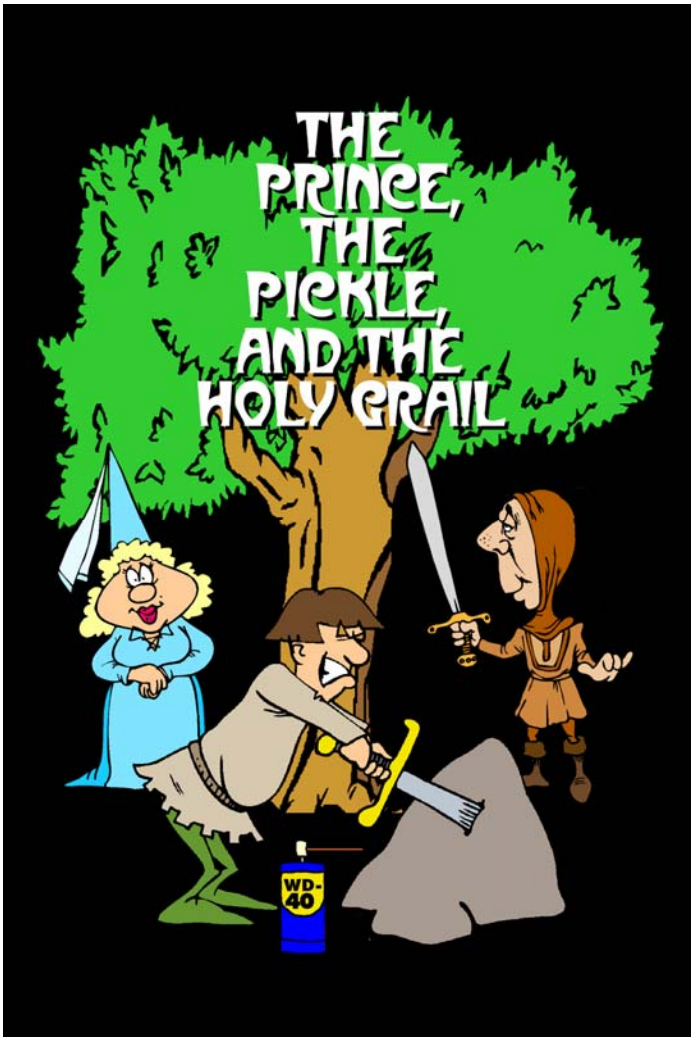

Murray J. Rivette

Big Dog Publishing

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THE PRINCE, THE PICKLE, AND THE HOLY GRAIL

COMEDY. Accompanied by a real "Klutz" and a dreadful magician, Prince Arthur disguises himself as a peasant and sets out on a quest to find the Holy Grail. Along the way, he meets up with two dimwitted knights, a lazy lady-in-waiting, a thief who uses "alternative facts," and even the Wicked Witch of the West, who is on her own quest to find Dorothy's ruby slippers. Since grails don't grow on trees, locating the Holy Grail proves challenging, especially since no one knows what a "quest" or "grail" is. But all is not lost. Arthur has a poem that may provide a clue. It reads, "Don't go beyond the pale," except no one knows what "pale" means. This comedic quest is littered with oxymorons, misspellings, homonyms, and misunderstandings, but it's sort of trendy in a "medieval-modern" kind of way!

Performance Time: Approximately 45-60 minutes.

"Arturus rex," illustration of King Arthur from the Nuremberg Chronicle, 1493.

ABOUT THE STORY

Medieval histories and romances depict King Arthur as a legendary British leader who defended Britain against Saxon invaders in the late 5th and early 6th centuries. Even though King Arthur is considered one of the most iconic figures in Western folklore, most modern historians consider him a purely mythical hero or a composite of several real-life leaders. In Arthurian legends, King Arthur proved his right to rule by pulling the sword, Excalibur, from a stone and anvil. In medieval literature, the Holy Grail is most commonly referred to as a holy chalice. However, the earliest known version of the Holy Grail was described in a poem by Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval, the Story of the Grail* (circa 1190) as a gold serving vessel set with jewels.

CHARACTERS

(5 M, 7 F, 1 flexible)

KING UTHER: King of Overland; wears royal garb and a crown; male.

QUEEN BEATRICE: Queen of Overland; wears royal garb and a crown; female.

PRINCE ARTHUR: King Uther and Queen Beatrice's son; wears royal garb at the castle; wears peasant clothing while on his quest; male.

JUDY KLUTZ: Prime minister of Overland who comes from a long line of clumsy people; loves to tell lawyer jokes; female.

GLADYS MERLIN: A terrible magician; female.

PICKLE: A thief named Sylvester Dill, who reaps the benefits of using "alternative facts"; male.

LUCY: Pickle's partner who assists him in the business of "iron and steal"; speaks with a thick New York accent; female.

WITCH: Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West, who is on a quest to find Dorothy's ruby slippers; female.

SIR KAY: Knight whose only luck is bad luck; male.

SIR PERCIVAL: Knight who isn't too bright; male.

LADY SUSAN: Lady-in-waiting who has to take at least three naps a day; female.

LADY BLANCHE: Lady-in-waiting who named her doll Barbie; female.

PAGE: Royal page; flexible.

SETTING

Kingdom of Overland, Middle Ages.

SETS

Castle throne room. Flags and tapestries adorn the walls. There are two thrones (may be large chairs) with a small table between them. There is a small bench at SL and SR.

