



Kristi Cunningham

Inspired by "The Princess and the Pea" by Hans Christian Andersen

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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BIG DOG PUBLISHING

P.O. Box 1400

TALLEHAST, FL 34270

The Princess Quest

COMEDY. Hear ye! Hear ye! Prince Allistair must marry within one year or forfeit his claim to the throne. In addition, he must find a princess who is able to host large dinners with elegance and flair, instruct servants in a firm manner, and look glorious in a crown! With time running out, Prince Allistair and his faithful servant venture forth to find the perfect princess bride. However, it doesn't take long before Prince Allistair finds himself accosted by a bevy of enthusiastic husband-hunting princesses including the long-winded Princess Brighid and the overly amorous Princess Betina. Then there's Princess Purdy, who has an obnoxious laugh; Princess Edina, who makes everyone shudder; and Princess Petula, who is so concerned with her posture that she refuses to sit down. Discouraged, Prince Allistair is about to give up when he accidentally encounters Anabella, an independent-minded orphan and expert archer who doesn't need a man to protect her. Prince Allistair falls madly in love with the feisty orphan, but the only problem is that Anabella has no way to prove she is a princess. Eager to marry off their son, the King and Queen give Anabella a rather unusual test to see if she is indeed a princess. Audiences will laugh and cheer their way to a fun-filled ending.

Performance Time: Approximately 60 minutes.



Hans Christian Andersen in 1836
Portrait by Christian Albrecht Jensen

About the Story

Danish writer and poet Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) published "The Princess and the Pea" in Copenhagen, Denmark, as part of a collection fairy tales entitled *Tales, Told for Children* (1835). Andersen noted in his preface that he first heard the story as a child. However, the story is now thought to be derived from a similar Swedish folk tale about a young orphan girl. As a child, Andersen's education was in part paid for by King Frederick VI. This spurred some to speculate that Andersen may have been an illegitimate son of the royal family, but this was never proven. Andersen has become one of the greatest children's writers of all time. Andersen's stories have been translated into more than 150 languages and some of his most famous tales include "The Little Mermaid," "Thumbelina," "The Emperor's New Clothes," and "The Ugly Duckling." "The Princess and the Pea" is one of Andersen's best-loved stories and has spurred two film adaptations and the 1959 musical, *Once Upon a Mattress* starring Carol Burnett.

Characters

(7 M, 7 F, 5 flexible, opt. extras)

(With doubling: 4 M, 7 F, 5 flexible)

PRINCE ALLISTAIR: Prince of Dawsonia who finds out that he must get married before he turns 20 or forfeit the throne.

KING RODRICK: Allistair's father; desperately wants grandchildren.

QUEEN HELENE: Allistair's mother who has been happily married to King Rodrick for 20 years; desperately wants grandchildren.

GILROY: Allistair's faithful friend and servant who accompanies him on a quest to find a princess bride; male.

ANABELLA: Princess of Holledonia; a self-assured, confident orphan who knows how to take care of herself and is an expert archer.

EDINA: Sinister, manipulative princess who has her sights set on marrying Allistair even though she makes him shudder with horror.

DUFF: Princess Edina's beleaguered servant who is forced to do her evil bidding; flexible.

BRIGHID: Princess who wants to marry Allistair; overly talkative.

PURDY: Princess who wants to marry Allistair; has a loud, obnoxious laugh.

PETULA: Princess who wants to marry Allistair; overly concerned with her posture and refuses to sit down.

BETINA: Princess who wants to marry Allistair; overly amorous.

HERALD: Announces the news for the Kingdom of Dawsonia; flexible.

TRUMPETER: Royal trumpet player who is musically challenged; flexible.

MAN 1, 2: Ruffians who harass Princess Anabella and try to kiss her; oafish and rough-looking.

GUY: King's army commander and an accomplished archer; non-speaking; male.

GUARD 1, 2: Palace guards/soldiers; non-speaking; flexible.

MANLY PRINCESS: Manly looking princess; non-speaking; male.

EXTRAS (opt.): As Princesses and Spectators.

Options for doubling:

MAN 1/GUARD 1 (male)

MAN 2/GUARD 2 (male)

GUY/MANLY PRINCESS (male)

Set

The action should be fast paced and feel fluid as the scenes progress. For this reason, only minimal set pieces are required. However, if desired, the set can be as elaborate as your budget allows.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: Palace throne room, Dawsonia. There are two thrones CS.

