

WOLF. What a gyp.

WITCH. Well, back to the forest, I guess. (*Slyly, looking around:*) Any of you kids want to come with me and see what a real candy house looks like?

GODMOTHER. (*Hurriedly:*) I don't know if anyone's interested but...I know some stories. If you want, I could tell them and maybe some of you and the performers could act them out...

PRINCE. Oh, I don't know...

WOLF. Why not? There's nothing else to do.

WITCH. (*To GODMOTHER:*) Who put you in charge?

GODMOTHER. Nobody. I just thought...

WITCH. Oh, yeah. I know all about you fairies...

GODMOTHER. (*Insulted:*) I'm a fairy *godmother*.

WITCH. Even worse. Always butting in and ruining everybody's plans...

GODMOTHER. You can tell some stories, too, if you like. Do you know any?

WITCH. Well, of course I know some stories. I'm a witch, not an idiot.

GODMOTHER. I didn't mean to step on anyone's toes.

WOLF. It's a good idea and it's nice of you to offer it.

WITCH. Fine. Suck up to the fairy. You'd think you'd be on my side.

WOLF. Why?

WITCH. You know what it's like to always be put down as the bad guy no matter what you do just because you're a wolf. The wolf and the witch are always bad, the beautiful fairy godmother is always good, blah blah blah.

WOLF. That has nothing to do with it. I was just saying...

WITCH. Yeah, whatever. *(To PRINCE:)* What do you think, Junior?

PRINCE. I don't want to get involved.

(They all look at him.)

PRINCE. If I don't give the right answer, he'll *(Meaning the WOLF)* eat me or she'll *(Meaning the WITCH)* turn me into a frog or she'll *(Meaning the GODMOTHER)* make me marry some horrible princess.

WITCH. Oh, don't be such a baby.

PRINCE. Easy for you to say —you've never had to catch flies for dinner with your tongue.

WOLF. What if we all take turns telling a story? Would that be all right?

GODMOTHER. That sounds lovely.

PRINCE. And no one eats or puts a spell on anyone.

WITCH. These kids probably aren't even interested. They're too "sophisticated" for fairy tales these days, what with their video games and their computer generated special effects...

GODMOTHER. Goodness, it was just a suggestion. I didn't mean to cause such a fuss.

WOLF. Well, let's see what they think. *(To audience:)* Would you like us to tell some stories or would you rather go learn the principal exports of Brazil?

(Hopefully, the audience response is enthusiastic.)

WOLF. The majority has spoken. *(To WITCH:)* If you're not interested, you can leave. No one's forcing you to stay.

WITCH. *(Suddenly sly:)* No, no, I'll help. *(Sinisterly:)* It'll be fun.

PRINCE. Will they mind if we use their things?

GODMOTHER. *(Crossing up to the stage:)* Where is that stage manager? Hello? Is anybody there? Helloooooo?

(Enter STAGE MANAGER, rather shredded.)

STAGE MANAGER. Shouldn't you all be gone by now?

GODMOTHER. Could we ask you a favor?

PRINCE. Excuse me. What happened to the werewolves?

STAGE MANAGER. I shot them with tranquilizing darts and locked them in their dressing room. They won't wake up for hours, we're all perfectly safe.

GODMOTHER. That's good. Now, we thought that we might...

PRINCE. You're sure they're sleeping? There's no way they can wake up and get out?

STAGE MANAGER. No, no, everything's under control.

GODMOTHER. That's a relief! Now, Trixie, would it be possible for us to...

PRINCE. They're not just pretending to be asleep to fool you, and then when your back's turned they open their eyes and you didn't realize they had a key to the door all along...

STAGE MANAGER. No, I'm quite sure they're really sleeping and everything is fine. It's perfectly safe for you to vacate the premises.

GODMOTHER. Yes, well, now that we've settled that, would you mind actually if we stayed here for a bit and told our own stories to the audience?

STAGE MANAGER. Oh, I don't think that's a...

GODMOTHER. It's not for us, you understand...

STAGE MANAGER. We couldn't pay you or anything.

GODMOTHER. No, no, we wouldn't expect that...

STAGE MANAGER. I don't think we could risk the sets getting damaged...

GODMOTHER. It's just that it's for the children, you know, I don't think you want to disappoint all the poor little children, do you?

(GODMOTHER gestures to the children, encourages them to make sad faces.)

GODMOTHER. You wouldn't want them all sad and crying, would you?

(GODMOTHER encourages children to cry.)

STAGE MANAGER. It's just that there's insurance liability...it's not really up to me...

GODMOTHER. Crying and crying as if their dear little hearts would break...

STAGE MANAGER. All right, all right!

GODMOTHER. Thank you, thank you! *(To the audience:)* Dry your eyes, my deary-dears, do not weep and wail. We shall have some lovely fairy stories after all.

STAGE MANAGER. *(Calling:)* Bobby, bring the lights back up.

(The stage lights come up, the house lights go out.)

GODMOTHER. That's wonderful, thank you so much.

STAGE MANAGER. *(Under her breath:)* Yeah, yeah, it's always stupid spoiled children are our future, always getting what they want, nobody ever cares about the stage manager...

(STAGE MANAGER exits.)

WITCH. How'd you do that, put some kind of spell on her?

GODMOTHER. No, no, you can get away with anything if you say it's for the children. We could persuade them to paint their faces blue and dance the hula naked if we said it was for the children.

WITCH. "For the children," eh? That's good to know.

(The GODMOTHER, WITCH, PRINCE and WOLF climb onto the stage. They introduce themselves to each other as they do.)

GODMOTHER. How do you do, I'm Pamela Prunes.

WOLF. Orville Smythe, that's Smythe with a "y."

PRINCE. Prince Gary...

WITCH. Let me guess, Charming.

PRINCE. No, Rickenbacher.

WITCH. Sylvia Smartly, pleased to meet ya.

WOLF. So what do you want us to do?

GODMOTHER. *(Gesturing off:)* Perhaps you might just go off there and find some costumes and props to use and then just act out what I say.

(WITCH, PRINCE and WOLF exit.)

GODMOTHER. *(Calling:)* Bobby, be a dear and just follow along with the lights as best you can, all right, sweetie? Now, let's see. What would be a good story to start with? "Sleeping Beauty" has always been my favorite. *(Calling:)* How does that sound to everybody? "Sleeping Beauty?"

WITCH. *(Entering:)* Ooooh, jeez! "Sleeping Beauty?" What a moron!

GODMOTHER. She is not a moron.

WITCH. She is too a moron. They tell her only one thing in the whole world can hurt her and she goes right out and looks for it. That's the definition of moron in my book. Besides, who's going to play her? There's a witch in this story and I'm playing her.

PRINCE. *(Entering:)* Well, don't look at me. There's a prince in this story and I'm playing him.

WOLF. *(Entering:)* Well, don't look at me. There's a wolf in this story and I'm playing him.

WITCH. There aren't any wolves in "Sleeping Beauty."

WOLF. Sure there are. I'll point him out to you when we get to that part.

GODMOTHER. So none of you wants to be Beauty? I suppose I could do it if I had to but I was really just hoping to be the narrator. Well, we'll cross that bridge when we come to it. Let us begin.

(WITCH and PRINCE exit.)

WOLF. I'll cue you about the wolf part.

(WOLF exits.)

GODMOTHER. Once upon a time, there was a king...

(Enter WOLF with a crown on his head. He carries a second crown with a woman's wig attached.)

GODMOTHER. ...and a queen. *(She looks around.)* Queen? Where is the queen?

WITCH. *(Off-stage:)* I'm not playing the queen! I have to get into character! I'm coming on in a minute as the misunderstood witch!

GODMOTHER. You mean *wicked* witch.

WITCH. *(Off-stage:)* I meant what I said! And if you don't like it, I'll turn you into a wart!

GODMOTHER. So who's going to play the queen?

(WITCH pushes PRINCE on.)

PRINCE. Oh, no! I'm playing the prince.

GODMOTHER. The prince doesn't come on until the end.

PRINCE. I don't mind waiting.

GODMOTHER. But we need you.