Outside the Castle. A backdrop of the exterior of a castle may be used, or a bare stage will suffice. There is a picnic table.

A village street. A backdrop of a village may be used (opt.).

Forest. A backdrop of a forest. There are three trees and a few bushes. At CS, there is a log large enough to sit on.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: Castle throne room.
Scene 2: Outside the castle.
Scene 3: On the street.
Scene 4: Forest.
Scene 5: Forest, the next morning.
Scene 6: Castle throne room, later that day.

PROPS

Feather duster, for Page
Crown, for King
Crown, for Queen
Deck of cards, for Gladys
$100 bill (fake money)
Piece of brown paper with a poem on it
3 Swords
Pack of gum
Glass goblet
Wooden goblet (or plastic/ceramic that looks like wood)
Backpack
Pail
Sundial wristwatch, for Pickle
Broomstick, for Elphaba

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Loud crash
Sounds of things breaking
Narrow hanging tapestry or cord that can be pulled
Bell ringing
Sound of a cheering crowd
Sound of glass breaking

"THROUGH THINGS IN LIFE YOU MUST SAIL,
BUT DON'T GO BEYOND THE PALE.
FOR IF YOU STAY CLOSE BY THE TRAIL,
THAT'S WHERE YOU WILL FIND THE GRAIL."

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: Castle throne room. A Page is dusting the King's throne with a feather duster. Queen enters with the King in tow.)

QUEEN BEATRICE: *(To King.)* Well, I think it would be a good thing for Arthur to go out and see a little more of the world than what we have in our courtyard. *(Sits on her throne.)*

KING UTHER: It would certainly give him a new perspective on what it means to rule the kingdom when he inherits the throne. *(Sits on his throne and hands his crown to the Page. The Page dusts the crown with the feather duster, blows on it, polishes it with his sleeve, and places it on King's head.)* I just hope it doesn't come too soon. Thank you, Page.

(Page stands behind the King's throne.)

QUEEN BEATRICE: I think that meeting with commoners on the QT should really give him some wonderful insight into our royal subjects. *(Crosses to the wall and pulls on a narrow hanging tapestry.)* I'm going to call Prime Minister Judy. I don't think he should go alone.

KING UTHER: I agree. But Prince Arthur is so easily recognizable. *(Realizes.)* Oh, wait a minute! Perhaps he could disguise himself in some manner.

QUEEN BEATRICE: By George, I think you've got it! A disguise! What a wonderful idea!

KING UTHER: Yes, isn't it? Oh, I do get a flash of brilliance once in a while.

QUEEN BEATRICE: Yes, you do, dear, and that's why I love my little snookie-ookums! *(Pinches King's cheek.)* By the way, dear, [Fed Ex] delivered a huge wooden crate, and they left it out in the courtyard. Did you order something online? *[Or insert another delivery service.]*

KING UTHER: Oh, yes. It's a dictionary I ordered from IKEA.

QUEEN BEATRICE: My goodness! A dictionary comes in a crate that big?

KING UTHER: Well, it's not the actual dictionary itself. It's 250 million Scrabble tiles. I have to put the dictionary together myself. I love IKEA.

QUEEN BEATRICE: Wow! That should keep you busy and out of trouble for a good long time!

KING UTHER: Yeah, that's what Conan said.

QUEEN BEATRICE: Who's Conan?

KING UTHER: Conan, the librarian. He offered to help me, too. He's a terrific guy. I also met two of his cousins when I was talking to him. And they're both named Conan, too.

QUEEN BEATRICE: Really? Both are named Conan?

KING UTHER: Yeah, one cousin is a farmer. Calls himself Conan, the Agrarian. From what I understood, his grandfather's will specified that the first-born son of all of his children be named Conan.

QUEEN BEATRICE: And the other cousin you met?

KING UTHER: He lives in the Black Forest area of Germany.

QUEEN BEATRICE: Oh, let me guess…Conan, the Bavarian?

KING UTHER: You got it! Conan's entire family is weird.

QUEEN BEATRICE: For sure. I'm almost tempted to say that there's another cousin from Bulgaria, one who's an animal doctor and also one who doesn't eat meat.

KING UTHER: A Bulgarian, a veterinarian, and a vegetarian? I think you might just be right. Hey! If one joined the Unity Church, he'd be—

QUEEN BEATRICE: I know, I know…Conan, the Unitarian.

KING UTHER: Without a doubt!

QUEEN BEATRICE: That's a really weird situation, but I do believe that you may need a lot of help. Putting together 250 million Scrabble tiles seems like an awful lot of work for one person.

(Prince enters, wearing royal garb.)

PRINCE ARTHUR: Hi, Mom, Dad. What's up?
KING UTHER: Funny you should ask that, Son.
QUEEN BEATRICE: *(To Prince.)* Yes. As a matter of fact, we were just talking about you.
PRINCE ARTHUR: All right, but there was something I wanted to ask you about, too, so may I speak to you about my situation first?
KING/QUEEN BEATRICE: Sure.
PRINCE ARTHUR: Good. Now, here's the thing…I really think I need to get out into the kingdom and get to know our subjects. That way, when I do inherit the throne, I'll be better prepared to keep everything running and all our people happy. What do you think?
KING UTHER: I think you read our minds, Son. We were just discussing the exact same thing.

(King approaches Prince.)