Scene 2: A different room in the palace. Played in front of curtain.

Scene 3: Kingdom of Kylaroon, Country of Halemooora, Kingdom of Bryceland, and Scarbroughland. There is a chair or bench with a cushion.

Scene 4: Scarbroughland. There is seating for two.

Intermission (optional)

ACT II

Scene 1: Palace ballroom, Dawsonia. Two thrones are CS with a banner behind them. Topiaries or other decorations may be used to create a ballroom atmosphere.

Scene 2: Dawsonian palace grounds where an archery contest is taking place. Targets are hung on back wall of theatre behind the audience.

Scene 3: Palace banquet hall. Thrones are USC and there is a long table and chairs slightly SL of center.

Scene 4: Royal banquet hall, next morning.

Props

Trumpet	6 Arrows (no arrows are shot)
Scroll	3 Bows
Ancient royal document	Quiver
Cushion	Cloak, for Anabella
Traveling clothes, for Anabella	Large bandage, for Duff's butt
Cloak, for Allistair	Shrub/plant/flower to serve as Duff's hiding place
Earplugs	Large platter with a turkey
Ostentatious ball gown, for Edina	Large bowl of fruit
Banner	Goblets
Bandages	Plates
Arm sling	Small vial for sleeping potion
Candles or candlesticks (Use battery operated for safety.)	Kazoo
2 Archery targets	

Special Effects

Ballroom music
Loud storm
Thunder
Lightning
Wind
Sound of an arrow whizzing through the air
Bed on wheels with 20 stacked mattresses. No actual bed or mattresses needed. Use a cart on wheels with a cutout to represent mattresses.

“Now,
I am to be saddled
with a wife.
I can think
of nothing worse.”

—Allistair

ACT I

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Before the curtain. Herald and Trumpeter enter SR and stand CS. Trumpeter is holding a trumpet and Herald is holding a scroll. Trumpeter attempts to sound his trumpet but fails miserably. Herald gives a pained look. Herald unrolls the scroll.)

HERALD: *(To audience, reads from scroll.)* Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye! Let it be known throughout the land that Prince Allistair—eligible bachelor and royal heir to the throne of Dawsonia—shall marry within the year. It has been decreed by a recently discovered, ancient, royal document that he shall marry a *real* princess of royal lineage who is able to host large dinners with elegance and flair, instruct servants in a firm manner, and, uh... *(Clears throat.)* ...who looks glorious in a crown. *(Trumpeter looks confused as he tries to get a look at the proclamation before raising his trumpet. Herald stops Trumpeter and shakes his head.)* Uh, no.

(Trumpeter and Herald exit SR as curtain opens. The stage is bare except for two thrones CS. The King and Queen are seated. Gilroy is pacing. Allistair is lying flat on his back in front of the thrones. Gilroy crosses to Allistair.)

GILROY: *(To Allistair.)* Your Highness, please get up. It isn't seemly for you to be lying on the floor.

HELENE: Really, Allistair, Gilroy is right. What if someone should see you?

(Allistair sits up.)

ALLISTAIR: Why should I care what anyone else thinks? Because of some ancient document that no one ever knew

existed, I am doomed. Besides, is this not the way they shall carry me out when I am dead? I might as well make their preparations easy for them. (*Lies back down.*)

HELENE: Oh, Allistair, you're always so dramatic!

RODRICK: (*To Helene, leaning in.*) He gets it from you.

(*Helene gives Rodrick an elbow.*)

GILROY: (*To Allistair.*) Please, Your Highness, do get up! All is not hopeless. You have a year to find a bride, and I am most certain that it will not kill you. My prince, marriage is not death. In fact—

(*Allistair sits up.*)

ALLISTAIR: Really? And how long have you been married?

GILROY: Now, sire...

ALLISTAIR: Come, Gilroy, let me have your wisdom. I should like to benefit from all your years of experience.

GILROY: The prince is well aware that I have never been married.

ALLISTAIR: Aha! So how would you know anything about the matter?

HELENE: Now, Allistair, leave poor Gilroy alone. He is wise about many things.

ALLISTAIR: I agree, but how he can be wise about something he has never been shackled with—uh, I mean “experienced”—I would like to know.

GILROY: (*Annoyed.*) One doesn't need to taste the honey to know it is sweet.

ALLISTAIR: (*Laughs.*) Honey!