PRINCE. *(Looking at WOLF:)* I should at least get to play the king.

WOLF. I called it first.

(Everyone looks at PRINCE expectantly.)

PRINCE. Oh, for heaven's sake...

(PRINCE grabs the crown, jams it on his head, stands there glowing.)

GODMOTHER. Was that so hard?

WOLF. You look lovely.

GODMOTHER. Once upon a time, there was...

WOLF. A king!

GODMOTHER. ...and...and...

PRINCE. (*Grumpily:*) ...and a queen.

GODMOTHER. Look, if you're not going to do this right, don't do it at all. It is for the children, after all...

PRINCE. All right, all right!

(*PRINCE sashays over to a stump, sits, crosses his legs daintily.*)

PRINCE. (*In a high voice:*) And a queen.

(*WOLF crosses to stand behind PRINCE.*)

GODMOTHER. Although they were happy, their lives were not complete. More than anything, they wished for...

PRINCE and WOLF. ...a child.

PRINCE. (*Regular voice, alarmed:*) Really? A child? Are you sure?

WOLF. I'd trade everything for a little boy or girl of our very own.

PRINCE. (*High voice again:*) Perhaps we could adopt...!

(*Enter WITCH into the audience, ringing a bell.*)

WITCH. Boy for sale! Boy for sale!

(*She finds a boy to try to sell.*)

WITCH. How much will you give for this one? (*Like an auctioneer:*) Boy, boy, boy, gotta boy, gotta boy, who'll start me off, who'll give me five, five, five, five, who'll give me 10, 10, 10, 10, do I hear 12, 12, 12, 12?

WOLF. No, I'm afraid he looks much too intelligent. I couldn't raise a boy smarter than myself.

WITCH. How about a girl? (*She chooses a girl to sell:*) Here's a pretty little miss. (*Goes into her spiel:*) Pretty girl, pretty girl, pretty girl, who'll give me five, gimme five, five, five, that's five over there,

who'll go 10, 10, 10, 10, 10 to you ma'am, anyone say 15, 15, 15, 15, your Majesty?

PRINCE. Oh, I couldn't possibly. She's so lovely, I'm sure her own mother would miss her too much. I suppose we'll just have to wait and see if God grants us a child of our own.

(WITCH exits.)

GODMOTHER. And after much praying and wishing, the queen finally gave birth to a beautiful baby girl.

PRINCE. No!

(A doll wrapped in a blanket is thrown out from the wings. WOLF or PRINCE catches it.)

PRINCE. *(Relieved:)* Phew! *(Re-crossing legs uncomfortably:)* A difficult birth but well worth it. A child of our own at last!

WOLF. Now our lives are complete.

GODMOTHER. The day of the christening arrived and everyone in the kingdom was invited to come and bring the child a present. The most anticipated gifts were to be given by three magical sisters who lived in the forest – Philodendron, Rotodendron and Malodendron.

(GODMOTHER exits.)

PRINCE. What do you think they'll give our little Beauty? Magical presents beyond price?

WOLF. It makes no difference. She has our love and needs nothing else.

PRINCE. Well, we could use some more diapers at least. You can never really have enough diapers.

(Enter GODMOTHER with a puppet or doll in each hand.)

GODMOTHER. And I'd rather...

PRINCE. Maybe a supply of diapers that never runs out!

GODMOTHER. And I'd rather...

PRINCE. Or diapers that magically clean themselves!

GODMOTHER. *(With a black look:)* And I'd rather...

PRINCE. Or diapers that change themselves. *(Seeing GODMOTHER's evil look and trailing off:)* That'd really be some...

GODMOTHER. *(Singing a little song of her own devising:)* "...and I'd rather be a rutabaga than no bega at all!" Helloo helloo and how-de-do! What a lovely day for a christening. *(As Puppet 1:)* Oh my yes, isn't it just? The day is as perfect as the guest of honor herself. Beauty is easily the prettiest baby I have ever seen. *(She looks at baby, looks at PRINCE, looks at baby, looks at WOLF:)* Thank goodness she takes after her mother. *(To WOLF:)* No offense, your majesty, but pointed ears and all that hair on her face just wouldn't be very flattering on such a sweet little girl.

WOLF. Off with her head!

(GODMOTHER looks worried.)

WOLF. Just kidding!

PRINCE. What gifts have you brought the princess? Anything diaper-related?

GODMOTHER. *(As Puppet 1:)* A great big pile of poo!

(WOLF and PRINCE look startled.)

Just kidding! *(To Audience:)* Two can play at that game. *(As Puppet 2:)* Your Majesties, we have brought the most wonderful presents anyone could ever want. So just a heads up that we're going to expect some pretty nice thank you notes. *(As herself:)* I bring halibut! No, not halibut. Hash, hushpuppies, hairpins, harpies, hyenas! Wait, wait. Hiccups, hydrangeas, health! Yes, I bring her health, good, great health that she may enjoy all her days. To bind the spell, I need everyone's help. *(To audience:)* Clap your hands with me and say, higgeldy-piggeldy health, it's so much better than wealth! Ready? "Higgeldy-piggeldy health, it's so much better than wealth!" Now everyone scream at the top of your lungs! *(After they are finished:)* That last part isn't necessary, I just think it's fun. And now I'm done.

PRINCE. Well, it's not diapers but it is very nice. What else you got?

GODMOTHER. (*As Puppet 1:*) Jumping beans! Jolly Green Giants! Jellyfish, Jupiter, jiggling jugs of gelatinous jelly, joy. That's it, joy! I bring her a lifetime of joy! But I need everyone's aid in binding it to her. (*To Audience:*) Stamp your feet and say with me, Boy oh boy oh boy, you can never have too much joy! Ready? "Boy oh boy oh boy, you can never have too much joy!" Now everyone blow a raspberry! Like this. (*She demonstrates and after everyone is done:*) That last part is really most unnecessary but I enjoy it immensely. And now I'm finished.

PRINCE. Again, I'm not seeing any diapers but it's the thought that counts, I guess. What else?

GODMOTHER. But before the third wise woman could speak, in burst a wicked witch!

(*GODMOTHER takes off puppets.*)

WITCH. (*Bursting in:*) Ta-da!

GODMOTHER. And she cursed the poor little princess with these terrible...

WITCH. Wait wait wait! How do you know I'm a *wicked* witch? Why do you just automatically assume...

GODMOTHER. Well, for heaven's sake, look at the way you're dressed. And haven't there been several incidents involving missing children...

WITCH. Jeez —you eat a few kids and you get the worst reputation. Go ahead.

GODMOTHER. She cursed the poor little princess with these terrible words:

WITCH. I'll teach you not to invite me to your little party!

"Pointy spindle, weaver's friend..."

Wait a minute. What's the deal with the spindle? Why am I so obsessed with spindles?

GODMOTHER. I don't know! That's just the way the story goes!

WITCH. I don't think you're telling this right.

PRINCE. What the heck is a spindle, anyway?

WOLF. A slender, rod on which fibers are twisted into thread and on which the spun thread is wound.

(Everyone looks at WOLF.)

WOLF. *(Dumbing it down for them:)* A pointy stick used in weaving cloth? I thought everyone knew that.

EVERYONE. Oh, a spindle, oh, of course, yes, I thought you said *sprindle*, and there's no such thing as a sprindle... *(Etc.)*

GODMOTHER. There you go—you don't like spinning and this is just your way of channeling your aggression. That's wonderful motivation.

WITCH. Whatever.

“Pointy spindle, weaver's friend,
Is Beauty's foe in the end.
She'll prick her finger yet will not weep,
Instead for days and days will sleep.
But...”

GODMOTHER. *(Cutting her off:)* Thank you!

WITCH. But I'm not done yet!

GODMOTHER. Yes, you are. It's my story and I say you are. Thank you.

(WITCH stands pouting.)

WITCH. You've got it all wrong! That's not what happened at all!

GODMOTHER. Look, who's telling this story—you or me?

WITCH. Me, now! *(Raising her arms and putting a spell on the GODMOTHER:)* “Abracadabra, rice-a-roni, the San Francisco treat!” Now, what do you have to say?