PRINCE ARTHUR: Good. Because I believe that I need to go out into the kingdom and find out what our subjects really think of me. You know, before I become their king and ruler.
QUEEN BEATRICE: That's exactly what we were saying. We feel that you should spread your wings.
PRINCE ARTHUR: I don't have wings, Mom.
KING UTHER: It's just an expression, Son.
PRINCE ARTHUR: Oh.
QUEEN BEATRICE: Yes, it means you need to find out what the world has to offer you.
PRINCE ARTHUR: Oh, okay. And I thought I'd kill two birds with one stone.
QUEEN BEATRICE: Oh, no! No killing any creatures!
KING UTHER: Except at Thanksgiving. Get a nice, plump bird, and then…skrrritttcccch. *(Runs his finger across his throat.)*

PRINCE ARTHUR: No, no, no! I'm not talking about killing birds, Mom. I just meant that I'd be able to accomplish two things at the same time.

KING UTHER: Oh? How so?

PRINCE ARTHUR: Well, I'd not only find out what the people thought of me…

QUEEN BEATRICE: Yes?

PRINCE ARTHUR: But I'd also like to go on a quest to look for the Holy Grail.

KING UTHER: Oh, Son, that's nothing but a wild goose chase.

PRINCE ARTHUR: No, Dad, I wouldn't really be chasing any wild geese. I'd just be looking for the Holy Grail.

QUEEN BEATRICE: Again, Arthur, "wild goose chase" is just an expression.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Oh. But if I did get a goose, we could have him for Thanksgiving!

KING UTHER: Splendid idea! So…you want to go on a quest?

PRINCE ARTHUR: Yes, sir, a quest.

QUEEN BEATRICE: You realize, of course, that the Holy Grail is just a myth.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Well, you know what they say, "A myth is as good as a mile."

KING UTHER: Somehow, I think you're misinterpreting that expression. And you're lisping, too.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Well, I've been hearing lots of stories, and I'd really like to check them out for myself.

KING/QUEEN BEATRICE: Right!

PRINCE ARTHUR: Okay, then, I'll get ready to go.

QUEEN BEATRICE: Well, Son, I hate to say it, but it really *is* a myth. The Holy Grail doesn't exist.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Au contraire, Mamacita. I've heard so many stories about the Holy Grail that it makes me think it really does exist. Oh, and I discussed meeting people of the kingdom with Conan when I was at the library. He seems to think that it would also broaden my education.

KING UTHER: Well, I guess that as long as you're out there, it wouldn't hurt to look for the Holy Grail.

QUEEN BEATRICE: Look all you want, Son. But don't be too disappointed if you don't find it.

KING UTHER: Tru dat. Tru dat. Don't be disappointed.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Oh, I won't. Don't worry. I found what I think might be a clue. See this paper? *(Shows a piece of brown paper to them.)* It's got a poem written on it, but I think it really means something because it specifically mentions the Grail.

QUEEN BEATRICE: Okay, but how do you intend to go out into the kingdom without being recognized?

KING UTHER: *(To Prince.)* Yes. Your Mother and I were talking about the possibility of a disguise.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Oh, right. I thought I'd borrow some old clothes from one of the pages and leave my princely raiment here. Can't wear [Yves Saint Laurent] in public, right? *[Or insert another high-fashion designer.]*

KING UTHER: Right. That sounds like a plan.

QUEEN BEATRICE: But you mustn't go alone, Son. I want you to take someone with you…like Judy.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Prime Minister Judy?

QUEEN BEATRICE: Of course, Prime Minister Judy. Did you think I meant Judge Judy?

PRINCE ARTHUR: Prime Minister Judy, the Klutz?

QUEEN BEATRICE: Yes, Son. It is unfortunate, but that *is* her name.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Wait! You mean to say "Klutz" is her *real* name?

QUEEN BEATRICE: Yes, dear. Her family members were Klutzes from way, way back.

PRINCE ARTHUR: I never knew that. I just thought everyone called her a "klutz" because she's so clumsy. She has a terrible reputation for dropping and breaking things.

KING UTHER: Like your mom said, Arthur, Prime Minister Judy has a lineage that goes way back. Her father, her

grandfather, her great-grandfather, and her great-great-grandfather were all prime ministers, and they all did a terrific job, but they were all very clumsy.

PRINCE ARTHUR: How about that.

QUEEN BEATRICE: I summoned her earlier when we were talking about letting you go out into the world. She should have been here by now. I wonder what's keeping her?

PRINCE ARTHUR: I'll go find out what's taking her so long. *(Exits.)*

KING UTHER: Sweetheart, do you really think that sending Judy with Arthur is such a good idea? After all, she's just a woman.

QUEEN BEATRICE: *(Insulted.)* Oh, really?! "Just a woman"?! Well, let me tell you, there are many countries that have had female prime ministers: Canada, Israel, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Trinidad and Tobago, Denmark, Slovenia, Senegal, Norway, Latvia, Canada, Poland, the United Kingdom—

KING UTHER: Okay, okay!

QUEEN BEATRICE: That's right! All women! And, secondly, I don't think Arthur wandering around all by himself is a good idea.

KING UTHER: Okay, okay, that's true. Say, did you look up all that stuff about female prime ministers on Wikipedia?

QUEEN BEATRICE: I sure did. There are times when I just have to set you straight.

KING UTHER: Sorry.

(Prince enters.)

PRINCE ARTHUR: *(To King, Queen.)* She's on her way. It was strange, but she was just sitting there, staring at a can of frozen orange juice.