HELENE: Enough! Rodrick, are you just going to sit there or are you going to talk some sense into your son?

(*Rodrick rises and crosses to Allistair. Rodrick takes Allistair by the elbow.*)

RODRICK: Get up, Boy! (*Allistair stands.*) I will ask you one question.

(*Rodrick crosses back to his throne and sits. Allistair crosses and stands next to Rodrick and Helene.*)

ALLISTAIR: Well?

RODRICK: Do your mother and I look dead?

HELENE: (*Sighs, shakes head. Sarcastically.*) Well done, Rodrick.

RODRICK: (*Pleased with himself.*) Thank you. You see, my boy, marriage has not killed us.

HELENE: (*To Allistair.*) What your dear father means is...we have been married these 20 years, and they have been the happiest years of our lives.

ALLISTAIR: Yes, but...

GILROY: If I may, Your Highness, I may not have partaken of the sweetness of marriage, but I believe I have been witness to many happy marriages in my time—your parents included—and I must say that such happiness only serves to enhance one's life. So you see...

ALLISTAIR: (*To Rodrick and Helene, sinks to the ground as he speaks.*) Yes, but you two married for love. I haven't even met anyone I *like*, let alone love.

RODRICK: It didn't start out that way, Son. It could have ended very differently.

ALLISTAIR: What?

HELENE: Rodrick!

RODRICK: I believe, my dear, that now would be the appropriate time to share our true beginnings.

ALLISTAIR: What are you talking about? What true beginning? You always told me that you were very much in love when you married.

RODRICK: Oh, we were, but I wasn't supposed to marry your mother. You see, I was pledged to her older sister Celeste.

ALLISTAIR: Aunt Celeste?

HELENE: It's true, dear.

RODRICK: (*To Allistair.*) Yes, it was arranged when we were very young. And when the time came for us to marry, I traveled to their palace prepared to honor my duty. But when I got there, I took one look at your mother and fell head over heels in love.

HELENE: (*Laughs.*) Quite literally! He tripped over a servant and ended up face down in a puddle of soup! I couldn't help but love him.

RODRICK: (*To Allistair.*) Imagine, then, how I felt when I realized it was Celeste and not Helene who I should marry.

ALLISTAIR: Why have you never told me this?

RODRICK: You never asked. And, anyway, it didn't matter because it ended exactly as it should have.

ALLISTAIR: But how?

RODRICK: It just so happened that Celeste had fallen in love with someone else.

ALLISTAIR: (*Realizes.*) Uncle Ferdinand!

HELENE: That's right. He had been to our court many times and they had fallen madly in love. My father was not happy about the situation.

RODRICK: (*To Allistair.*) He threatened to have my ears cut off. But being the negotiator that I am, he quickly realized that he could have two alliances instead of one.

HELENE: I believe, dear, it was Ferdinand who did the negotiating. You were too concerned about your ears.

RODRICK: (*Clears throat. To Allistair.*) At any rate, it all ended very happily and just the way it should have.

(Allistair stands and begins to pace.)

ALLISTAIR: Yes, but you didn't have an ancient document telling you who to marry and when.

RODRICK: We had an arranged marriage. You have an ancient document.

HELENE: (*To Allistair.*) There's no reason why you shouldn't expect a happy ending as well. And you may not need to look very far. Why, we have a real princess living with us at the moment.

RODRICK: Quite right, my dear. (*To Allistair.*) Your real princess could be right under your nose.

ALLISTAIR: Edina. (*Allistair and Gilroy shudder.*) I'm afraid she's a little too... (*Looks to Gilroy for help.*)

GILROY: My thoughts exactly, Your Highness. She *is* a little too...

(*Allistair and Gilroy shudder again.*)

HELENE: Is there no one, Allistair?

ALLISTAIR: No, Mother.

RODRICK: Well, then, my boy, I suppose you are off on a quest...a princess quest! (*Chuckles.*) Gilroy, you will go with my son to help him find a wife.

GILROY: (*Bowing.*) As you wish, sire.

ALLISTAIR: (*To Helene.*) Are you sure there is nothing that can be done?

HELENE: No, Allistair. We have had our advisors searching for a loophole. I'm afraid you must marry within the year, or you shall forfeit the throne.

ALLISTAIR: Fine. I will go, but know this...I will *not* be happy about it.

RODRICK: It will all end well, Boy, you'll see.