GODMOTHER. *(In a monotone, as she is in a trance:)* Yes, you should tell us your version. It's always good to hear both sides.

PRINCE. *(Whispering loudly:)* But she eats children!

WITCH. Not all of them. Just the slow ones who can't get away.

WOLF. The slow ones are the most delicious.

WITCH. Yes, aren't they? I like mine rubbed with butter and salt and just a pinch of rosemary...

PRINCE. (*Nauseated:*) Weren't you going to tell us your side?

WITCH. Oh, yes. Once upon a time, there was a nice old woman named Esmerelda who lived in a forest on the edge of a kingdom. She was very wise and very nice but she was not very beautiful so everyone treated her like a wicked witch.

(*GODMOTHER, WOLF and PRINCE come together as a mob.*)

GODMOTHER, WOLF, PRINCE. Boo! Get away, wicked witch! Go back to wicked witch land! (*Etc.*)

(*GODMOTHER, WOLF and PRINCE exit.*)

WITCH. One night, Esmerelda had a terrible dream that the beautiful Princess of the land married an evil prince who took her far away and treated her terribly. She awoke shivering at dawn thanking providence that it was just a dream for she knew that the King and Queen had no children. But the very next day, she heard the news she had been dreading.

(*Enter WOLF as a newsboy.*)

WOLF. Extra, extra! Read all about it! Disco returns, everybody boogie!

(*WOLF boogies.*)

WITCH. No, the other news she had been dreading.

WOLF. Queen gives birth to wrinkly, red-faced baby girl! Read all about it! We can only hope she grows out of it! Extra, extra!

(*WOLF boogies off.*)

WITCH. She knew now that it had been no ordinary dream but a premonition of the future. She had to tell then King and Queen so she traveled to the castle and arrived on the day of the baby's christening.

(*Enter WOLF as the King and PRINCE as the QUEEN. PRINCE holds a doll.*)

(GODMOTHER enters as a guard. WITCH tries to approach but the GODMOTHER bars the way.)

GODMOTHER. Halt! What business have you in the castle?

WITCH. I must speak to the King and Queen.

GODMOTHER. Yeah, yeah, that's what they all say.

WITCH. But I am a wise woman.

GODMOTHER. *(Under her breath:)* Not wise enough to put a bag over your head.

WITCH. Pardon?

GODMOTHER. Nothing, nothing, go right in.

(WITCH crosses to WOLF and PRINCE.)

WITCH. Your majesties, I am Esmerelda, a wise woman of the far forest and I have dire news! Your daughter will grow up to marry a terrible prince who will treat her dreadfully and keep her from you! You must not let that happen!

PRINCE. How do you know such a thing?

WITCH. I had a dream.

PRINCE. That's it? A dream?

WITCH. I *am* a wise woman. A dream is all I need.

QUEEN. Yeah, well, I had a dream I was playing cards with the cat and you don't see me running off to the litter box to tell her, do you?

WOLF. I've never heard of you.

WITCH. I don't get around much.

WOLF. Why should we believe you?

WITCH. For your dear daughter's sake.

PRINCE. Who is this prince? What is his name?

WITCH. I don't know.

WOLF. Where is he from?

WITCH. I...don't know...

WOLF. What does he look like?

WITCH. I can't remember.

WOLF. You're not really very much help, then, are you?

PRINCE. So what do you want us to do?

WITCH. *(Taken aback:)* Well...uhm...

PRINCE. We can't keep her from marrying.

WITCH. Perhaps you could devise a test for each prince who desires her hand...

WOLF. We don't have time for all that nonsense. Be gone!

PRINCE. Honestly, we must have a word with the guards, they'll let anyone in.

(GODMOTHER comes and takes WITCH away.)

GODMOTHER. Dreams about evil princes, indeed. "Oooh, I had a scary dream and I'm all upset." You wanna hear my dream? I dreamed I got fired because an ugly old woman got me into trouble. Off with you, foul witch, before I toss you into the moat!

(GODMOTHER chases WITCH off but WITCH enters again immediately.)

WITCH. There must be a way to protect the Princess. I know! I shall put a spell on her so that only a Prince who is willing to fight and die for her shall win her hand. Now, what have I got on me?

(WITCH looks through her robe, finds a spindle.)

WITCH. A spindle? That's it? It's not much of a present but it will have to do. Now to apply the spell:

"To keep Beauty for her true love's arms
I now endow thee with magic charms.
One prick from you and she will nap
Until the right prince evades the trap
And plants a kiss to break the spell
Then she will wake and all be well."

Perfect!

(The WITCH crosses back to WOLF and PRINCE.)

WITCH. Your Majesties, I have a present for Princess Beauty.

WOLF. Nice, very nice. Guard!

PRINCE. Diapers!

WITCH. No, guess again.

WOLF. Guard!!!!

PRINCE. Magic diapers?

WOLF. Guard!!!!!!!!!!

WITCH. *(Holding up spindle:)* A spindle!

PRINCE. A spindle?

WOLF. Where is that guard?!

PRINCE. What sort of gift is that for a princess? And it's not even a designer spindle!

WOLF. *(Getting up:)* Fine, I'll do it myself. Off with her head!

WITCH. You want to play rough? I'll give you rough! I'm gonna curse *all* the spindles in the land so that not just Princess Beauty but *all* the people will fall asleep when she pricks her finger! Happy now?!

“To keep Beauty for her true love's arms
I now curse you *all* with magic charms!
One prick from a spindle and *all* will nap
Until...”

(Enter GODMOTHER, rearranging dress.)

GODMOTHER. Sorry, I had to go to the...you know...

WOLF. Get her!

(GODMOTHER chases WITCH about the stage.)

WITCH. And he chased her out before she could finish up with the part about the kiss and explain why she did it in the first place. So

you see, she was really trying to help the kid, not hurt her. Is everyone clear on that point?

GODMOTHER. (*Mechanically:*) Oh, yes, now I understand.

WOLF. Well, since you put it that way...

PRINCE. We didn't know that part of the story.

WITCH. Yes, well, nobody ever tells it that way, do they. So now that you know what's really going on, I guess you can keep going. (*To GODMOTHER:*) "Abracadabra, zip-a-dee-doo, it's magically delicious!"

(*GODMOTHER returns to normal.*)

GODMOTHER. I should be very angry at you for that.

WITCH. I did it for the children.

GODMOTHER. Very well then, I'm willing to overlook it but just this once. May I continue?

WITCH. Be my guest.

GODMOTHER. And after delivering this terrible curse...

(*A look from the WITCH.*)

GODMOTHER. ...this terrible *misunderstood* but well-intentioned curse, the witch disappeared in a puff of smoke.

WITCH. Give me a break.

GODMOTHER. ...uh, was chased out before she could finish or explain.

(*GODMOTHER puts puppets back on.*)

WITCH. Thank you. Disappearing in a puff of smoke takes some effort, you know.

(*WITCH exits.*)

WOLF. What shall we do, what shall we do?! She's only a few days old and already our little Beauty is cursed!

GODMOTHER. (*As puppet 3:*) Fear not! You forget that I have not yet granted my gift.

PRINCE. Finally, diapers!

WOLF. Don't listen to her! Fix the curse!

GODMOTHER. *(As puppet 3:)*

"I cannot undo another's curse,
But I can keep things from getting worse.
To break the spell? Just one kiss
From her true love to our pretty little miss."

(GODMOTHER puts away puppets and sticks out her tongue toward the WITCH, off.)

WITCH. *(Sticking her head in:)* I would have said that if I'd had the chance.

(WITCH's head exits.)

WOLF. That was wonderful...

PRINCE. Not seeing any diapers here!

WOLF. ...but we're not going to take any chances. By royal proclamation, let the word go forth that no spindles may remain in the kingdom from this day forward.

PRINCE. That's going to make weaving cloth rather difficult. I hope you don't mind walking around without any clothes on.

WOLF. It'll be worth it to insure our Beauty's safety.

PRINCE. *(Unconvinced:)* I don't know. Have you ever taken a good look at yourself naked? It's not really a pretty sight...

WOLF. You're not a very good mother, are you.

PRINCE. Now I'm getting parenting advice from a wolf?