(Offstage, a loud crash is heard and then the sound of things breaking.)

JUDY: *(Offstage, calls.)* Sorry! Really sorry about that!
PRINCE ARTHUR: I think that's her now! I mean, who else could it possibly be?
KING/QUEEN: Oh, yeah…

(Judy enters.)

JUDY: Good morning, Your Majesties. *(Bows.)* Prince Arthur.
KING UTHER: Judy, I'm almost afraid to ask, but what were you doing when Arthur found you?
QUEEN BEATRICE: *(To Judy.)* Yes, he said that you were staring at a can of frozen orange juice.
JUDY: Yes, I was, Your Majesty.
PRINCE ARTHUR: But why?
JUDY: Oh, because when I took the can out of the freezer, I read the label and it said, "concentrate." So that's what I was doing.
PAGE: Oh, boy! *(To audience.)* Sorry, folks, but good help is so hard to find nowadays!
KING UTHER: Oh, my golly! Hey, you know what? Maybe we should have Merlin go with you, too, Arthur. I'll summon him. *(Pulls on narrow-hanging tapestry on the wall. Bell is heard.)*
PRINCE ARTHUR: *The* Merlin? Our court magician? The one who people say can perform miracles?
QUEEN BEATRICE: Yes, that's the one.
PRINCE ARTHUR: Actually, Mom, Merlin is a terrible magician. I've seen him attempt some magic stuff, and if he performs a good trick, *that's* a miracle!

(Gladys enters.)

GLADYS MERLIN: Yes, Your Majesties? You called?
KING UTHER: Actually, I was calling for your husband. Is he coming?

GLADYS MERLIN: I'm so sorry, Your Highness, but my husband isn't available. He went to visit his sick mother in Ireland.

OTHERS: Ireland?

GLADYS MERLIN: Yes, she lives in Dublin.

KING UTHER: Dublin. Ha! You know, I remember an old joke about that.

GLADYS MERLIN: Really?

KING UTHER: Yep. Did you know that Ireland is the richest country in the entire world?

GLADYS MERLIN: No, I didn't. How come?

KING UTHER: Its capital has been Dublin for years!

GLADYS MERLIN: I don't get it.

KING UTHER: It's capital? Capital? Capital with an "A" means money. Capitol with an "O" means the head of government!

QUEEN BEATRICE: Doesn't Ireland use the Euro?

KING UTHER: Yes, they do. Why?

QUEEN BEATRICE: Then wouldn't the Euro be their capital? I'm confused. Will Merlin be back soon, Gladys?

GLADYS MERLIN: Oh, not for some time, Your Highness. After he visits his mother, he has plans to go to Hogwarts for a wizards' convention.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Hogwarts? Where's that?

GLADYS MERLIN: Oh, it's a little castle in Oz in the world of Narnia. It's a school for wizards. And they're hosting Wizard-Con. It's like Comic-Con, but strictly for wizards.

KING UTHER: I really wanted your husband to accompany the Prince on his quest, Mrs. Merlin.

GLADYS MERLIN: I'm so sorry, Your Highness. He's not around. And by the way, my name is Gladys.

PRINCE ARTHUR: You don't know magic, do you, Gladys?

GLADYS MERLIN: Oh, yeah, I sure do. *(Produces a deck of playing cards.)* Pick a card. Go ahead…pick a card. And don't let me see it.

(Prince picks a card.)

PRINCE ARTHUR: Okay, I got one.
GLADYS MERLIN: It's the four of diamonds.
PRINCE ARTHUR: Not even close. It's the nine of clubs.
GLADYS MERLIN: Really? The nine of clubs? Wow. I thought I had that trick down pat. Well, I guess it's back to the old drawing board…
PRINCE ARTHUR: Yeah, I don't think so, Gladys. Besides, that was just a trick. It wasn't magic. Making something disappear is magic.
QUEEN BEATRICE: Your father could make a roasted turkey leg disappear in just a few minutes, and that's not magic at all!
KING UTHER: Thank you, my dear.
PRINCE ARTHUR: I'm sorry, Gladys, but you can't come along with us. You're a terrible magician.
GLADYS MERLIN: Look, I'm still practicing. Give me a break, please. Oh, and by the way, I'm a terrific cook!
PRINCE ARTHUR: You can cook? Okay, that's a plus. All right, you can come. Just don't try any real magic.
GLADYS MERLIN: *(Crosses her fingers behind her back so the Prince can't see.)* Whatever you say, Prince Arthur. Whatever you say. Besides, I'd like to have the chance to get to know you better.
PRINCE ARTHUR: Mrs. Merlin— *(Realizes.)* Gladys, you don't know me at all.
GLADYS MERLIN: Oh, yeah? There are three things I know about you.
PRINCE ARTHUR: Really?
GLADYS MERLIN: Yep. *(Ticks items off on her fingers.)* You love riding your horse in the early morning hours. You love chocolate chip cookies… *(Can't think of anything.)* Okay, so there're two things I know about you.

KING UTHER: All right, enough small talk. It's settled, then. Arthur, you will go on your quest with Prime Minister Judy and Gladys Merlin.

GLADYS MERLIN: You want me to go on a quest with Prince Arthur? You mean a *real* quest?

QUEEN BEATRICE: Yes.

GLADYS MERLIN: *(Excited.)* Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy! A real quest! Yay! But I just have one question.

KING UTHER: What is it?

