

The Princess & the Pea by Simone Plant

Chester: I'll have you know I took a correspondence course.

Ch5: Yes but that was for plumbing.

Ch3: Give him his due though, that song did sound like a load of old blocked pipes.

Chorus all laugh

Ch1: We don't mean anything by it Chester; we all know how devoted you are to the royal family.

Chester: Yes I am.

Ch2: I heard you slept on the floor outside the old King's bedchamber.

Chester: Yes I did.

Ch3: You always tasted the old King's food before he ate it.

Chester: Yes I did.

Ch4: You brought him his newspaper every morning.

Chester: Yes I did.

Ch5: You were the faithful old dog weren't you?

Chester: Yes I was. (*Without really hearing what's been said – pause while chorus snigger*) What? Eh.

All Chorus: Bye Chester (*ad lib – cheerfully slap him on the back type of thing*)

Chorus exit, leaving Chester on his own

Chester: Oh hello, I am the Royal Jester, and before you ask my name is not Jester Minute. It's Chester. Actually it's Claybourne Wilberforce Chester the Jester but that's just plain daft so it's just plain old Chester the Jester. My job is to tell jokes, like - what happened to the frog's car when it broke down? It got toad away.
I've had other jobs before this one. I worked in a calendar factory but I got fired from there. All I did was take a day off. Then I had a go at being a chef. Do you know what you get if you boil a funny bone.....a laughing stock. I quit that job anyway because they cut my celery. I got an audition to play the trumpet with the Lack of Commitments, but I blew it. However I refused to work in our local coal mine, it was beneath me. At least I know my job here is secure. No one else wants it. Everyone laughed when I said I wanted to be a comedian. Well they're not laughing now are they.

Have you seen this big red button here on the wall – it's for the King to summon me to make him laugh. But now he's gone to a better place.

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(genuinely sad). No not Aston Lodge. There's no one to push it until the new King is crowned. Could you help me boys and girls. Could you watch the button for me to make sure no one else presses it? If you see anyone going towards it just shout "don't press the button" as loud as you can and I'll come running to stop them. Shall we have a practise, I'll just pretend to be someone else *(puts on a funny voice)* oh hello what's this, a button oh I must push it *(goes to push it and hopefully the audience will react)* sorry did anyone say something only I didn't hear a word. Come on let's try again *(puts on another voice)* *Ad lib a few times.*

Brilliant thanks kids that's great.

The chorus come back on continuing their work; Lord Chamberlain opens a doors and stage whispers.

Chamberlain: Chester, announce the Prince.

Chester: What? *(walking over to the door that the Chamberlain is speaking from)*

Chamberlain: Announce the Prince.

Chester: Er... down with the Prince.

Chamberlain: What are you saying?

Chester: You said denounce the Prince.

Chamberlain: A-nnounce the Prince, you fool, A-nnounce.

Chester: Ooops sorry.

Chamberlain: Never mind I'll do it myself *(slams the door wide open trapping Chester behind. He huffs and puffs as he marches on)*. Ahem *(clears throat)*, His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince Valiant!

Valiant enters, pushing the door open trapping Chester behind the door again.

ALL: *(murmurs of affectionate approval)*

Chester: *(rushing forward.)* Shall I sing a song?

ALL: NO!

Chester: Alright, no need to jump down my throat.

Ch A: Oh he's a good looking boy isn't he?

Ch B: Well he does takes after his mother.

Ch C: Was she a good looking boy too?

Scene 4

Castle entrance hall – Next day

Empty stage, enter Rosebud, less disguise.

Rosebud: Did you see me yesterday, and my cunning plan. Of course I've had this planned from the very beginning. My poor "Godchild" Princess Eleanor has been raised by gypsies since she was a baby after her kingdom was invaded by Ogres. The princess is travelling here to the castle as I speak to take part in the challenge and I fully expect her to win hands down as she is the most pleasant, attractive, sensible, dignified and charming young woman; in fact everything a Princess is supposed to be. I need to keep my eye on that pesky Duchess Wilhelmina and her henchman, they could really scupper the plan, and get in my way. But my magic will put a stop to their little games.

Song Bibidi Bobidi boo

Oh, I thought I heard someone walking along the corridor.

"Pregnant" pause as if waiting for something to happen. The next bit is said in a "staged" voice.

I **said** I heard someone **stomping** along the corridor. *(Chester runs on out of breath)*

Chester: Sorry I was in the lavvy. Did I miss my cue?

Rosebud: Honestly – amateurs! *(walks off)*

Suitcases are thrown on from wings as Chester forgot to bring them on in his haste to get on stage.

Chester: Ow, *(Chester ducks out of the way, then collects suitcases from around the stage)* ow, ow.

SFX of airplane coming into land. Chester gets out 2 table tennis bats and wafts them around pretending to bring in to land the plane. Eventually Dolly enters pushing a trolley full of suitcases, trunks, bags, handbags – Dolly's small handbag has a false bottom and one of the trunks has a false top with lots of items in it including 3key fobs etc. Dolly goes to swipe Chester.