GODMOTHER. So all the spindles were brought to the borders of the kingdom and tossed over.

(The STAGE MANAGER enters with a basket of spindles. She turns, tosses them off.)

STAGE MANAGER. For the children.

(STAGE MANAGER exits.)

WITCH. (*Sticking head in again:*) Think you can outsmart me, do you? We'll see about this!

(*WITCH's head exits.*)

GODMOTHER. Years passed. People ran out of clothes but Beauty grew into a lovely young lady. Her parents were very proud of her.

(*PRINCE throws the doll off. PRINCE and WOLF put on ratty old bathrobes.*)

(*Everyone looks around for BEAUTY.*)

WITCH. (*Off-stage:*) Don't even think about it! I'm busy with my own problems right now!

GODMOTHER. Look, someone has to do it or we can't continue the story. (*She looks out at the audience.*) Does anyone out there want to help us out and come up and play Beauty?

(*SHE chooses a little girl.*)

How about you?

(*If the director wishes to present the play without audience participation, the STAGE MANAGER can volunteer—after all, “it's for the children.”:*)

GODMOTHER. Yoo hoo! Stage Manager? Can you help us out here, please?

(*STAGE MANAGER enters with a dress and helps the volunteer up on the stage and over to GODMOTHER.*)

GODMOTHER. What's your name, dear? Okey-dokey, (*name*), are you ready to become Beauty? First, we have to get you into your costume.

(*STAGE MANAGER helps the child into the dress and whispers into GODMOTHER's ear.*)

GODMOTHER. Oh, right. We mustn't forget about the make-up.

STAGE MANAGER. Make-up!

(*STAGE MANAGER pulls out a big powder puff and hits GODMOTHER in the face with it.*)

(Powder flies everywhere.)

GODMOTHER. I meant her!

(STAGE MANAGER gently powders volunteer and adds a dab of lipstick. STAGE MANAGER stays with volunteer to whisper lines to her and help her move about the stage.)

GODMOTHER. Gorgeous! We're good to go so let us proceed. Beauty was now a lovely young lady and her parents were very proud of her.

PRINCE. Darling daughter, you are so good and kind to everyone, so smart and full of life.

WOLF. And so talented! What can you do for us today, my precious girl? Can you sing a little song or dance or tell a joke? Maybe a knock-knock joke?

(WOLF encourages volunteer to do a little short something.)

WOLF. Excellent! Bravo!

PRINCE. See you at supper.

(WOLF and PRINCE exit quickly.)

GODMOTHER. One day, when Beauty was all alone and had nothing to do, she decided to explore the castle.

(BEAUTY walks about the stage looking around.)

(She peers off.)

GODMOTHER. She surprised someone in the shower...

(A scream off. BEAUTY looks in a new spot.)

GODMOTHER. She went to the kennels...

(Barking off. BEAUTY looks in a new spot.)

GODMOTHER. She surprised someone in the shower again...

(Another scream off.)

WITCH. *(Sticking her head in, which is covered in a shower cap:)* Look, why don't you go to the top of the tallest tower and give me a break?! *(Withdraws.)*

GODMOTHER. So she went up to the top of the tallest tower and found a little room she had never been in before.

(GODMOTHER takes out a spindle, spins thread on it. BEAUTY crosses to her.)

BEAUTY. Hello, old woman.

GODMOTHER. Hello, little girl.

BEAUTY. I've never seen you before.

GODMOTHER. Don't tell anyone but I'm playing a game of hide and seek. I'm hiding.

BEAUTY. How long have you been hiding?

GODMOTHER. Oh, about 12 years or so. It's so nice of you to visit me.

BEAUTY. *(Taking out a box of cookies:)* Actually, I'm selling these cookies...

GODMOTHER. *(Taking box and tossing off:)* I bought some at the office. Is there anything else I can do for you?

BEAUTY. What's that?

GODMOTHER. *(Handing BEAUTY the spindle:)* That's odd. I thought everyone knew what a spindle...uh oh. Your name wouldn't happen to be Beauty by any chance, would it?

BEAUTY. Yes, why?

GODMOTHER. Carefully, very carefully, can you hand that back to me, please?

BEAUTY. What's wrong?

GODMOTHER. *(Trying to be casual:)* Oh, nothing, nothing at all, certainly nothing to do with a terrible curse or anything, no, why would you ask?

(BEAUTY gives back the spindle.)

GODMOTHER. Phew! That was a close one. I won't do anything that stupid again.

WITCH. *(Off-stage:)* Ding dong!

GODMOTHER. Who is it?

WITCH. *(Off-stage:)* Delivery man!

GODMOTHER. Come in!

(Enter WITCH. She is dressed as a delivery man and carries a package wrapped in brown paper.)

WITCH. I have a package here for... *(Reading label)* ...Princess Beauty?

BEAUTY. That's me.

WITCH. Sign here.

(WITCH has BEAUTY sign paper, hands her the package.)

GODMOTHER. That's odd. How did you know she was here?

WITCH. Says right there on the label —"Princess Beauty, Top Tower Room, Today Only."

BEAUTY. May I open it?

GODMOTHER. Of course, dear, it is your package.

(BEAUTY opens box.)

GODMOTHER. You don't look like a delivery man. You look sort of...witchy...to me.

WITCH. Yeah, I get that a lot.

GODMOTHER. Who is it from?

WITCH. "Spindles R Us."

GODMOTHER. This can't be good.

(BEAUTY has the box open and takes out a spindle.)

BEAUTY. Look, it's another one of those spindle things.

GODMOTHER. This is not natural. Who sent it?

WITCH. Doesn't say. Don't worry —have a lollypop.

(WITCH gives GODMOTHER a large lollypop. It looks suspiciously like a spindle with a fake candy top. She exits.)

GODMOTHER. May I please see that?

(BEAUTY gives GODMOTHER the spindle.)

GODMOTHER. Another close call. What could possibly happen next?

(A hand reaches out from off and pulls on a rope. A rain of spindles falls onto an empty part of the stage [to avoid injury].)

GODMOTHER. Goodness! I've heard of plagues of locusts and frogs but never a shower of spindles! Beauty, stay away from those. They're very dangerous.

BEAUTY. They don't look dangerous.

GODMOTHER. They are to you. Didn't your parents ever have that talk with you? The spindle talk?

BEAUTY. No. Is something wrong with me?

GODMOTHER. No, nothing! Just don't touch any more spindles! My heart can't take it! Here, have a lollypop instead.

(GODMOTHER hands BEAUTY the lollypop.)

BEAUTY. Ow, it scratched me!

BEAUTY holds up a hand.

GODMOTHER. Oh, that's not so bad.

(GODMOTHER takes the lollypop back and the head comes off the stick.)

GODMOTHER. Wait a minute! This isn't a lollypop! It's a spindle!

BEAUTY. I pricked my finger on it. Don't worry, it's just a... (She yawns:)...sleepy.

GODMOTHER. No! No no no no no!

BEAUTY. Can I take a nap here?

(BEAUTY pushes GODMOTHER off her bench and sits.)

GODMOTHER. No! You're not tired! You're full of pep and energy! Let's play a game of tag! Have a glass of chocolate milk!

BEAUTY. Wake me for dinner.

(BEAUTY lies down on the bench.)

GODMOTHER. You're yawning! Stop yawning! *(She yawns:)* Now I'm yawning! I don't want to be yawning! I can't...*(yawns again:)*...be yawning!

(BEAUTY falls asleep.)

GODMOTHER. Noooooooooo!!!!!! *(It trails off into another yawn:)* Wake up! Oh, dear, what have I done? *(Tries to shake off fatigue:)* And then everyone and everything in the whole castle fell asleep. Not just Beauty but all the servants and the nobles, the King and the Queen, the cat in her basket and the dogs in their kennels, the ponies in the yard and the fly on the door knob. Even the water in the fountain fell into a deep, deep sleep.

WITCH. *(Sticking her head in:)* I knew I could pull it off! *(Withdraws:)*

GODMOTHER. Do you all feel sleepy? *(She yawns again:)* I know I do. Very, very, very...