GLADYS MERLIN: What's a "quest"?

QUEEN BEATRICE: Oh, dear. Uh, Gladys, a "quest" is a journey of sorts. A search, if you will.

PRINCE ARTHUR: *(To Gladys.)* Yes, and, in this case, we'll be searching for the Holy Grail.

GLADYS MERLIN: Oh, wow! A search for the Holy Grail! Fantastic! But I just have one question.

KING UTHER: Yes, what is it?

GLADYS MERLIN: What's a "grail"?

PRINCE ARTHUR: Gladys, a "grail" is a chalice. *(Gladys looks confused.)* A flagon… *(Gladys looks confused.)* A goblet… *(Gladys looks even more confused.)*

QUEEN BEATRICE: *(Exasperated.)* Oh, for goodness sake, Gladys, it's a very large cup!

GLADYS MERLIN: Ah! I think I got it!

QUEEN BEATRICE: Yes, good. So now you got it! Well, with the three of you going, at least there's safety in numbers.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Right. Say, listen, Dad…I'm going to need a few bucks for meals and such.

KING UTHER: Won't your allowance cover it?

PRINCE ARTHUR: Hey, I get $5 a week, and there're three of us going on this quest. I'm going to need more than that.

(King takes a $100 bill from his pocket.)

KING UTHER: Gee, I've only got this $100 bill—

(Prince grabs the $100.)

PRINCE ARTHUR: That should just about do it. Thanks, Dad.
KING UTHER: Well, all right, but bring me back the change.
PRINCE ARTHUR: Whatever is left over, I'll give back to you.
KING UTHER: *(To Queen, nostalgic.)* Gee, when I was a kid, I could get lots of food for just a couple of bucks.
QUEEN BEATRICE: Those were the old days, dear. Prices have gone way up since then. Arthur, I do hope that you'll be safe on this quest. After all, you are my favorite son!
PRINCE ARTHUR: Mom, I'm your only…never mind. I'm sure that Excalibur will keep me safe. *(Waves his sword around.)*
KING UTHER: I don't know how you did it, Son, when so many others have tried and failed. And you pulled that sword out of the stone with such ease.
PRINCE ARTHUR: Yeah, I did. But I kind of cheated a little.
KING UTHER: Oh? How's that?
PRINCE ARTHUR: I used some WD-40!
KING UTHER: Huh. How about that? So…you actually named your sword?
PRINCE ARTHUR: Sure. People name their dogs and cats, even their cars. And since I don't have a dog or a cat and I haven't gotten my driver's license and since cars haven't been invented, so why not name my sword?
QUEEN BEATRICE: You have a point there.
PRINCE ARTHUR: So does my sword! *(Laughs. No one else laughs.)* I made a joke! Get it?
QUEEN BEATRICE: Got it.
KING UTHER: Meanwhile, I am famished! All that mention about food has gotten me hungry. When I came through the kitchen earlier, I saw a nice fat roasted turkey leg that had my name on it. Let's all go eat, and tomorrow morning, the three of you can start off on your quest.

(As lights fade, others adlib, "Wonderful," "Great," "I'm hungry, too," "Right," etc. as they exit.)

SCENE 2

(AT RISE: Outside the castle. Sir Percival and Lady Blanche are seated at a large picnic table. Sir Kay is practicing with his sword.)

SIR PERCIVAL: What a marvelous day to be in the great outdoors, isn't it, Lady Blanche?
LADY BLANCHE: Yes, it's a lovely day for a picnic, Sir Percival. Sunshine, soft breezes…
SIR KAY: Remember that silly old nonsense poem?
LADY BLANCHE: Poem?
SIR PERCIVAL: What poem, Sir Kay?
SIR KAY: It goes like this… *(Recites.)*
"The sky is blue, the grass has rizz,
I wonder where the birdies is?
Why, the birdies is on the wing." That's funny, I always thought that the wings was on the birdies!
LADY BLANCHE: Oh, that is such silly, utter nonsense.

(Lady Susan rushes on.)

LADY SUSAN: Hello, everyone! Phew, I am so tired.
LADY BLANCHE: Why were you running, Lady Susan?
LADY SUSAN: Because I can't wait to tell you all the news.
SIR PERCIVAL: What news?
LADY SUSAN: The news that Prince Arthur is going on a quest!
OTHERS: No!
LADY SUSAN: Yes! And he's going to look for the Holy Grail!
OTHERS: No!
LADY SUSAN: Yes! And Prime Minister Klutz and Gladys Merlin are going with him, too!
OTHERS: No!
LADY SUSAN: Yes! Isn't that exciting?
SIR PERCIVAL: It certainly would be…if I knew what a "quest" was.