(*Gilroy and Allistair start to exit.*)

ALLISTAIR: If I ever find out exactly who found this lost document, they'll have to worry about more than their ears!

(*Allistair and Gilroy exit SR.*)

RODRICK: (*Excited.*) Can you hear it, Helene?

HELENE: What, Rodrick?

RODRICK: The pitter-patter of little feet.

HELENE: (*Excited.*) Oh, Rodrick! Grandchildren! How many do you suppose he'll give us?

RODRICK: How many do you want?

HELENE: (*Giggles.*) Three or four. But he's so set against this marriage...do you think he will agree?

RODRICK: (*Laughs.*) Perhaps we should find another lost document of our own. We'll call it the "Grandchildren Clause."

HELENE: Oh, Rodrick!

(*They laugh. Curtain.*)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: Front of curtain. Edina enters.)

EDINA: *(Pacing.)* Where is that little toad? Must I do everything myself? Fluff, you little wart, where are you?!

(Duff enters from audience.)

DUFF: Right here, my princess. And my name is "Duff."

EDINA: Hand it over.

DUFF: Hand what over, my princess?

EDINA: *(Angry.)* The ancient, royal document, you imbecile!

DUFF: The ancient...but it is in the royal document library.

EDINA: I know that, you buffoon! You made a copy, didn't you?

DUFF: Yes, Your Highness. *(Just stands there.)*

EDINA: Well?

DUFF: Well, what? Oh, yes, here it is right here.

(Duff takes a document out of his pocket. Edina sighs, grabs the document out of his hand, and hits him over the head with it.)

EDINA: Incompetent fool! Now, let me see... *(Reads, mumbles.)* "By royal decree, every Dawsonian prince shall marry by the age of 20 or forfeit the throne." *(Laughs.)* Oh, that's wonderful, Buff!

DUFF: Thank you, my princess, but my name is "Duff."

EDINA: *(Reads.)* "He must marry a *real* princess from a long royal line"...able to host large dinners with elegance and flair." *(To Duff, proudly.)* I am most adept at large dinners.

DUFF: Indeed, my princess.

EDINA: *(Reads.)* "Able to handle servants with a firm hand." *(To Duff, proudly.)* I must say that there isn't a firmer hand in all the land, I am sure.

DUFF: (*Rubbing head.*) I am living proof of that, Your Highness.

EDINA: (*Reads.*) "And looks glorious in a crown." (*Laughs.*) I do look rather...glorious in a crown, don't I? No one—I mean no one—looks better in a crown than moi! Nicely done, Stuff! There isn't another princess around who can compare to me!

DUFF: No, indeed, my princess. And it's "Duff," Your Highness.

EDINA: Well, I must say, Gruff...for an ugly little toad, you did quite well. I had no idea you were so good at forging royal documents. Perhaps I have underestimated you.

DUFF: Thank you, Your Highness. I—

EDINA: And, now, I must hurry to my room to prepare.

DUFF: Prepare for what, my princess?

EDINA: Why, the prince, of course. He will no doubt be knocking at my door to ask me to marry him, and I must look my best.

DUFF: But—

EDINA: Honestly, I don't know what he's been waiting for. I stayed here for the summer just to give him ample opportunity, but there are some things men just don't understand. So, we women must sometimes take things into our own hands. (*Laughs.*)

DUFF: But, Princess—

EDINA: Not now, Cuff. I have an engagement to see to. (*Starts to exit SR.*)

DUFF: (*Shouts.*) The prince is gone! (*Cowers and covers head.*)

EDINA: (*Shouts.*) What?! (*Through clenched teeth.*) And just where has the Prince gone?

DUFF: Hunting, my princess.

EDINA: (*Calm now.*) Hunting. I see. He's a man, and he has gone hunting. He's probably just trying to work up the courage to come to me.

DUFF: *Princess hunting, Your Highness. (Cowers again.)*

EDINA: (*Screams.*) What?! (*Throws a fit.*)

DUFF: I am sure, my princess, that it must be Gilroy's fault.
He must have suggested it.

(Edina calms down and tries to regain her composure.)

EDINA: Yes. Yes, I am sure you are right, Ruff. It must be
Gilroy who has put him up to this. He's probably just not
sure about my feelings and wants to make me jealous.
Right? *(No answer. Threatening.)* Right?!

DUFF: Yes, my princess.