(GODMOTHER nods off. A pause. She snores.)

(WOLF tiptoes in.)

WOLF. *(Whispering:)* Is everyone sleeping? *(Shouting to audience:)* Well, wake up! We're doing not prancing around up here for our health, you know! It's for you, the children! So pay attention! That's better. *(Shouting to GODMOTHER:)* You, too! Wake up! Come on, wake up! Wake! Up!

(There is no reaction. The WOLF picks the GODMOTHER up and walks her around like a person trying to sober up a drunk.)

WOLF. Come on, don't leave us hanging! Wake up! You've got to finish the story. What happens next? Get to the wolf part!

(WOLF briefly walks the GODMOTHER off or behind a set piece and when he re-enters, she has been replaced by a life-sized soft dummy. Consequently, he can toss it about a bit more roughly.)

WOLF. Wake up! Wake up! How can anyone sleep through this?
(*Calling off:*) Hey, come here! You gotta see this!

(*Enter WITCH and PRINCE.*)

WOLF. She's totally out of it! We can make her do anything!

(*They begin to bend her into impossible positions.*)

PRINCE. Can she bend over backwards and touch her head to the floor?

WITCH. Put her legs around her head!

PRINCE. Make her stand on her head!

WITCH. And spin her around!

WOLF. Break-dancing Granny!

STAGE MANAGER. We could do this all day but we've got to get on with the story.

WITCH. Spoil-sport.

WOLF. (*To WITCH:*) You stay here and finish it.

WITCH. Why me?

WOLF. 'Cause it's your fault she's asleep. And besides, your part's over. Our parts are still coming up.

(*WOLF and PRINCE exit.*)

WITCH. (*Calling:*) What part? There aren't any wolves in "Sleeping Beauty!" Oh, for the love of Mike...

(*WITCH stands behind the dummy, manipulating it and speaking for it in a high-pitched voice.*)

WITCH. So everyone and everything in the castle fell asleep and no one could break the spell because it was so good and strong and no one ever woke up again and the wicked witch won! The end.

PRINCE. (*Off-stage:*) Do it right!

WITCH. (*Mumbling as she sits down the dummy:*) ...getting so a girl can't have any fun around here. Fine. We'll do it your way. So everyone asleep, blah blah blah. Years went by and since people were

afraid to go into the cursed castle, the trees and grass and vines grew over the place, hiding it from view, and eventually, everyone forgot it was even there. The whole story passed into legend.

(The STAGE MANAGER throws a blanket of vines over BEAUTY, hiding her from view. A wall of vines comes on, held up from behind by the hidden GODMOTHER.)

WITCH. But one day, a Prince and his squire from far, far away rode into the kingdom.

(Enter PRINCE riding a wooden stick horse. WOLF, his valet, enters, walking behind him.)

PRINCE. Well, loyal Pringle?

WOLF. *(Unenthusiastically:)* My name is Yancy. *(A look from the PRINCE:)* Doo-doo-da-doo! Doo-doo-da-doo!

WITCH. Why do you sound like a dying rooster?

WOLF. He makes me do it to announce his arrival.

WITCH. Well, stop it. It's very annoying.

WOLF. Thank you.

PRINCE. *(Looking around:)* I've heard stories of a beautiful princess who once lived in a castle near here.

WOLF. An enchanted castle, I believe.

PRINCE. I don't see any castle.

WOLF. Well, d'uh, you wouldn't. It's *enchanted*. *(To WITCH:)* Honestly, you see what I have to work with?

PRINCE. We must search valiantly for the castle and the princess.

WOLF. Because, why? *(Singsong:)* You can feel in your heart she's your one true love and you can only be happy if you're together forever?

PRINCE. Well, yeah, it sounds stupid if you say it like that. Say it like this. *(Passionately:)* I can feel in my heart she's my one true love and I can only be happy if we're together forever? Doesn't that sound better?

WOLF. Oh, yes, that makes all the difference.

PRINCE. Besides, Pringle, it's not just that. I want to break the spell and free all the people in the castle. It's not just about one wonderful girl but her parents and the stinky peasants and the animals and the insects and the flowers and the...

WOLF. Yes, yes, we get it. And my name is Yancy.

PRINCE. I'm handsome, brave and pure of heart. This should be easy as cake.

WOLF. You mean pie.

PRINCE. What?

WOLF. When something is easy, the expression is, "Easy as pie."

PRINCE. I thought that was "This will be a piece of pie."

WOLF. No, that one's "This will be a piece of cake."

PRINCE. But I'd rather have pie.

WOLF. There is no pie!

PRINCE. Can we have cake instead?

WOLF. There isn't any cake either!

PRINCE. But I thought you said there was a piece of cake?

WOLF. I did!

PRINCE. Oh, so you ate it!

WOLF. I didn't eat anything!

PRINCE. So where's the pie?

WOLF. (*Inspired:*) It's in the castle! With the cake! The beautiful princess made both!

PRINCE. (*Drawing his sword:*) Take heart, faithful Pringle. We shall soon have pie and cake! And maybe some milk to wash it down with because I hate when they serve pie and there's nothing to drink...

WOLF. *(Going to one side and sitting down:)* Whatever makes you happy.

(The PRINCE begins hacking at the wall of vines.)

VINES. Ow! Quit it! Stop that, I say! Ouch!

PRINCE. *(To WOLF:)* Do not be afraid, loyal Pringle. I will defend you from the magical talking vines.

(HE continues dancing about and hacking at the vines.)

This must be the right place. Why else would these enchanted vines grow here?

(The VINES are trying to get away but the PRINCE pursues them.)

WOLF. It's fairy tale land. You can't go five feet without tripping over something enchanted.

PRINCE. Back, get back, wretched vines! Let me through, let me through! I must find the beautiful princess and her pie!

VINES. Ow! Who's stopping you? Just go and quit hitting me!

(The wall of vines exits.)

PRINCE. Pringle...!

WOLF. Yancy.

PRINCE. I've done it! I've found the castle!

WOLF. Cool.

PRINCE. Now to find the beautiful princess and her cake!

(PRINCE walks all about, perhaps even into the audience.)

WITCH. And so the prince searched all through the castle looking for Sleeping Beauty.

PRINCE. All these beauties are awake. *(Looking at a man:)* And some ain't even that beautiful!

WOLF. Then you're not looking in the right place, are you.

GODMOTHER. Finally, he climbed the highest tower and there she was, the one he had searched so long for.

(The PRINCE returns to the stage and finds BEAUTY.)

PRINCE. Here she is!

WOLF. *(Unexcited:)* Woo-hoo.

PRINCE. *(To BEAUTY:)* Wake up, my sweet one. Your Prince is here! Arise, Beauty. *(To WOLF:)* She won't wake up.

WOLF. Well, d'uh, she's *enchanted*. Remember?

PRINCE. So what should I do? *(To WITCH:)* Any hints?

WITCH. According to the Prime Directive, I'm not allowed to interfere.

PRINCE. *(To audience:)* Does anybody out there have any ideas?

(God willing, someone will suggest a kiss.)

PRINCE. Really? A kiss? It's just crazy enough to work.

(PRINCE kisses WOLF, or audience member who suggested it, and looks at BEAUTY.)

PRINCE. It didn't work —she's still asleep.

WOLF. The princess, you silly prince, kiss the princess!

PRINCE. Oh, kiss *the princess!* Well, now, that makes more sense.

(PRINCE kisses BEAUTY. She wakes up.)

(While the attention is elsewhere, WITCH exits with the dummy and returns with the real GODMOTHER, still asleep.)

WOLF. You finally got it right! Toodle-ee-doo-da-doo!

BEAUTY. Who are you?

PRINCE. I'm the prince who has broken the spell and set you free.

BEAUTY. How long have I been asleep?

PRINCE. Years and years and years.

WOLF. You've kept your looks very well for a gal who's over 100.

BEAUTY. Thank you for saving me.

PRINCE. You're welcome. And now there is something very important I must ask you. Beauty...

GODMOTHER. *(Finally waking up and speaking to the WITCH who is still holding her up:)* Will you please get your hands off me?

WITCH. *(Letting go:)* Suit yourself.

