



The Prince's Quest

by Bradford and Webster

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PantoScripts Sample

The Prince's Quest - Cast List

DAME BATTERSPOON	Traditional pantomime dame. Good-hearted and larger-than-life.
PRINCE ANDREAS	Principal Boy. Traditionally played, usually by a female. Brave young hero. Eventually marries Rosa.
PRINCE DIMITRI	A second Prince. This one is rich, pompous and arrogant. Eventually marries Princess Francesca.
PRINCESS FRANCESCA	Principal Girl. A strong-willed, young, attractive Princess.
ROSA	A second Principal Girl. Dame Batterspoon's kind and pretty daughter. Servant and best friend to Princess Francesca.
LORD ELBIRRET	Traditional panto "baddie". Evil and nasty. Intent on achieving world domination. That's terrible!
BADD WURSE	The comedy duo. The two dim-witted henchmen to the evil Lord Elbirret.
KING HORATIO	Princess Francesca's father. A little hen-pecked.
QUEEN HORTENSE	Princess Francesca's mother. A bit bossy.
POOR MAN	A scruffy, tired old man, who is eventually revealed to be Prince Andreas' father, the King of Rispalia.
FAIRY ETHEL ARRIVA	Pantomime fairy but a bit 'dippy' always arrives late, and gets her spells wrong. Good audience rapport. ("Arriva" is a local bus company. Either replace it with your local company, or just call her Ethel).
THE SULTAN	One scene only. An 'Elvis-style' character – good comedian
GRANNY HILL MARY-SUE HILL MARY-KATE HILL	A "Hill Billy" family. All short-sighted. Accent is important. Small roles, but good fun. One scene only, but also do the "Song Sheet".
SINGE	A dragon. A non-speaking role, but needs to be able to portray character and actions from beneath the costume.
VILLAGERS 1 & 2	Chorus Villagers. Small, speaking roles.
FOOTMAN	Small speaking role.

Chorus roles:

Waiters & Waitresses, Courtiers, Harem Girls, Hill Billies, Prisoners, Ghosts, Goblins and Villagers.

Many of the roles can be doubled or played by members of the chorus.

Scenes and Staging

Don't be daunted by the large number of scene changes! The staging can, in fact, be fairly simple.

The only full-stage scenes are "The Village", "The Ballroom" (which can double as "Francesca's Bedroom"), and possibly "The Laundry".

"The Kitchen", "Outside Elbirret's Castle", "The West" and "The East" would be ideal as half stage scenes, if you can accommodate that.

Many of the scenes can be played simply "front of tabs", if required.

Additional Notes appear at the end of the script.

ACT I

- | | |
|---|---|
| Scene 1 The Village Of Verdentia | Full stage scene. "Old Village" backcloth. |
| Scene 2 The Kitchen of the Royal Palace | Half-stage, if possible. A table is centre. |
| Scene 3 The Village Of Verdentia | Full stage scene. As Scene 1. |
| Scene 4 On the Road to Elbirret's Castle | Front of tabs or front cloth scene. |
| Scene 5 The Kitchen of the Royal Palace | Half-stage, if possible. As Scene 2. |
| Scene 6 A Corridor in the Royal Palace | Front of tabs or front cloth scene. |
| Scene 7 The Palace Ballroom | Full-stage scene. "Ballroom" cloth, if it can be accommodated. Re-use for Scene 9, if possible. |
| Scene 8 The Palace Dungeons | Front of tabs or front cloth scene. |
| Scene 9 Princess Francesca's Bedroom | A full stage scene. It is possible to use the setting / cloth as used for Scene 7, if it is suitable. A bed is set centre, add a large bed-canopy can Be added to change the 'look' of this scene, if you are using the same setting as Scene 7. A wardrobe is set upstage left or right. |

ACT II

- | | |
|--|---|
| Scene 10 On the Road | Front of tabs or front cloth scene. |
| Scene 11 The West ~ The Home of the Hill Family | A full stage, or half-stage scene. A white picket fence and a rocking chair set upstage right. |
| Scene 12 The East ~ A Sultan's Palace | A full stage, or half-stage scene, depending upon what is used for "The West". Two folding book flats, with vivid colours, satins and beads will set the scene. A large satin canopy, held by two |

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“slaves”, and a number of large satin floor cushions will provide a place for the King to sit.

