

The Princess & the Pea by Simone Plant

Duchess: *(thinking)* That could be to our advantage, a little bit of bribery with one of the judges is just what we need.

Travis: No madam please, not that.

Duchess: Buck up man, what are you coward or hero?

Travis: *(looking at Dolly)* Definitely coward milady definitely coward. Have you met her? She makes *(someone ghastly LILY SAVAGE)* look like *(someone nice PEPPA PIG)*!

Duchess: Woo her and we can get all the information we need.

Travis: But I don't know how to woo ...

Duchess: It's simple. Charm her. Tell her you think she's the one for you. Then take her for a meal. A romantic, candle-lit meal.

Travis: *(sadly)* Yes...

Duchess: Whisper something gooey and sweet in her ear.

Travis: Semolina pudding...

Duchess: No, fool. Lean over the table and say: "Pass me the sugar, sugar".

Travis: Sugar, sugar.

Duchess: Or: "Pass me the honey, honey".

Travis: Honey, honey.

Duchess: She'll just melt into your arms.

Travis: Like ice cream? It all seems rather messy, milady.

Duchess: Shhh here comes the daft old bird now... get ready to woo her.

Duchess pushed Travis over to Dolly

Rosebud: *(to the audience)* I think it's time to spice things up a bit. *(discreetly waves a hand and mumbles a bit of mumbo jumbo)*

Sfx of thunder and lightning and a rain storm. Everyone reacts. Dolly jumps into Travis's arms – if possible. Thunder & lightning carries on during the rest of the scene.

Dolly: Oh my hero.

Travis stands Dolly back up

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Travis: Madam, please control yourself, it was only thunder and lightning.

Dolly: Can you see my bosom pounding?

Chester: **Everyone** can see your bosom pounding and we all feel seasick, so put it away.

Music starts quietly in the background for a dance.

Dolly: *(ignoring Chester)* Shall we **darnce**?

Dolly grabs Travis round the waist, but he pulls away and holds her at arm's length, and stands completely still while Dolly dances madly in front of him. Chamberlain dances with the Duchess while she "spies" on Travis making sure he's "wooing" Dolly. Chester dances with someone in chorus. The Prince dances with the 4 ladies in turn like a "ladies excuse-me".

Travis: Er... Dame Dolly I must say you dance with a lot of passion.

Chester: Wait till you see her eat a Big Mac.

More mad dancing by Dolly

Dolly: If I asked you for a kiss what would you say?

Travis: Nothing – it's impossible to speak and laugh at the same time. *(Duchess nudges him in the ribs as she dances past him. Dolly plants a smacker on his cheek)* Where did you learn to kiss like that?

Dolly: I used to syphon petrol out of lorries.

Travis: Tell me, what sort of man you're looking for?

Dolly: I want a man who'll pick me up, whirl me round and drain me dry.

Chester: You don't want a man you need a spin dryer.

Dolly: You're just the type of man I'm looking for.

Travis: What type is that?

Dolly: Well you're breathing for a start. Do you like my perfume, its Coco channel?

Travis: *(sniffs then coughs violently)* Delightful madam. *(not really)* Though it's more gravy browning than cocoa.

Dolly: Can I be the girl of your dreams?

Travis: Only if someone reminds me never to go to sleep again.

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Dolly: We can make beautiful music together.

Travis: Thankfully I'm tone deaf madam.

Dance ends everyone curtseys or bows. More thunder & lightning.

Valiant: Thank you ladies for a most delightful dance.

Daphne: I am an expert at singing as well as dancing. Could I sing something for you now?

Selena: Don't be ridiculous Daphne, no one wants to hear you screech, and besides it would give you an unfair advantage.

Valiant: Ladies please don't argue.

Lavinia: I'm sure the competition will be totally impartial and fair. After all E does equal M C squared.

Gwendolyn: Oh do shut up Lavinia. Do you have to be goody goody all the time?

Lavinia: I was only saying...*(there is a massive clap of thunder, that interrupts the argument)*

Chamberlain: The thunder seems to be getting worse.

Chester: No, that was just Dolly's stomach rumbling, she hasn't had any food for the last 10 minutes.

More thunder getting louder, then there's a sfx of a knock at the door. A servant enters through audience.

Servant 1: Sire, there is a young lady at the door who wishes to enter.

Chamberlain: Quickly, bring her in out of this dreadful weather.

Servant goes back through the audience

Dolly: Oooh isn't this exciting. I wonder who she can be, out at this time of night in this foul weather.

Chester: Better watch out for the chickens and ducks. Get it, **fowl** weather.

Chamberlain: Thank you Chester, we did, unfortunately. I think, however, it may be raining cats and dogs now. I hope she hasn't stepped in a **poodle**. Har-har.

There is silence as Valiant stares in disbelief at the Chamberlain and the fact that he has just tried to make a joke, of sorts.

Valiant: Really Chamberlain, I am surprised at you.

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).*