(GODMOTHER falls down.)

WITCH. Let me guess—you're all pins and needles.

GODMOTHER. What happened?

WITCH. You fell asleep and I had to carry on the story without you.

GODMOTHER. Thank you very much.

WITCH. You're very welcome.

GODMOTHER. So where are we now?

WITCH. The prince asking Beauty to marry him.

WOLF. Wait a minute...

GODMOTHER. And what did she say?

BEAUTY. Yes! Kiss me again!

PRINCE. Not until you've had a breath mint—you've been asleep a long time.

WOLF. Hold on just a second...

GODMOTHER. And everyone lived...

WITCH. ...happily ever after!

GODMOTHER. Hey! I wanted to say that.

WOLF. It's not happily ever after. You skipped my part.

EVERYONE. There aren't any wolves in "Sleeping Beauty!"

GODMOTHER. How about a big hand for our very talented Beauty?

(STAGE MANAGER *leads BEAUTY back to her seat and returns to the stage.*)

STAGE MANAGER. Okay, so I guess you're all done now. Bu-bye!

PRINCE AND WOLF. No! We still have to tell *our* side!

GODMOTHER. What do you mean, *your* side?

WOLF. She (*meaning the WITCH:*) got to tell her side. What about us?

PRINCE. The exciting prince part!

WOLF. The wolf bit!

STAGE MANAGER. All right, all right! So who goes next?

PRINCE. (*Wildly waving his hand in the air:*) Me! Me! Pick me!

STAGE MANAGER. Fine, don't have a seizure, go ahead.

PRINCE. Finally! A chance to tell the Prince's side of the story! We have been silenced far too long!

(EVERYONE *looks at him.*)

PRINCE. Nobody ever cares about us. We just come galloping in at the end, kiss the beautiful princess and ride off into the sunset to live happily ever after. No one gets to hear *our* story, *our* hopes and dreams. No one ever asks what *we* want, what makes *us* tick. But now, I have the spotlight! Now, you must all listen to me!

(*A pause.*)

GODMOTHER. Go ahead, dear. What did you want to say?

PRINCE. (*Looking in his pockets:*) I've written it all down somewhere, all my notes and...just waiting for this opportunity...a yellow piece of paper...thought I had it right here...(*makes a sound of exasperation*)...can't believe I've lost it...!

WOLF. Maybe you left it in your other tights.

(OTHERS *wait expectantly.*)

PRINCE. It was right here! (*To audience:*) Has anyone seen a yellow...

WITCH. Oh, for pity's sake, just tell your story. We haven't got all day.

PRINCE. *(Giving up the search:)* Fine! Everybody off and come on when I need you. *(Under his breath:)* Wouldn't want to waste anybody's valuable time or anything...

(ALL but PRINCE exit.)

PRINCE. ...all these years I've been putting up with listening to your stories over and over again...

WITCH. *(Off-stage:)* Look, if you don't start, I'm going to turn you into a newt!

PRINCE. *(Making a face at WITCH:)* Once upon a time...

WITCH. *(Off-stage:)* I saw that!

PRINCE. Once upon a time, there was a very handsome prince named Prince Snarky...

(Enter WOLF strutting proudly with a crown on his head.)

WOLF. Oh, yeah! Digging the prince, everybody's digging the prince! I am loving these stories!

PRINCE. ...who was a very bad prince.

(WOLF slumps, disappointed.)

PRINCE. He was lazy and mean and a bully. He liked to make fun of people and order his servants about and make life generally miserable for everybody.

(Enter GODMOTHER, WITCH and STAGE MANAGER as servants.)

WOLF. You there! Servants! Move the castle three inches to the left, teach my cat how to play checkers and make me a suit out of butter. Now, you ugly servants, now!

GODMOTHER, WITCH, STAGE MANAGER. Yes, your highness.

WOLF. And when you're done, go sit in the kennels.

GODMOTHER, WITCH, STAGE MANAGER. The kennels, my lord?

WOLF. That's where the *dogs* live, isn't it? (*Barking at them:*) Ruff ruff ruff!

GODMOTHER, WITCH, STAGE MANAGER. Yes, your highness.

WOLF. Here's a joke I just made up. What's hideously ugly, has 6 arms and legs, bad breath, body odor and has to do exactly what I say?

GODMOTHER. A dragon?

WOLF. (*Patiently:*) No, guess again.

WITCH. (*Thinking hard:*) A dragon?

WOLF. (*Kindly:*) No. Think harder.

STAGE MANAGER. (*Happily:*) A dragon!

WOLF. No. Give up? (*THEY nod:*) You three! (*Laughs:*) Pretty good, eh?

GODMOTHER, WITCH, STAGE MANAGER. Very witty, my lord.

(They exit.)

PRINCE. One day, the prince went out riding.

(A stick horse is thrown on and WOLF catches it and gallops about on it, perhaps into the audience.)

WOLF. You, stop picking that. You, tuck in that shirt. You, comb your hair. You, pay attention. You, get your finger out of your nose, you don't know where it's been! What are you, five? Six? Act your age!

(Enter GODMOTHER.)

PRINCE. Suddenly, his horse reared up and threw the prince to the ground!

(WOLF falls to the ground in front of GODMOTHER.)

PRINCE. There was an old woman standing on the path.

WOLF. You, there! Ugly old woman! How dare you scare my noble steed! Get out of my way, you toad!

GODMOTHER. For shame! That's no way to talk to a poor, old woman.

WOLF. (*Thundering:*) Do you know who I am?!

GODMOTHER. A very rude young man?

WOLF. I am the prince and you will show me some respect!

GODMOTHER. (*Singing:*) "R-E-S-P-E-C-T! Find out what it means to me!" Here's a riddle —what must you give away in order to receive?

WOLF. Ugly old women?

GODMOTHER. No. Respect.

WOLF. (*Sputtering in rage:*) Why, you...! I'd...! How dare...!

GODMOTHER. Keep that up and you'll give yourself a stroke.

WOLF. I will put you in chains and lock you up in my deepest, darkest dungeon! You will never see the light of day again!

GODMOTHER. For what crime?

WOLF. For...for scaring my horse by being so hideously ugly!

GODMOTHER. I'm not so ugly.

WOLF. You are!

GODMOTHER. Am not.

WOLF. Are to!

GODMOTHER. Am not!

WOLF. Are to!

GODMOTHER. Not!

WOLF. To!

GODMOTHER. Not!

WOLF. To!

GODMOTHER. Not too what?

WOLF. Ugly!

GODMOTHER. There, see? You said it yourself—I'm not too ugly.

WOLF. Aaaaah!

GODMOTHER. And even if I am, it's not a crime to be ugly.

WOLF. It is now! By royal proclamation, all ugly people must now be locked away so as not to offend the beautiful people!

GODMOTHER. You know, you have a very poor attitude and should be taught a lesson.

WOLF. And who's going to teach it to me? You?

GODMOTHER. As a matter of fact, yes. You picked the wrong lady to mess with, Junior, because I am a witch!

“To look at you, no one would guess
Your soul is such an awful mess.
Your face is fair and oh, so bright
But your soul is foul and quite a fright!
This contrast must be rectified.
Let the surface match what is inside.
So say goodbye to your beautiful face
As ugliness now takes its place!”

(Some sort of special effect. WOLF becomes ugly, probably by donning a mask.)

WOLF. *(Feeling his face:)* What's happening? What have you done to my beautiful face?

GODMOTHER. From now on, your face will show everyone how ugly your heart is.

WOLF. I'm ugly?!

GODMOTHER. All that nastiness *inside* of you is now *outside* of you! Try that on for size.

(GODMOTHER starts to exit.)

WOLF. Wait! How can I break the spell? You've got to give me an out.

GODMOTHER. Oh, very well. I suppose it is the traditional thing to do.

“To reverse the curse, you must follow this plan—
Just give a kiss to whoever you can.”

WOLF. (*Delighted:*) That's it? That's all? Just a kiss? I'll just pay some poor peasant girl to close her eyes and do the deed.

GODMOTHER. I wasn't finished.

“Before the kiss, you will have to shout—
'One kiss from me turns you inside out!'”