EDINA: Very well. I will just use this time to make myself
even more beautiful, if that is possible. And you will follow
the prince to make sure that he doesn't meet anyone...well,
you know what I mean. *(Pause.)* Well, what are you waiting
for?! The prince is getting away! Be off with you, Muff!
(Turns to exit.)

DUFF: It's "Duff," my princess.

EDINA: Whatever! *(Exits SR.)*

DUFF: *(Sighs.)* Yes, my princess...

(Duff exits through the audience. Curtain.)

Scene 3

(AT RISE: Curtains part slightly to create a doorway effect. Herald and Trumpeter enter SL and stand before the curtain. Trumpeter attempts to sound the trumpet but fails miserably. Herald rolls his eyes at Trumpeter. As Herald speaks the following, Allistair and Gilroy enter from the back and make their way to the stage SR.)

HERALD: *(To audience.)* Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye! His royal highness and eligible bachelor, Prince Allistair, has arrived in the land of Kylaroon, where a large party of princesses has gathered. The Kingdom of Dawsonia wishes our royal heir luck in this...his princess adventure.

(Herald and Trumpeter remain SL. Allistair and Gilroy reach the stage and stand SR, looking out over the audience while they speak.)

ALLISTAIR: *(To Gilroy.)* I would like to go on record, once again, for saying that this is absolute madness. I don't want to find a wife like this. In fact, I'm not sure I want to find a wife at all.

GILROY: Believe it or not, I do understand, Your Highness, but I am afraid you have no choice.

ALLISTAIR: Well, let's get this over with. Let's just see what Kylaroon has to offer.

(Princesses enter from back.)

BETINA: *(Points to Allistair.)* Look! There he is! It's Prince Allistair!

PETULA: He's so handsome!

PURDY: He's mine, so back off!

BRIGHID: Oh, no, he's not! He's mine! I saw him first!

BETINA: No, you didn't. I did. He's mine!

(Princesses continue to argue in low tones.)

ALLISTAIR: *(Worried.)* Uh, Gilroy? What do we do?

PETULA: *(Over the arguing.)* I wonder if he likes blue eyes or brown.

BRIGHID: It doesn't matter, Petula, because you're not going to get close enough for him to notice!

(Arguing gets louder and angrier. Duff enters by sneaking through the back and makes his way to the front.)

GILROY: I believe, Your Highness, in such cases as these, there is only one thing to do.

ALLISTAIR: And what is that?

GILROY: *(Shouts.)* Run!

(Allistair and Gilroy exit through the part in the curtain and offstage. Princesses scream and run for the stage SR. They claw and fight with each other for position as they move through the audience. This will give them a great opportunity for using the audience and to adlib their fight. Duff reaches the stage stairs just as the Princesses do, and they run over him. Duff continues to try to climb the stairs while the Princesses run up the stairs and exit through the part in the curtain. Struggling, Duff finally crawls to the stage and collapses on his back. Pause. He rises slowly.)

DUFF: *(Weakly.)* Help.

(Duff collapses back to the floor and lights go down on him. Lights up on Herald who is still SL. Trumpeter attempts to sound his trumpet but fails miserably. Curtains open to reveal a bare stage.)

HERALD: *(To audience.)* Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye! Afraid for his life, our beloved prince and most eligible bachelor has traveled to the country of Halemooora, where it is

rumored another large party of princesses has gathered.
Dawsonia is behind you, our cherished prince!

(Allistair and Gilroy sneak onto the stage SR and make their way to CS. Duff sneaks onto the stage USL.)

PURDY: *(To Princesses, shouts.)* There he is, girls!

(All Princesses run screaming from SR and chase Allistair and Gilroy off SL, trampling Duff on the way. Duff tries to get up, sighs, and lies back down. Trumpeter attempts to sound his trumpet but fails miserably.)

HERALD: *(To audience.)* Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye! Prince Allistair has fled Halemooora and has arrived in Bryceland. Will our beloved prince find his princess there? Will there be a wedding soon after? Dawsonia can only hope...

(Allistair and Gilroy sneak onto the stage walking backward from opposite sides. They facing the wings and are startled when they bump into each other CS. Duff enters SL, and hides behind a potted plant or flower. He stays back this time, hiding.)

BRIGHID: *(Offstage, calls.)* Where are you, my handsome prince?

BETINA: *(Offstage, calls.)* Oh, Princey! Where are you?

(Allistair and Gilroy cover each other's mouths and start to sneak off SL. Princesses descend upon them from each side of the stage and tackle them. Duff starts to laugh, but an errant Princess runs in SL and knocks him down in her hurry to get to the Prince.)