Scene 13 A Dungeon in Elbirret’s Castle	Front of tabs or front cloth scene.
Scene 14 Outside Elbirret’s Castle	A half-stage scene, if possible. A “rock” is set upstage on one side of the stage, and a doorway, is set upstage on the other side.
Scene 15 A Corridor in Elbirret’s Castle	Front of tabs or front cloth scene.
Scene 16 The Castle Laundry	A full stage or half-stage scene.
Scene 17 The Road back to Verdentia	Front of tabs or front cloth scene.
Scene 18 The Village of Verdentia	Full stage scene. As Scene 1.
Song Sheet	Front of tabs
Finale Wedding Walk-Down and Bows	Full stage. Use “Village”, as Scene 1. Or if you can accommodate it, a sparkle cloth or shimmer curtain will enhance your finale.

ACT I

Scene 1 The Village of Verdentia

SONG: "It's Not How You Start, It's How You Finish" or a similar upbeat opening number.

After the song, the villagers start to exit the stage.

A poor man, dressed in rags enters. One or two of the villagers notice him, but just shrug and exit the stage.

The poor man, is carrying a bag, he wanders across the stage. He is clearly very tired.

He stops centre stage. He takes out a water bottle and, turning towards the audience, takes a swig. He sighs and carries on, to exit via opposite wings.

Andreas enters.

ANDREAS

Whoa! Well, hello, where did you lot come from? I said HELLO! ...

AUDIENCE

Hello!

ANDREAS

That's better. But isn't it always the way? You don't see a soul for three days and then 143 come along at once. It's like those things, what are they called, they're big and red and shiny, though they can be green, or brown or even yellow sorry? What did you say? Buses? No, never heard of them. This is the 14th century you know. I've got it, I was thinking about dragons, huge big red shiny ones. You can go for ages without seeing any at all and then, all of a sudden, you've got more than you can handle, they're everywhere, landing on the church, flying into the steeple, running around and scaring all the people. But anyway, since I've bumped into you, I was wondering if you could help me. I'm searching for my father. You haven't seen anyone coming along this road, have you? You have? Great. Was he about this tall? Yes? elegant, well dressed with a long red cloak? No? Oh dear. It probably wasn't him then. Thanks very much, anyway. Maybe I'll see you later. I must keep looking.

Andreas exits.

Scene 2 The Kitchen of the Royal Palace

A table is set upstage centre, on it is a mixing bowl and spoon, and various ingredients. Behind the table, hidden from the view of the audience (use a full-length table cloth), is a bucket containing confetti or streamers (it is exactly the same as the bucket that Rosa will use to collect the water).

Rosa is pottering around at back.

Dame enters

DAME

(to herself) Where can that girl have got to?

Dame turns to front of stage and sees audience.

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DAME

Oooooooo, would you look at that? What a lovely audience. Welcome to the Royal Palace kitchen! Hello boys and girls!

AUDIENCE

Hello.

DAME

Aaaaaah, isn't that sweet, you're a bit shy. But then, of course, we haven't been introduced, have we? Me first, then. My name is Dame Batterspoon and I am the palace cook. Now it's your turn. Oh dear, I think there's too many of you to remember all your names, so I'll just call you boys and girls. And do you know what all my friends call me? They call me Spoony. And before you start, that's not Loony or Moony, it's Spoony. Anyway, whenever I see you, I'll shout "Hello boys and girls", and you can shout "Hello Spoony". Shall we have a go? Hello boys and girls!

AUDIENCE

Hello Spoony!

DAME

Oh, I'm sure you can do better than that. Hello boys and girls!

AUDIENCE

Hello Spoony!

DAME

Oooooo, yes. It makes me feel all warm inside. Now then, while I've got your attention, you haven't seen my daughter, Rosa, anywhere have you? She's lady in waiting to the Princess Francesca. She's about this tall. Wearing a red dress. You have? What? Behind me? Of course, this is a pantomime after all.

Rosa comes up closer and Dame turns to see her.

DAME

Oh Rosa, there you are. Look lively dear, we have to prepare the food for the Royal Banquet? *(to audience)* Well, they call it a royal banquet but it's only 23 courses.