WOLF. My kiss will turn someone inside out? That's horrible!

GODMOTHER. That's life. Good luck, sweetie!

(*GODMOTHER exits.*)

PRINCE. And so the poor prince had a long time rue his rude behavior.

(*WOLF “rides” his horse around the audience.*)

PRINCE. Although he rode far and wide, he could find no one who would let him kiss them. Everyone soon heard of his terrible curse and those who hadn't, heard it from him.

WOLF. (*To audience member:*) Really? You'll kiss me? Fantastic! (*In a loud “possessed” voice:*) “My kiss will turn you inside out!” Shoot! Lost another one!

PRINCE. Even the promise of gold wasn't enough to lure anyone to help him.

WOLF. Wealth! Wealth beyond your wildest dreams! For just one little kiss—what a deal! Anyone? Darn.

PRINCE. But as the days went by, something began to happen to the prince. As people turned away from his ugly face and snickered, he began to understand how much pain he had caused when he had done the same thing to others.

(Enter WITCH, STAGE MANAGER and GODMOTHER.)

WITCH. Oh, what's wrong with his face?

STAGE MANAGER. He looks like a monster!

GODMOTHER. What a hideous mistake of nature.

WOLF. Shut up! It's not my fault! I'm not a monster!

PRINCE. He had quite given up all hope of ever breaking the curse when one day, he overheard an interesting conversation.

GODMOTHER. She's sound asleep and no one can wake her up.

WITCH. She's enchanted.

GODMOTHER. You can say that again. Nothing's gonna wake up that child.

STAGE MANAGER. You could march a brass band right by her and she'd just keep right on snoring.

WITCH. The whole castle's that way. Every single body.

STAGE MANAGER. Poor little thing.

GODMOTHER. And where did you say she is?

STAGE MANAGER. Over the mountains and over the sea, at the far end of the forest.

WITCH. The sweet lamb.

GODMOTHER. The precious dear.

WOLF. The unsuspecting solution to all my problems!

STAGE MANAGER. I hear she's drooling all over her pillow...

(WITCH, STAGE MANAGER and GODMOTHER exit.)

PRINCE. So the prince began his journey to find the sleeping girl.

WOLF. *(Riding about:)* I can kiss her and she won't even know! It's perfect!

PRINCE. But as he traveled, he began to feel guilty.

WOLF. Can I really go through with it? How can I turn an innocent girl inside out and make her a monstrous outcast like myself?

PRINCE. Finally, he found the enchanted castle where the sleeping girl was waiting.

(STAGE MANAGER comes out and lies on the bench, covered by the blanket of vines. WITCH enters and sits beside her. GODMOTHER comes out holding the wall of vines again and is hacked aside by WOLF.)

WOLF. *(Hacking at vines:)* Back, vines, get back!

GODMOTHER. Ow! Ow!!!! Why are people always hacking at me?

WITCH. Who're you?

WOLF. I'm an ugly prince. Who're you?

WITCH. I'm the ugly wise woman who put the spell on the princess. How'd you get through the vines?

WOLF. Whacked 'em with my sword.

WITCH. Fair enough. I suppose you want to kiss her.

WOLF. You'd think so.

WITCH. So what's stopping you?

WOLF. I'm cursed. If I kiss her, I'll become handsome again but she'll turn inside out.

WITCH. You don't say. Let me get this straight. Handsome prince, insulted a witch, turned him ugly, cursed his kiss that will break the spell.

WOLF. Exactly. But I can't do it to her. I can't curse her, even to save myself.

WITCH. So you've learned your lesson, have you?

WOLF. I guess I have. *(With a big sigh:)* I'd rather stay ugly forever than do this to her.

WITCH. Right. So kiss me.

WOLF. What?

WITCH. Turn me inside out. Then you'll be handsome again and can kiss my Beauty and wake her up and marry her and everyone will live happily ever after.

WOLF. Didn't you understand a word I've said? Inside out? Means nothing to you?

WITCH. Come on—here's your big chance! I know the risks. Go ahead!

WOLF. All right. If you say so.

(WOLF kisses WITCH. HE returns to his normal self while She becomes beautiful as well.)

WOLF. Look at you! You're beautiful! What happened?

WITCH. I ain't a wise woman for nothing, sonny. That witch didn't mean inside out literally, she meant the same thing that happened to you—that the face will reflect the heart. It was a gift she gave you, not a curse. See all the goodness in my soul?

WOLF. You're beautiful.

WITCH. I know! So are you. Now go on and kiss Beauty—you are the worthy one she has waited for.

(WOLF kisses STAGE MANAGER. She wakes up.)

STAGE MANAGER. Mom! I'm up from my nap. When's dinner?
(To WOLF:) Who're you?

(WOLF, STAGE MANAGER and WITCH talk together silently.)

PRINCE. And so Beauty awoke. And she felt sort of indebted to the prince for waking her up so she took him out for ice cream and then they went on a date to play miniature golf and then...

WITCH, WOLF, GODMOTHER, STAGE MANAGER. *(Quickly:)*
...they got married and lived happily ever after!

WITCH. Enough already.

WOLF. Sheesh!

GODMOTHER. You're not very good at endings, are you, dear.

STAGE MANAGER. Keep it short and snappy, that's what they like. And speaking of endings...

WOLF. Oh, no you don't! It's my turn now!

EVERYONE. But there aren't any wolves in "Sleeping Beauty!"

WOLF. That's what you think. Stand back and watch me work.

(Everyone but WOLF exits.)

WOLF. Once upon a time, as all good tales begin, there was a wolf named Jerry.

(Enter PRINCE as Jerry.)

JERRY/PRINCE. Hey, Orville.

WOLF. Hey, Jerry. He was just your normal sort of wolf, nothing special. One day, he was walking through the woods and he came upon a beautiful young woman who was sitting all alone and crying.

(Enter WITCH as Prune Danish. She wears a tattered dress and sits crying.)

WOLF. You and I might have seen a gal in trouble but Jerry saw lunch so he pounced!

(PRINCE pounces on WITCH.)

WOLF. Instead of begging for her life, which is what the wolf expected, the woman stuck out her arm.

WITCH. *(Sticking out her arm:)* I'm sorry I'm so small and skinny, Mr. Wolf, and will not make you a very good meal but please eat me up as quick as you can and put an end to my sorrow.

WOLF. This was not the sort of thing the wolf usually heard from his meals, so he was curious.

PRINCE. Pray, beautiful girl, tell me your name and how such a beautiful girl as yourself came to be so sad.

WITCH. Well, it's like this. My name is Prune Danish and my poor dear mother died when I was born. My father and I lived alone quite happily for years until one day, he remarried. My step-mother

was a horrid, fat, ugly woman and she had a horrid, fat, ugly daughter. They both were both very jealous of my beauty and hated me from the start but tolerated me for my father's sake. When he died, they instantly changed and cruelly treated me like the lowest slave.

PRINCE. That's terrible!

WITCH. Yesterday, we heard that the King is traveling throughout the land in search of a wife. He will be coming to our town soon and my step-mother was so afraid that he would fall in love with my beauty and ignore her daughter that she banished me here to the woods to be eaten by wild animals!

PRINCE. What a horrible woman!

WITCH. I am so lonely and full of despair that I want only to die so go ahead and eat me up. It's too bad my step-mother and sister are not here as they would make you a much more delicious meal but alas, they are at home, alone and unprotected by men-folk.

WOLF. And these words gave the wolf an interesting idea...

PRINCE. And just where would this home happen to be?

(PRINCE and WITCH exit.)

WOLF. And that night, there was a terrible commotion as Jerry ate both the step-mother...

(A scream off.)

WOLF. ...and the step-sister.

(Another scream off.)

WOLF. But he liked Prune Danish so he didn't eat her at all.

(Enter PRINCE and WITCH.)

WITCH. Thank you so much, Jerry. How can I ever reward you?

PRINCE. My full stomach and your lovely beauty are reward enough. Good luck, Miss Danish.

(PRINCE exits. WOLF puts on a crown to become the King.)