LADY BLANCHE: It's basically just a journey.
SIR PERCIVAL: Ah! And a "grail"? What exactly is a "grail"?
SIR KAY: You aren't too bright, are you, Percy?
LADY SUSAN: Percy, a "grail" is another word for a goblet. *(Sir Percival shakes his head, looks confused.)* A flagon? *(Sir Percival shakes his head, looks confused.)* A chalice? *(Sir Percival shakes his head, looks confused. Exasperated.)* A big cup!
SIR PERCIVAL: Ah, a big cup!
SIR KAY: Perhaps we, too, should go, Percy. If Prince Arthur should get into trouble, we can protect him.
SIR PERCIVAL: Oh, I think he'll be all right. After all, he's got Excalibur.
LADY BLANCHE: What is "Excalibur"?
SIR PERCIVAL: Oh, that's the name he's given to his sword.
LADY SUSAN: He gave a name to an inanimate object like a sword?
SIR PERCIVAL: That's right.
LADY SUSAN: Ridiculous.
SIR PERCIVAL: *(Correcting.)* No, Excalibur.
LADY BLANCHE: You know, I once had a pretty little doll that I named.
SIR KAY: You're kidding, right?
LADY BLANCHE: No, she seemed so lifelike that I felt she deserved a name. So I named her.
SIR PERCIVAL: Really? What name did you give her?
LADY BLANCHE: I called her Barbie.
OTHERS: No! *(Laugh.)*
LADY BLANCHE: Oh, yes.
LADY SUSAN: What kind of silly name is that? *(Scoffs.)* Barbie!
LADY BLANCHE: I didn't think it was silly. I thought it was a cool name.
SIR KAY: Why didn't you give her a normal name like Genevieve or Beatrice or Brumhilda?
LADY BLANCHE: Oh, those names are too old-fashioned. I wanted her to be a more modern doll.

SIR PERCIVAL: Well, I think that "Barbie" is a foolish name. A name like that will never catch on with children.

OTHERS: Agreed!

LADY SUSAN: It's true. That name is much too modern. *(To Sir Kay.)* So, what's with that sword Excalibur?

SIR KAY: Oh, right. Merlin says it has magical powers of some sort.

LADY SUSAN: Magical powers? How can that be? It's only a sword.

SIR KAY: Yes, but it was stuck in a stone for ages. And Prince Arthur was able to pull it out. Easy as pie, too.

LADY BLANCHE: Really?

SIR PERCIVAL: Yes, the legend was that whoever could free the sword from that stone was the rightful heir to the throne.

LADY SUSAN: And Prince Arthur was able to do it?

SIR KAY: He sure did! He pulled it right out of that big rock! Countless others had tried before and failed…and I was one of them.

LADY BLANCHE: I bet Merlin had something to do with it.

PRECIVAL: No, Merlin was out of the country on a crusade in Paris. So he couldn't have helped in any way.

LADY SUSAN: A crusade? We're still having crusades? *(Disgusted.)* And in *Paris*, of all places!

SIR KAY: Apparently so. At least, that's the story he told Gladys.

LADY BLANCHE: Huh. Say, Lady Susan, how did you hear about this quest that Arthur and the others are going on?

LADY SUSAN: Oh, I was just getting up from my nap yesterday, and I was passing by the throne room. I heard them discussing it.

SIR PERCIVAL: Another nap?! You take naps three times a day! You are so lazy, Susan!

LADY SUSAN: Nah, I'm not lazy. It's pollen season, and it's just my allergies. They're acting up on me. And I see spots in front of my eyes.

SIR KAY: Oh, really? Have you seen a doctor?

LADY SUSAN: No, just the spots.

SIR KAY: Ah. Okay, changing the subject. *(To others.)* Looking for the Holy Grail could be like looking for a needle in a haystack! He'd have to be very lucky to find that ancient artifact. Grails don't grow on trees, you know.

SIR PERCIVAL: If he needs some luck, maybe we should go with him, but perhaps follow at a distance so that he doesn't know we're there. Kind of like the Secret Service. With any luck, we can help him in case of trouble. Sir Kay, it's been said that you have all the luck in the world!

SIR KAY: True, but unfortunately it's all *bad* luck!

LADY SUSAN: Aw, that's too bad.

LADY BLANCHE: *(To Sir Kay.)* Yeah, what a shame.

LADY SUSAN: Listen, guys, I've been out in the sun longer than I like. I've got such fair skin. I don't want to get a sunburn.

SIR PERCIVAL: Yes, you are very light-skinned, my fair lady.

SIR KAY: Yes, yes, let's all go back inside before we burn to a crisp. We'll leave early tomorrow morning, right after Arthur. All right, Percy?

SIR PERCIVAL: All right, all right. Klutz and Gladys Merlin won't be great protection. We'll go, too.

LADY BLANCHE: Good idea. I think I'm beginning to feel the sun, too.

LADY SUSAN: And I'm still a little tired. I think perhaps I'll take another nap…

(All exit. Blackout.)

SCENE 3

(AT RISE: On a street. Prince, Judy, and Gladys enter SL. Arthur is now wearing raggedy clothes. Pickle and Lucy enter SR. The two groups cross at CS. Pickle recognizes the Prince immediately and turns.)

PICKLE: *(To Prince, calls.)* Ohmigosh! Oh, wow! Hey, it's you!
PRINCE ARTHUR: *(Turns.)* Well, of course, it's me!
PICKLE: No, no. I mean, you're him! You're really him!
PRINCE ARTHUR: Of course, I'm him. Who else would I be?
PICKLE: I mean that you're Prince Arthur!

(Prince crosses to Pickle.)

PRINCE ARTHUR: Excuse me? Why would you say that I was Prince Arthur?

(Both groups go CS.)

PICKLE: Because that's who you are.
PRINCE ARTHUR: No, no, no. I'm not Prince Arthur.
PICKLE: Oh, yes, you are. I recognized you right away.
PRINCE ARTHUR: No, I'm not. *(Pause.)* Oh, okay, okay! You got me! But how did you know?
PICKLE: Well, first, I recognized Prime Minister Klutz—
JUDY: Judy.
PICKLE: Okay, Judy. And then I realized that Mrs. Merlin was with her, too—
GLADYS MERLIN: Gladys.
PICKLE: Okay, Gladys.
GLADYS MERLIN: *(Correcting.)* You can call me Gladdy.
PICKLE: Gladdy.
PRINCE ARTHUR: So you recognized the two of them, but my disguise worked?
PICKLE: What disguise was that?