GILROY: *(To Allistair, shouts.)* Run! Save yourself, Your Highness! Auugh!

(Lights down. Spotlight up on Herald. Trumpeter starts to sound the horn, but Herald grabs it away from him. As Herald speaks, a Servant or Guard enters, carrying a chair or bench and a cushion and places it CS. Allistair enters and takes his place on the seat. Gilroy enters and takes up station next to Allistair. A line of Princesses form DSL.)

HERALD: *(To audience.)* If you please! Hear ye! Hear ye! Oh, never mind that. Prince Allistair has recovered from his injuries and has traveled under guarded protection to Scarbroughland. Once again, Dawsonia wishes our favorite son the best of luck, and we send out hope for a safe return.

(Spotlight down. Herald and Trumpeter exit SL. Lights up.)

GILROY: Are we ready, Your Highness?

ALLISTAIR: Do you really need me to answer that?

GILROY: It will be all right, sire. *(Crosses to the line of Princesses. To Princesses.)* Attention. Each princess will pass before me for inspection. Only those who are approved will speak to the prince. *(Each Princess steps forward and unveils or preens before Gilroy. Princesses exit SL after they are rejected.)* No. No. No. *(A Manly Princess steps up and unveils herself. Gilroy is shocked. Shouts.)* Next! *(Lights lower and slowly come back up.)* No. No. I am afraid that is all for the day. We will continue tomorrow. Good day.

(Remaining Princesses groan and exit.)

ALLISTAIR: I told you this was hopeless.

GILROY: I'm afraid it is proving to be a bit more challenging than I had anticipated.

ALLISTAIR: Why did they have to find that document? I was happy just as I was. Now, I am to be saddled with a wife. I can think of nothing worse.

GILROY: But, Your Highness, I don't understand why you have such a gloomy outlook. You have had a wonderful example in your parents all these years. Why shouldn't you be looking forward to getting married?

ALLISTAIR: It isn't that I don't want to get married. It's just that...well, I want to fall in love like my parents did. I want a best friend...someone I can talk to about everything. Someone who will treat me like a real person instead of a prince. I want her to be something more than these silly girls, who are no more than fluffy decorations.

GILROY: I have never heard you talk like this before.

ALLISTAIR: Yeah, well, if you ever tell anyone, I'll make *you* marry Edina.

(Gilroy and Allistair shudder.)

GILROY: You may be assured of my silence. *(Pause.)* I do understand your feelings, Prince. You are looking for a rare find—someone who will complement you perfectly, your soul mate. And, dare I say, you wish to be as close as two peas in a pod? I do understand, and I will do my best to help you find her.

ALLISTAIR: Thank you, Gilroy, but I am afraid it is quite hopeless...

(Anabella enters, wearing traveling clothes, and is surrounded and harassed by rough-looking Man 1, 2.)

MAN 1: *(To Anabella.)* Come now, lady, all I want is a little kiss!

MAN 2: *(To Anabella.)* That's not too much to ask from a pretty lady such as yourself, is it? All we want is a little smooch.

(Man 2 makes kissing noises as Man 1 laughs.)

ANABELLA: A kiss, you say? Well, if it is a kiss you want, it is a kiss you will get. Come and get it, boys!

(Man 1, 2 are oafish in their attempts at collecting the kiss. Anabella eludes them, pushing them into each other or kicking them in the backside. Anabella is enjoying the fight. Man 1, 2 are getting more frustrated and upset. Allistair and Gilroy watch CS.)

ALLISTAIR: My sword, Gilroy! This lady is in trouble!

GILROY: I left it in the carriage, Your Highness.

ALLISTAIR: Never mind, I shall rout these fellows without a weapon! *(Crosses to the action.)*

GILROY: But, Your Highness...oh, do be careful!

(Allistair joins the fight. Man 1, 2 put up a struggle at first and then run offstage SL.)

ALLISTAIR: *(To Man 1, 2, shouts.)* That will teach you to accost helpless maidens! *(Anabella kicks the Prince. To Anabella, shouts.)* Owwww! What did you do that for?

ANABELLA: I am not helpless!

ALLISTAIR: I beg your pardon, but you *are* a lady, and you *were* outnumbered. I should think you would thank me for my help, not injure me.

ANABELLA: I'll have you know I was doing just fine on my own. I had the situation very well in hand.

