

Scene 3

Duchess's residence

FOT Enter Dowager Duchess Wilhelmina clutching an opened scroll "the proclamation", her daughter Lady Selena and Travis.

Duchess: *(reading from the proclamation)* "To all eligible young ladies, please attend Grande Florentia Castle in 3 days' time where during our Welcome Ball your name will be considered in the forthcoming marriage to Crown Prince Valiant". At last a chance to get my darling girl married to a Prince. What we need is a full proof plan to ensure that she wins.

Travis: A **dastardly** plan, milady.

Duchess: Precisely.

Selena: Are you sure this is going to work Mater?

Duchess: Of course it is my darling.

Selena: Well it didn't with that idiot Prince Charming did it?

Duchess: We can do soooo much better than that wet fish.

Selena: You promised that I would be a Princess. What is the point of looking this beautiful if I can't be in the public eye all the time where everyone can see me. Really mother this just isn't good enough.

Duchess: Now, now dear, don't get so upset. Stop worrying your gorgeous head about it precious; leave it all up to me. Off you go and supervise the servants packing. Don't let those idiots put creases in your silk gowns.

Selena flounces off

Duchess: Travis when we arrive at the castle, I need you to get the list of all the ladies who will be attending so we can start planning our little bit of sabotage.

Travis: Do you have any plans in mind milady?

Duchess: Just ideas at present. But whatever we do it can't look as though I or Selena are involved. I expect you to be as discrete as possible. Do you think you are capable of being discrete Travis?

Travis: Of course I am milady. Just as my father and his father were before me. It runs in the family.

Duchess: Good, just as long as it doesn't run out of your mouth.

Travis: Very good milady.

The Princess & the Pea by Simone Plant

Travis leaves.

Duchess: Hello all you **working class** people out there. I am the Dowager Duchess Wilhelmina and if you hadn't already worked it out **I** am the baddie of this little **pantomime**.

When I was a young lady just out of finishing school I was cheated out of the crown by Valiant's mother, who married the King instead of me. Just because he thought she was kinder and more sensitive than I was. But now at last I can smell the sweet scent of success. This time my very own darling daughter will get the crown and I will be the Queen Mother. How absolutely delicious. Nothing will stand in my way.

I have trained Selena from a babe to behave as a royal in everything she does. She's an expert in every activity she puts her mind to; needlepoint, piano forte, water colour painting.

MD: Painting and decorating.

Duchess: Who said that?

Band: He/She did. (all pointing to MD)

Duchess: Do you know what happened to the last person who made remarks like that?

MD: No.

Duchess: I banished them to Stafford, so be warned. Oh do shut up you lot. Boo and hiss all you like it won't make any difference. You sound like a broken gas pipe. I'm not **that** horrible, well maybe just a little bit, ha-ha.

Song **Material Girl**

She flounces off just like her daughter.

Scene 4

Castle corridor

Duchess and Selena enter front of stage

Selena: Mother how much longer do we have to wait? I really should be getting my beauty sleep by now. How am I expected to win if I don't look my best.

Duchess: Be patient dear. Travis will be along presently, and he'll have the information we need on the final challenge to ensure your success.

Selena: Well if he doesn't turn up soon I'm going. *(folds her arms in a huff)*

Travis enters

Duchess: Arh here he is. What happened Travis?

Travis: Well I followed them as you asked. They went down to the dungeon and after quite a bit of ridiculous messing around they found a large leather bound book. I entered and pretended to be there to assist them, but that idiot jester was getting suspicious so I had to let them leave with it.

Duchess: Did you manage to look inside the book?

Travis: I am sorry to say no, milady.

Duchess has a fit and throws a tantrum around the stage

Duchess: *(all calm again)* You will just have to find out where the Chamberlain is going to put the book for safe keeping. Then when he retires to his bed chamber tonight you can borrow the book and bring it to me.

Travis: *(wearily)* Yes milady.

They exit one side of stage as the Chamberlain comes on past them they bow to each other. However they pop their heads round the side of the stage to "overhear" what's going on. Chamberlain loiters a bit before Dolly and Chester come running on from the other side.

Dolly: Sweetie, we have the book.

Chamberlain: Excellent, and don't call me sweetie. *(she hands over the book)*

Dolly: Oh surely I can.

Chamberlain: And don't call me Shirley.

Dolly: It says in the book that...mmmmmmmmmm *(the Chamberlain puts his hand over Dolly's mouth to stop her talking).*