PRINCE ARTHUR: *(Indicating clothes.)* These raggedy clothes. This disguise!
PICKLE: Ah, yes. Well, actually, I recognized them, too. Those clothes you're wearing belonged to my cousin, Louie. I was going to give them to Goodwill, but I remembered that Louie is a page at the castle and he doesn't make a lot of money, so I gave him those clothes to help with his expenses.
PRINCE ARTHUR: Oh, I see.
PICKLE: Yes, but it was mainly your entourage that gave you away…and also the clothes. *(Pickle takes out pack of gum. Offering.)* Gum?
PRINCE ARTHUR: *(Looks at gum.)* Yes, it is.
PICKLE: Yes, but what I mean is…would you like a piece of gum?
PRINCE ARTHUR: Oh. No, thanks. Trying to cut down on snacks.
PICKLE: Ah. *(Opens pack of gum, takes a piece of gum, and puts it in his mouth.)* I love chewing gum. It's my one bad habit.

(Lucy glares at him.)

LUCY: *(Under her breath.) One* bad habit?! Ha!
JUDY: Excuse me, but may I have a piece of gum, please?
PICKLE: Sure. Here you go, take the whole pack.

(Pickle hands the pack of gum to Judy. Judy fumbles around and drops it.)

JUDY: Ooops! Dropped it! Sorry! *(Picks up the pack of gum.)*
PICKLE: *(Realizes.)* Oh, right! Prime Minister Klutz. I definitely recognized you. I'm glad that we all met.
LUCY: *(Glares at Pickle.)* Uh, ahem?
PICKLE: *(Realizes.)* Oh, sorry, please forgive me. *(Introducing.)* This is my lovely wife, Lucy.
LUCY: *(In a thick New York accent.)* Hi! Pleased ta meetcha.
PRINCE/JUDY/GLADYS MERLIN: Likewise.

LUCY: *(To Pickle.)* So, like you were saying about your habit, Sylvester—

PRINCE/JUDY/GLADYS MERLIN: Sylvester?

PICKLE: Yep. That's my name.

PRINCE/JUDY/GLADYS MERLIN: Really?

PICKLE: Yeah. My mom was a big fan of all the Rocky and Rambo movies. You know, the guy who's in them, Sylvester Stallone. And my last name is Dill, so I got the nickname "Pickle."

PRINCE/JUDY/GLADYS MERLIN: Oh.

LUCY: But I gotta tell ya, to be perfectly honest with ya, Sylvester has more than *one* bad habit.

PRINCE/JUDY/GLADYS MERLIN: Oh?

PICKLE: Okay, okay, so I lied. It's something I do, and I can't help it.

PRINCE ARTHUR: What is it that you do for a living?

PICKLE: *(Sheepishly.)* Steal.

PRINCE ARTHUR: *(Relieved.)* Oh, well, that's very commendable. *(Judy and Gladys shake their heads no.)* Very commendable.

LUCY/PICKLE: *(Surprised.)* It is?

PRINCE ARTHUR: Oh, yes. Andrew Carnegie made a fortune in steel. Put Pittsburgh on the map.

JUDY: My Prince, I don't think that's what he's trying to tell you.

PRINCE ARTHUR: But he did say "steel."

GLADYS MERLIN: Yes, but it's spelled… *(Spells.)* …s-t-e-a-l, not s-t-e-e-l.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Oh, I see. *(To Pickle.)* So you're like Robin Hood. You take from the rich and give to the poor.

PICKLE: Not exactly. I steal from everyone, and give it all to my favorite charity.

PRINCE ARTHUR: And what charity would that be?

PICKLE: The SDCFM.

PRINCE ARTHUR: What's that?

PICKLE: The Sylvester Dill Charity For Myself. You see, Sire, I am a pickpocket. I hate to admit it, but I'm somewhat of a scoundrel.

PRINCE ARTHUR: *(To Lucy.)* And are you also a pickpocket?

LUCY: No, I just do the laundry. I wash and iron Pick's clothes, and he puts food on the table. So you might say that we're in the business of "iron and steal."

PRINCE ARTHUR: Did you two ever do anything else that was, let's just say, worthwhile?

PICKLE: Oh, yeah. I made a bundle when I became a prince.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Excuse me, y*ou* became a prince?

PICKLE: Yeah. I got on the Internet and got a certificate that said I was a prince.

PRINCE ARTHUR: From the Internet?

PICKLE: Yeah, It's kind of like becoming a minister the easy way. Basically, all you have to do is send in a couple of bucks, and they make you whatever you want to be.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Amazing.

PICKLE: So I sent email messages to people promising to send a lot of money if they would just send me a few bucks to help me out in my financial crisis.

PRINCE ARTHUR: But it was all fake? A scam?

PICKLE: Oh, sure. But you would be surprised how many people fell for it! Wow!

PRINCE ARTHUR: Unbelievable.

PICKLE: I know! But folks are very gullible. It's called "alternative facts." And I simply reaped the profits.

JUDY: You know, I was once thinking of doing something along those lines myself on the Internet.

GLADYS MERLIN: Really?