ROSA

I think 23 courses is more than enough for any banquet. Hadn't you better start moving some of the dishes through to the dining room?

DAME

You're right. If we don't start now, we'll never be finished in time. Waiters!

Waiters & waitresses enter in a line.

SONG: "Food, Glorious Food" (Waiters & Waitresses)

Waiters exit with dishes.

DAME

Ooooo, I've just remembered, I haven't made the pastry for the vol au vents. Quick Rosa dear, bring me some water better make it a bucketful, I'm catering for large numbers.

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ROSA
Yes mother.

*Rosa exits. Dame is stirring in a large bowl, adding salt etc.
Rosa returns with a bucket.*

DAME
Good girl now, you pour, I'll stir.

Rosa pours water into the bowl - the water must be visible to the audience. Dame continues to stir (very carefully).

DAME
OK, that's enough, thank you.

Rosa puts the bucket down behind the table.

DAME
Don't put it there! I'll end up standing in it and getting soaked. Tell you what, the grass is a bit dry, throw it out of the window onto the garden.

*Dame gestures towards the audience.
Rosa picks up duplicate bucket, containing confetti, from behind the table.*

ROSA
Are you sure you won't need any more water?

DAME
No, this pastry's just right, nothing worse than sticky pastry

Rosa moves forwards.

ROSA
And you're sure you don't need any water for anything else? I'm not fetching any more.

DAME
I definitely don't need any more! Throw it away.

Rosa pulls back bucket, ready to throw "water"

ROSA
Throwing it away!

Rosa throws confetti "water" at audience.

Blackout

Scene 3 The Village of Verdentia

Two goons, Badd and Wurse, enter together.

BADD

Would you look at this, isn't it lovely, very picture-rescue.

WURSE

Yeah, the boss is going to be really pleased we found this place. Hey, Badd, look over there, they've got trees and fields and everything.

BADD

Wow! Hey, Wurse, see this, they've got crystal clear streams and frolicking bunny rabbits and butterflies and ...

WURSE

And we'll soon put a stop to that, right.

BADD

Yeah, we don't want any of that lovely pretty stuff, all that flowers and fairies rubbish. We like mud and slime and trolls and goblins.

WURSE

We just need to redecorate a bit, you know, change the colour scheme. Get rid of these greens and blues and pinks and yellows. Perhaps a bit of black over here, some more black over here and maybe some black over here. What do you think, Badd, would that do it?

BADD

Couldn't be better, Wurse.

WURSE

You know, Badd, I feel so good about it, I can feel a song coming on.

BADD

I know what you mean.

Rhythmical music - perhaps a snippet of Michael Jackson's "I'm Bad" starts as Badd and Wurse begin to circle each other and leer at the audience.

They fail to notice a dark, menacing figure coming up behind them. It is Lord Elbirret, the evil sorcerer.

ELBIRRET

(shouts) What on earth do you think you are doing?

Badd and Wurse jump, the accompaniment screeches to a halt.

BADD

Oh, blimey, it's you boss. I nearly jumped out of my skin.

ELBIRRET

Oh, I scared you did I?

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WURSE

Not half, my heart's going 19 to the dozen.

ELBIRRET

You haven't got a heart, Wurse, you're an evil henchman and don't you forget it.

WURSE

Oh, yeah, sorry boss.

ELBIRRET

And stop calling me boss. I demand some respect from my minions.

BADD

We do beg your pardon, my Lord Elbirret. But look what we have found for you, my lord. Isn't it real pretty?

ELBIRRET

Oh, yes. Oh yes! I do like the look of this one. It seems perfect.

WURSE

We aim to please, my lord.

ELBIRRET

(soliloquising) I've been looking for a kingdom to steal, and this one looks a good one ... good for turning bad.

BADD

(Thinks Elbirret is speaking to him) Yes, boss? I mean, my lord?

ELBIRRET

Bad, as in rotten! Where was I? Oh, yes. We have travelled for many years, hounded at every turn by goodness and righteousness, but now I feel we have found a place at last we can call home, a place of our own to devastate and desecrate, to subjugate and suffocate, where the people will pay homage to me and cower when they hear the name of Lord Elbirret!

WURSE

That's terrible.