(Allistair laughs. Anabella kicks him again.)

ALLISTAIR: Aauugh! Will you quit doing that?

ANABELLA: Why is it that you men always think a woman is helpless. I'll have you know that my father trained me well in defense.

ALLISTAIR: *(Laughs.)* Well, he certainly taught you how to kick, that's for sure. *(Frustrated, Anabella lets out scream and then playfully punches the Prince in the stomach before stomping*

off SL. Slightly bent over and holding his stomach, Allistair crosses to Gilroy.) I don't think she appreciated my help.

GILROY: It would seem not, Your Highness.

ALLISTAIR: She didn't like my calling her helpless, either.

GILROY: No, indeed.

ALLISTAIR: *(Rubbing his stomach while looking off SL.)* She is a most unusual girl...

GILROY: So it would seem, Your Highness.

(Blackout.)

Scene 4

(AT RISE: Scarbroughland. The royal seat is CS. There should be seating for two. Guards 1, 2 are posted. Allistair is seated, awaiting the prospective Princesses. Gilroy is standing SR with the line of Princesses. Brighid is the first in line. Duff is hiding USR. Herald enters SL with Trumpeter. Trumpeter tries to sound his trumpet while eluding Herald's attempts to take the instrument away from him.)

HERALD: *(Clears throat. To audience.)* Scarbroughland, take two.

(Herald and the Trumpeter exit SL. Brighid crosses to Allistair.)

GILROY: Princess Brighid, Your Highness.

ALLISTAIR: *(To Brighid, bows.)* I am glad to make your acquaint—

BRIGHID: *(Speaks quickly and without pause.)* Oh, I am so happy to *finally* meet you, Prince Allistair. I've been waiting ages! Simply ages and ages to meet you! Why, just the other day, I asked my father why it was that he never took me to Dawsonia to meet the handsome and charming Prince Allistair, and do you know, he never did answer me. I can't imagine why. It isn't as if it were a difficult question. I mean, it isn't as if I were asking for the answer to some deep philosophical question like why can't pigs fly. I mean, if I had asked that sort of question, I might have understood why he didn't answer me, but all I asked was why he hadn't taken me to meet you. You are a man—you know the way of the manly mind—can you understand why he wouldn't answer?

ALLISTAIR: I—

BRIGHID: Oh, who could possibly know such a thing? But, really, pigs are the most darling of creatures, don't you

think? I think so. I am absolutely enamored with the little things. It doesn't really matter to me if they can fly or not, I will love them just as they are. (*Scoots closer and leans in.*) Just as I will my husband.

(*Allistair signals Gilroy for help. Gilroy crosses to usher Brighid out.*)

GILROY: Thank you, Princess, for your time. We'll be in touch.

(*Gilroy gives Brighid a little nudge. Guard 1 escorts Brighid off SL.*)

BRIGHID: (*Calls.*) Goodbye, my sweet prince. I will treasure our time together. (*To Guard 1 as she exits.*) Honestly, isn't he just the sweetest man you've ever met? And so handsome! Why, I could just... (*Trails off as she exits.*)

(*Gilroy stays next to Allistair and motions for the Princess Purdy to step forward.*)

GILROY: (*Announces.*) Princess Purdy.

(*Purdy crosses and plops herself down next to Allistair.*)

ALLISTAIR: (*To Purdy.*) I am honored.

PURDY: (*Obnoxious laugh.*) Oh, your princeyness. Has anyone ever told you how handsome you are?

ALLISTAIR: Uh, well, not lately.

PURDY: (*Obnoxious laugh.*) And so funny. I just knew you were going to be funny. (*Leans in closely.*) I just love that in a man.

ALLISTAIR: Uh...do you read?

PURDY: (*Blankly.*) Read what?

GILROY: Time is up, Princess. Thank you for coming. We will let you know.

(Gilroy gives Purdy a nudge toward the Guard.)

PURDY: Oh, time goes so fast when you're in love. Send me a message, my princely poo. I'll have my carrier pigeons waiting. *(Laughs obnoxiously and exits.)*

GILROY: *(Announces.)* Princess Petula.

(Princess Petula approaches Allistair.)

ALLISTAIR: It is a pleasure to meet you.

PETULA: *(Curtsies.)* Likewise, I'm sure.

ALLISTAIR: Won't you sit down?

PETULA: I can't.

ALLISTAIR: You can't?

