

## The Princess & the Pea by Simone Plant

Chamberlain: We're not to be disturbed.

Chester: Oh right.

Chamberlain: After you sire.

*Valiant & Chamberlain stride off, everyone runs around like headless chickens and then off leaving just Dolly on stage.*

Dolly: Well it's alright for them, they all got jobs, but I haven't, not now. *(Not talking directly to the audience yet. Gets out large hanky from pocket in dress and blows nose on it – the usual “it's worse than that” routine)* Now Valiant is all grown up the only things I'm Dame of the Bedchamber of are his old toys *(blows nose again)* Still I suppose it could be worse.... What am I saying it is worse.

*(Now talking to the audience)* Oh you must think I'm extremely rude, exceedingly impolite and outrageously attractive. I haven't even introduced myself. I'm Dame Dolly of the Bedchamber, *(she curtseys and falls over)*. I'm in charge of everything that happens to Prince Valiant, and I'm brilliant at my job *(oh yes I am routine)*. I know everything there is to know about babies. I know which end to feed and which end to put the nappy on. That's very important because if you get them the wrong way round the nappies won't stay on and it is ever so hard to get them to drink their milk. When Valiant was a toddler his father the old King said to me he thought that Valiant was spoilt but I told him kids always smelt that way. *(as an aside to someone on the front row)* Think about it. Now he's all grown up there's nothing left for me to do. *(starts crying again)*.

I suppose I'll have to carry on looking for a husband to take care of me when I get old. *(looks at the audience daring them to laugh)* I put an advert for one in the Sentinel. I got hundreds of replies. All from women saying: “You can have mine!” I have been married before. I once gave my husband the silent treatment for an entire week, at the end of it he said “Haven't we been getting on well lately?”. I've got 2 sisters you know; no they're not the ugly sisters. One of them is the cook for that Alderman Fitzwarren from London. She's a wonderful cook. Apparently when they got ship wrecked on this desert island she made a lovely stew for the natives. Funny name they had.....Cannibals I think it was. My other sister was the nanny for the 2 babes who lived with that awful Sheriff of Nottingham. She told me that he childproofed the castle... but they still got in.

I wanted to do something special for the Coronation so Valiant said I could sing a song. He says my voice has special qualities. The Chamberlain said something about me being locked out of the Castle because no matter how hard I tried I just wouldn't be able to find the right key. *(Sings a scale very badly)* Wasn't that just perfect. Music maestro please.

**Song** I'm holding out for a hero - *Blackout*

**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)*