ELBIRRET

Isn't it though? Right, let's find ourselves some accommodation. There's bound to be an empty scary old castle on a hill top around here somewhere.

Elbirret makes to exit.

BADD

Er, boss.

ELBIRRET

What?

WURSE

He means, excuse me, my lord.

ELBIRRET

Yes, what is it?

BADD

We thought you might like to do a number

ELBIRRET

A number?

WURSE

You know, a song.

BADD

To let everyone know how truly rotten and evil you are.

ELBIRRET

No, I'm not sure I've got time for that. I've got a kingdom to ruin, you know.

WURSE

Yes, we know, my lord, but you've got such a great voice.

ELBIRRET

Really? Do you think so? Oh, all right then. Hit it.

SONG: "Good and Bad" (an original song by Toby Bradford) or similar "Baddies' song"

Demon cheerleaders can come on and join in, if you are using dancers.

BADD

Oooh, my lord, that was really coool!

ELBIRRET

(smugly) Yes, it was rather, wasn't it? but enough of this! We've got work to do!

Elbirret. Badd & Wurse exit

Andreas enters. He stops centre stage and takes out his bottle and notices the audience.

ANDREAS

Oh, hello! Fancy meeting you again. Am I just going around in circles? Oh, but it's nice here isn't it, a beautiful part of the world. Reminds me of home.

It's just a shame that I can't stay for a while, but I've really got to carry on searching for my father. I've been on the road for such a long time, but I'm not going to give up now - look, it's a beautiful day, the sun is shining, the sky is blue - I've got a feeling that today might just be my lucky day

POSSIBLE SONG: "Oh What a Beautiful Morning"

Villagers begin to appear and go about their everyday tasks.

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Andreas walks to front corner of the stage as he finishes song and gazes into the distance.

Badd and Wurse enter carrying swag bags and leap about scattering the villagers, stealing their purses and grabbing things and stuffing them into their bags.

Badd and Wurse dance about taunting the villagers, who are cowering in fear. Badd and Wurse exit.

Villagers recover their composure as Andreas turns and walks back to centre stage. Andreas has seen nothing of the pillaging that has just taken place.

The villagers notice him and start talking among themselves. Andreas looks at them and smiles. Two villagers, come forward.

ANDREAS

Good day to you, I wonder ...

VILLAGER 1

Who are you? What do you want?

ANDREAS

I'm looking for ...

VILLAGER 2

Maybe he's one of them.

ALL VILLAGERS

Yes, etc ...

ANDREAS

I'm sorry, I don't know what you mean. I'm just ...

Villagers start to crowd around Andreas.

VILLAGER 1

I don't think we should take any chances. Let's run him out of here, make sure he never comes back.

The other villagers grab Andreas just as Rosa enters.

ROSA

What's all this? What's going on?

VILLAGER 1

We've got one of them, my lady.

ROSA

One of them?

VILLAGER 2

One of those evil henchmen. He was going to rob us.

ANDREAS

Look, all I was trying to do was ...

VILLAGER 1

Shut up, you.

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ROSA

He doesn't look much like an evil henchman to me.

The villagers inspect Andreas more closely.

VILLAGER 2

Yes, well, he's a stranger, anyway.

VILLAGER 1

I've certainly never seen him before.

ROSA

A stranger. I don't think that's a very good reason for being mean to him. Let him go.

VILLAGERS

Yes, my lady.

ANDREAS

Thank you.

Fairy Ethel Arriva bursts onto the stage.

FAIRY

Here am I, come to save the day.

She stands heroically.

FAIRY

I saw visions of evil henchmen in my goldfish bowl.

She looks around. The villagers are shaking their heads.

FAIRY

I'm not too late, am I?

ALL

Yes!

Fairy sees Andreas

FAIRY

Ooooh, who's this? Not an evil henchman, is it? Maybe I could

She waggles her wand towards Andreas.

ALL

No!

FAIRY

Oh. Oh dear.

Rosa glowers at Fairy and turns to Andreas.

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ROSA

Right then, stranger, are you going to tell us who you are?

ANDREAS

I've been trying to.

He looks round at the villagers, who shrug and look sheepish.

ANDREAS

My name is Andreas, I'm searching for my father, I've been on the road for a long time.