WOLF. When the King came to the town, he heard all about the terrible wolf attack. He met with Prune Danish to offer his sympathy and her beauty won his heart.

(WOLF crosses to WITCH, gets onto one knee to propose.)

WOLF. Lovely Prune Danish, will you marry me?

WITCH. Oh, yes, your majesty.

(They hug. WOLF gives crown to WITCH who puts it on.)

WOLF. And so they were married and Prune Danish became the Queen of all the land.

(Enter STAGE MANAGER and GODMOTHER.)

STAGE MANAGER AND GODMOTHER. All hail good Queen Danish!

(WOLF withdraws to one side to become narrator again.)

WOLF. When the King died from a tragic pogo stick accident, Danish became the ruler of all the land. And she was a terrible ruler. She cared only for herself and not for her people. She taxed everyone to buy herself fine things.

(WITCH crosses to STAGE MANAGER and GODMOTHER.)

WITCH. Come on, cough up that money. I need some new drapes.

GODMOTHER. But I need firewood and nasal decongestant!

WOLF. She was selfish and greedy and vain and generally unpleasant to be around.

GODMOTHER. But it was a terrible harvest and if I give you all my money, I'll starve!

WITCH. So starve already! I need to pay my hairdresser! Look at these roots!

STAGE MANAGER. I need this money to feed my poor children!

WITCH. I don't care! I need to feed my interior decorator!

WOLF. The wolf saw what was happening and realized he'd made a terrible mistake. He went back to Prune Danish's home and listened to the village gossip.

(Enter PRINCE.)

GODMOTHER. What a shame that wolf didn't eat Prune Danish.

STAGE MANAGER. Of all the people to be eaten, the hardest working, most honest, humblest two women around here.

GODMOTHER. I'll bet that evil Danish tricked the wolf into eating her step-mother and sister. She was very clever.

STAGE MANAGER. And wolves are very stupid.

WOLF. Hey! If only the wolf had known what a terrible person Prune Danish really was, he wouldn't have listened to her lies.

PRINCE. How could I have been so stupid to believe her? I thought she was telling the truth because she looked so sad and beautiful. Only a jerk would fall for that.

(PRINCE hits his head with his fist.)

PRINCE. Stupid, stupid, stupid!

GODMOTHER. So I guess this is all the wolf's fault then. If he hadn't eaten the wrong people...

STAGE MANAGER. ...we wouldn't have such a wicked Queen. If I ever get my hands on him...

GODMOTHER. ...bam, zoom, to the moon, Alice!

(STAGE MANAGER and GODMOTHER exit.)

WOLF. The wolf realized it was up to him to make things right.

PRINCE. But what can I do? She's the Queen and I'm just a wolf. I've got to think very hard.

WOLF. He traveled throughout the length and breadth of the land, visiting other kingdoms and talking to many people, coming up with many schemes until finally, he found the perfect plan.

(He does. A light bulb appears over his head.)

PRINCE. Ah ha! I've got it!

(PRINCE takes out a piece of parchment and a quill, scribbles a note and drops it on the floor. WITCH walking by, waving and smiling, trips on it.)

WITCH. Who left this here?! Why, I oughta... *(Reading it:)* Wait a minute, what's this? "Beauty Contest?! Every 100 years, yadda yadda yadda, the kingdom of Dragonwyck...celebrated beauty contest...every unmarried maiden required to enter...statue of winner...worshipped by citizens..." And this is the year?! Why wasn't I told about this?! I *love* beauty contests! I am so all over this! Servants, pack my stuff! I'm off to Dragonwyck!

(WITCH exits.)

WOLF. Now you or I might have looked into this rather odd once-every-hundred-years beauty pageant but Prune Danish was thinking only of how beautiful the winning tiara would look on her head. She couldn't get started fast enough.

(Enter WITCH with suitcases.)

WITCH. Dragonwyck, here I come!

(WITCH makes a circuit of the stage carrying her suitcases.)

WOLF. Prune Danish traveled many days and many miles. When her servants couldn't keep up with her, she left them behind and pushed on alone. Finally, she arrived on the very day of the contest!

(Enter STAGE MANAGER as King.)

WOLF. She went immediately to the king and introduced herself.

WITCH. You must have heard of me—I'm Queen Prune Danish—and I have come to enter your "Once-In-A-Century Beauty Contest."

STAGE MANAGER. That's not a very good idea.

WITCH. What, scared I'll beat your local girls?

STAGE MANAGER. No, it's just that...

WITCH. Is there anything in the rules that says I can't compete?

STAGE MANAGER. No, but...

WITCH. Then, sign me up!

STAGE MANAGER. You're sure?

WITCH. I'm sure, I'm sure, what're you, king of the idiots?

STAGE MANAGER. It's your funeral.

WOLF. Now, you or I might've wondered why the king tried to talk her out of it but Prune Danish didn't think twice. She was too busy getting ready.

WITCH. *(Opening bags and putting on dress, make-up, etc.)* These Dragonwyckians aren't going to know what hit them. I'm going to win this thing hands down. Can you believe the citizens memorize the names of every winner since this thing began? They're treated like national heroes! Finally, a place where beauty is recognized for what it is—the most important thing of all! I'm home!

(Enter GODMOTHER as BERTHA RATCATCHER, PRINCE as STELLA ARMPIT and WOLF as FESTERING PUSTULE.)

(ALL are dressed in gowns but all look horrible.)

STAGE MANAGER. Let the judging of our four finalists begin!

(In turn, each contestant sashays downstage, waving and smiling, turns slowly, returns to original spot. WITCH is last.)

STAGE MANAGER. First up, we have Bertha Ratcatcher. Bertha is the daughter of Frank and Sadie Ratcatcher. She is wearing a lovely dress made of burlap sacking and rat fur. Her hobbies include catching rats and talking to rats. Her best friend is her rat, Ratty. Isn't she a dream? *(Encourages applause:)* Next, we have Stella Armpit. Stella runs the village wash pit. She says she can identify any stain just by tasting it. Isn't she a treat in a gown she's made herself out of underwear that's been left at the wash pit? Stella enjoys gossiping and training fleas. Let's give her a big hand. Now, let's meet Festering Pustule. Festering is a beggar. Her usual begging ground is on the village dung pile but she can also be seen out by the dump on sunny days. Her ensemble is made entirely out of human hair that she has been collecting for years. When she's not begging, Festering likes to pick her scabs and shout things at people only she

can see. *(She does.)* She some day hopes to marry the Wayne, the village idiot. What a treasure! And finally, we have an out-of-towner this year, Prune Danish. Prune is the ruler of her own kingdom, isn't that unusual, and we couldn't be happier to have her here with us today. Her dress is custom-made of the finest and most expensive silks, jewels and satins. She spends all her free time looking in the mirror, well, don't we all? Show her how much we appreciate the effort she's made. And there you have them, our Miss Dragonwyck contestants for this year! Very nice! And now, it's time for the judging. Vote by your applause. Who likes Bertha Ratcatcher? And Stella Armpit? Anyone for Festering Pustule? And once again, Prune Danish.

(The other contestants and the STAGE MANAGER are clearly rooting for WITCH to win as they encourage the audience to applaud the loudest for her. If, for some reason, WITCH does not receive the loudest applause, She should threaten the winner and the winner should happily give the tiara to her.)

STAGE MANAGER. And the winner is...Prune Danish!

(STAGE MANAGER puts a tiara on WITCH. Everyone congratulates the winner —tears, smiles, hugs all around. WITCH makes a brief victory lap around the stage, waving. STAGE MANAGER takes out a long sash, really more rope than sash. He wraps it around WITCH, pinning her arms to her sides.)

STAGE MANAGER. Don't forget your sash. *(Perhaps singing to a tune he has made up:)* "Isn't she lovely? Pretty as a picture, our Beauty Queen! One in a million, every hundred years, the loveliest ever seen!"

WITCH. Thank you, thank you. This sash is a bit tight.

STAGE MANAGER. And now it's time to fulfill your winner's duties.

WITCH. Posing for my statue? Presiding over a banquet in my honor?

STAGE MANAGER. Not exactly.

(STAGE MANAGER whispers in WITCH's ear.)

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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