JUDY: Yeah, I wanted to become a lawyer, but it would have taken too many years. Besides, so many lawyers have a bad rap.

PRINCE ARTHUR: But you could have become a judge, Judy.

JUDY: Yeah, but before that, I would have had to listen to too many bad lawyer jokes.

GLADYS MERLIN: Bad lawyer jokes?
JUDY: Yep. For instance, what do you call 200 lawyers drowning in the ocean?
GLADYS MERLIN: I have no idea.
JUDY: A good start.
GLADYS MERLIN: That's terrible!
PRINCE ARTHUR: It's really not that bad.
JUDY: I know, but it gets worse.
GLADYS MERLIN: It does?
JUDY: Indeed, it does. For example, what's the difference between a lawyer and a jellyfish?
PRINCE ARTHUR: I don't know. What's the difference?
JUDY: One is a disgusting, spineless blob. The other is a form of sea life. *To audience.)* Hey, if there are any lawyers out there—and you know who you are—just kidding!
PRINCE ARTHUR: Oooh, that's really bad!
JUDY: I know. And there're thousands more. And it's the 99 percent of lawyers who give the other one percent a bad name. Shall I go on?
PRINCE ARTHUR: No, no. Not necessary. I think we've got the idea.
JUDY: And I think I made the right choice. I'm very happy here being the prime minister. It's a family tradition, you know, even though my dream was to be a lawyer.
PRINCE ARTHUR: And, most importantly, you don't get in my way.
GLADYS MERLIN: I guess I must be one of the lucky ones. I got my dream job.
LUCY: Really? What is your dream job?
GLADYS MERLIN: Well, I always loved magic, see. I used to go to every magic show in the area. I wanted to work in magic. Then I saw Merlin doing an act in Vegas, and I got the job as his assistant. *That* was my dream job…a magician's assistant. We hit it off right away, and his marriage proposal to me was really something, believe me!
LUCY: How so?

GLADYS MERLIN: Well, one part of his act was with a crossbow, very dangerous. I would stand in front of a big target, and he would shoot balloons I held in my mouth. One night, I had just put a balloon in my mouth, and I was leaning over the target. He loaded up the crossbow, took aim, and said, "Gladys, will you marry me?" I was in a very vulnerable position, so how could I possibly say no? And we've been married now for almost 15 years!

PICKLE: That's great! You got your dream job and a husband! So, where are you three off to?

PRINCE ARTHUR: We are on a quest—

JUDY: *(To Pickle.)* For the Holy Grail.

GLADYS MERLIN: *(To Pickle.)* We're off to find the Grail!

PICKLE: *(Defensive.)* Hey, I didn't take it! I swear!

PRINCE ARTHUR: No, no, no! It's okay. It wasn't stolen. It's an ancient artifact that's been lost for years, so we are on a quest to find the it.

PICKLE: So, you're telling me that you're going on a quest to find *the* Holy Grail?

PRINCE ARTHUR: Yes, that's what I said.

PICKLE: Wow! But please answer one question for me.

PRINCE ARTHUR: Sure.

PICKLE: What's a "grail"?

PRINCE ARTHUR: A "grail" is a goblet. *(Pickle looks confused.)* A flagon. *(Pickle looks confused.)* A chalice.

PICKLE: *(Confused.)* You still got me.

PRINCE ARTHUR: *(Exasperated.)* It's a big cup!

PICKLE: Ah, now I got it!

PRINCE ARTHUR: Good.

PICKLE: So why is it holy? Is it made of Swiss cheese?

PRINCE ARTHUR: No, it is not made of Swiss cheese!

PICKLE: Ah! Okay, now I understand. You know, you might try Goodwill. They get all kinds of stuff donated to them. Who knows what you might find there.

PRINCE ARTHUR: I kinda doubt that anyone would be foolish enough to donate the Holy Grail to Goodwill. It's a priceless antiquity.
LUCY: Maybe they'd donate it to the Jone-sonian.
PRINCE ARTHUR: I think you mean the Smithsonian.
LUCY: Smith-sonian, Jone-sonian, Brown-sonian. Smith, Jones, Brown…what's the difference?! A rose by any other name—
PICKLE: So that means it isn't worth anything?
PRINCE ARTHUR: No, no, no. I just said it's priceless.
PICKLE: So you can't put a price on it?
PRINCE ARTHUR: Right.
PICKLE: So if you can't put a price on it, that means it isn't worth anything, right?
GLADYS MERLIN: Not at all, young sir. It means that it is *very* valuable. It's like an oxymoron.
PICKLE: "Oxymoron"? What's that?!
GLADYS MERLIN: It's when one term contradicts another.
PICKLE: *(Confused.)* Oh.
GLADYS MERLIN: Yeah. Like "military intelligence" and "jumbo shrimp." Get it?
PICKLE: *(Confused.)* Got it.
GLADYS MERLIN: Good.
LUCY: *(To Prince.)* And what, pray tell, is a "quest"?
PRINCE ARTHUR: I thought you'd never ask! A quest is a journey in search of…something.
PICKLE: Hey, maybe Lucy and I can help you guys look for it.
PRINCE ARTHUR: That would be very helpful, thank you. Two more pairs of eyes would be welcome.
LUCY: So, which way are we going?
PRINCE ARTHUR: We'll go this way. *(Points.)* We'll just follow the yellow brick road!
OTHERS: Let's go!

[END OF FREEVIEW]