PETULA: I don't.

ALLISTAIR: You don't?

PETULA: Yes. I mean, no. *(Allistair looks confused.)* My mother said that I shouldn't sit in front of you because when I sit, all my lessons on posture go right out the window and I look like a hunchback. And if I look like a hunchback, you won't want to marry me, and you'll be the fifth prince I've gone through, and there are only so many princes in this world, and what will my father do if he can't marry me off? *(Takes a breath.)* So, I'd rather stand, thank you.

ALLISTAIR: Oh, I see.

GILROY: Time! Thank you very much for coming, Princess Petula. We will send word.

PETULA: *(Worried.)* You will tell my mother I didn't sit, won't you?

GILROY: You have my word.

PETULA: You have no idea how much I appreciate that. *(To Allistair, curtsies.)* Goodbye. *(Exits SL.)*

ALLISTAIR: *(Leans in to Gilroy.)* How much more of this do I have to endure?

GILROY: Only one more, Your Highness.

ALLISTAIR: Thank heavens!

GILROY: (*Announces.*) Princess Betina.

(*Princess Betina approaches Allistair.*)

ALLISTAIR: (*To Betina.*) I am pleased to meet you.

BETINA: (*Overly eager.*) Not as pleased as I am to meet you. I thought we'd never be rid of those ninnies! But, now, it is just you and me, Your Highness. We are all alone. (*Gilroy coughs.*) You can tell me all of your deep... (*Leans in.*) ...dark... (*Scoots closer.*) ...secrets! (*Scoots so closely that Allistair slides off his seat and falls to the floor.*) Oh, I knew it! You've fallen for me already! (*Pounces on him.*) I feel it too, my darling! (*Gilroy attempts to get her away from Allistair.*) I knew it instantly. As soon as our eyes met, I knew we were destined to be together. (*Gilroy and a Guard physically pick Betina up and start to carry her offstage SL as she continues to talk.*) Don't be afraid, my love! Come to me! I will be waiting!

(*Gilroy and Guard carry her offstage SL. Gilroy enters.*)

ALLISTAIR: (*To Gilroy.*) If you ever subject me to that again...I'll...I'll...

GILROY: Yes, Your Highness, and I would not blame you a bit.

ALLISTAIR: This is pointless. We will return home tomorrow.

GILROY: But, Your Highness...

ALLISTAIR: I've had enough, Gilroy. Tomorrow we go home.

(*Unseen by Allistair and Gilroy, Duff sneaks off.*)

GILROY: Very well. I am sorry, Your Highness.

ALLISTAIR: I know. So am I. Have we had any word from Mother and Father?

GILROY: No. And in all honesty, Prince, it is not very likely that we shall.

ALLISTAIR: Tell me, Gilroy, do you think that becoming king is worth this sacrifice I am forced to make?

GILROY: Well, I couldn't say, but I do know that wars have been fought for control of a kingdom.

ALLISTAIR: I'm being selfish, aren't I?

GILROY: No, Prince, you are being human.

ALLISTAIR: But princes aren't allowed to be human, are they?

GILROY: *(Smiles sadly.)* I will leave you to your thoughts.

(Gilroy exits SR. Allistair paces for a moment and then puts on a cloak and starts to exit SL. Anabella enters SL walking quickly and not watching where she is going and bumps into Allistair. She immediately goes into defense mode and knocks him to the ground.)

ALLISTAIR: *(Stunned.)* Pardon me, milady.

ANABELLA: Oh, it's you! First, you save me when I don't need saving and now you attack me?

ALLISTAIR: Attack you? No, I—

ANABELLA: What are you...some sort of crazy man?

(Allistair stands and dusts himself off.)

ALLISTAIR: You are calling me crazy? Me...crazy? You're the one going around kicking perfectly nice fellows in the knee for trying to protect you.

ANABELLA: *(Angrily.)* I...don't...need...protecting!

ALLISTAIR: Obviously. It's the rest of the world that needs protecting. *(Anabella starts to exit.)* Where do you think you're going?

ANABELLA: Away from you. I make it a policy never to engage in conversations with crazy men.

ALLISTAIR: Wait! At least give me your name.

ANABELLA: Why?

ALLISTAIR: (*Rubbing his injured backside.*) So that I may be sure to run the other way when I hear it. (*Anabella stares at him for a second and starts to laugh.*) You find my injuries amusing?

[END OF FREEVIEW]