Dolly: Oooh you cheeky monkey. I hope you haven't dented those suitcases, Chester.

Chester: That wasn't me it was the stage crew. *(off stage grumbling)* Where did you say these suitcases were to go Dame Dolly?

Dolly: The ones you have there are for the Dowager Duchess Wilhelmina and her daughter Lady Selena, and I've got the luggage for the ladies Lavinia, Daphne and Gwendolyn.

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Chester: How long are they all staying for? They've almost got as many clothes as you have.

Dolly: Oooh you cheeky. *(swipes at him again with her handbag)* I'll have you know I got rid of all my old clothes, I gave them to Oxfam.

Travis enters during conversation and walks over to where the button is on the tabs

Chester: Yes and they gave them all back again saying they weren't that desperate.

Audience should be shouting

Chester: *(rushes over to Travis)* Hey, don't push that button!

Dolly: Helloooooo *(just like Leslie Philips says it)*, and who are you? *(to Travis)*

Travis: Greetings, I am Travis, servant to the Dowager Duchess Wilhelmina. May I be of assistance and help with the old bags.

Chester: There's no need to call Dame Dolly names. That's my job.

Travis: I was **referring** to the suitcases actually.

Chester: Oooooo. *(handbags at dawn style)*

Dolly: Yes Chester *(swiping at him again, he ducks again)* this polite, good looking, young man.....

Chester does a double take

Chester: When was the last time you went to Specsavers?

Dolly: Shut up. This polite, good looking, young man certainly knows how to make the right impression. Leave the suitcases to Chester and let's get to know each other better.

Travis: If you let me have the list of rooms I could take the Duchess's cases with me, as I am her squire.

Dolly: Only if you agree to dance the night away with me at the Welcome Ball tonight, you hunk you.

Travis: Of course, it would be my pleasure. Is the list perhaps in your reticule?

Dolly looks blankly at him.

Dolly: Eh?

Travis: Your purse, love.

Scene 3 The Spookyish Cellar

The dungeon - not a very spooky place at all. The last occupant was the goat. All the old rubbish is now stored in the dungeon, as we would nowadays with our lofts. Old broken chairs, curtains, large dog bowl with "Gerald" written on it, vases, a suit of armour, boxes with labels written on them like "Valiant's toys", "Dolly's dresses" etc

Start with a spookyish dance. *(have a walking cardboard model of a goat like with lion king to use in dance?)*

Chester & Dolly enter through the audience

Chester: Come on, Dolly hurry up.

Dolly: I don't like it down here, I'm sure it's haunted.

Chester: If it is, then it's only with the ghosts of old farm animals.

Dolly: It's very dark down here, I can't see my hand in front of my face.

Chester: Thankfully neither can I.

Dolly: Did you bring a candle?

Chester: Yes.

Dolly: Well?

Chester: I am actually, thanks for asking, though I'm suffering with my pi....

Dolly: NO, I mean, well.... light the candle then.

Chester: Oh yes of course silly me. *(pause)* Er... Dolly?

Dolly: Yes?

Chester: Have you got a match?

Dolly: I don't believe it!!!!

Chester: Oh its ok, there's some here in the hand of this old rusty scary looking suit of armour *(sound effect - takes a match, "strikes" it on Dolly's face and lights the candle - it's a battery operated candle that has an on/off button on the bottom)* Arrghhh, that's scared the life out of me. *(as he sees Dolly's face)*

Dolly: It's me you cheeky monkey.

Chester: So what is it we're looking for again?

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Dolly: A magical book.

Chester: What does it look like?

Dolly: How should I know, book shaped probably.

Chester: Where shall we start?

Dolly: Let's try over here.

They creep over to an old ottoman covered in material, boxes and cobwebs. Creepy music and the suit of armour comes to life and follows them. Audience hopefully start to shout. Armour stands still right behind Dolly.

Chester: *(to the audience)* Did you say something?

Dolly: *(to the audience)* What? We need to visit the barber?

Audience shouting about a suit of armour during which the armour moves back to its original place.

Chester: Did you say it's in the parlour?

Dolly: No, I think they said something about the suit of armour. Come on let's look over there.

Creep round to the armour, have a good look all over it.

Chester: I can't see the book.

Dolly: Neither can I.

Holds the candle up high by the suit of armours face it "blows" the light out (switch the light off), while Chester & Dolly check around the middle of the suit.

Chester: Oh no the lights gone out.

Dolly: Well light it again.

Chester takes a match goes to strike it on Dolly's face but she stops him

Dolly: On second thoughts I'll light the candle.

Takes match out of Chesters hand while he still holds the candle. Dolly tries to strike match on his face. Tries a few times and it doesn't work. Chester then takes match out of her hand strikes her chin & lights the candle. sound effect again.

Chester: Arrghhh, still scary *(as he sees Dolly's face)*