ROSA

Yes, I can see that. You look like you could do with a bath and a good hot meal. Tell you what, you come back to the palace with me and we'll see what we can do for you.

ANDREAS

The palace? Are you a princess?

ROSA

Hah! No, but I do work for a princess. I'm her lady in waiting. My name is Rosa.

FAIRY

Ahem.

ROSA

.... and this is the good fairy Fairy Arriva.

ANDREAS

(to Rosa) Fairy ARRIVA? Like the bus company? Always late, is she?

ROSA

(to Andreas) 'Fraid so.

FAIRY

But you can call me Ethel.

ROSA

She is ... er ... the guardian of our lands.

ANDREAS

Really?

ROSA

(aside to Andreas) Good good fairies are pretty hard to come by these days.

FAIRY

Yes, I am the guardian of this fair land and I will battle against evil wherever I find it.

Fairy comes forward. As she does, everyone else exits shaking their heads.

FAIRY

Unfortunately, I just don't seem to be able to find it. It keeps running away, what am I supposed to do? I get here as fast as I can You know ...

She turns to talk to villagers. The stage is empty.

FAIRY

Oh, why does everybody keep running away? But I won't give up. I'll show them. I'll be the best good fairy anyone has ever seen.

Blackout.

Scene 4 On the Road to Elbirret's Castle

Badd and Wurse enter carrying their sacks.

BADD

Right then, shall we inspect our haul? What have you got?

WURSE

Let's have a look. A couple of purses, half empty, an onion, a chicken and some horse brasses.

BADD

Oh dear, mine's just as bad. Oooer, the boss is not going to be very pleased with us.

WURSE

Yeah, but I thought he said it wasn't so important how much we got as long as we scared the villagers.

BADD

Yes, true, he did say that. But did he really mean it?

WURSE

Oh, now you've got me worried.

BADD

Maybe we should pop into the Westfield Centre (*replace with local shopping centre*) on the way home and pick up a few things - make it look a bit more impressive.

They start to head off. Lord Elbirret appears.

ELBIRRET

And where do you think you're going? Sneaking off when there are dirty deeds to be done?

WURSE

No, we were just off to the W...

Badd nudges Wurse and butts in.

BADD

We were just coming to tell you that we scared the villagers good and proper, like you said, you know, in your plan.

ELBIRRET

Well, that's good, my little Badd. But there's been a little change of plan.

WURSE

Change of plan, my lord?

ELBIRRET

Isn't that what I said?

WURSE

Yes, my lord. Sorry my lord.

ELBIRRET

King Horatio is refusing to roll over meekly, so I've decided to strike at his soft heart. I want you to kidnap the fair Princess Francesca and bring her back to my castle. Once I have my hands on his darling daughter, I feel the king will do anything I ask.

WURSE

Great plan, your nastiness.

ELBIRRET

Yes, it is rather, isn't it. You'll recognise the princess quite easily – she'll be the pretty one with the expensive hair and the big frock. She'll be in love with some fatuous oaf with shiny buckles on his shoes. Oh, and she'll probably be singing.

BADD & WURSE

Singing?

ELBIRRET

Oh, yes. Princesses are always singing. Haven't you ever watched a Disney film?

BADD

Um, I, er, no. Have you, boss?

ELBIRRET

Oh, er, er no, of course not, don't be ridiculous. Well, don't just stand there, get on with it!

Bad and Wurse exit in hurry.

Elbirret exits opposite side singing "A Whole New World" to himself.

Poor man enters, walks wearily across the stage, then exits.

Scene 5 The Kitchen of the Royal Palace

Rosa enters with Andreas.

ROSA

You make yourself comfortable, Andreas, I'll go and find my mother.

Andreas sits at a table.

ANDREAS

Your mother?

ROSA

Yes, my mother, Dame Batterspoon, she's the palace cook. She'll fix you something to eat. I wouldn't know where to start looking in this kitchen. She's so disorganised.

ANDREAS

Rosa, there's something I think I should tell you.

ROSA

What? Don't tell me, you're really a girl.

ANDREAS

No, of course not, don't be ridiculous. *(stands in manly heroic fashion)* I'm a prince.

Rosa laughs.

ROSA

A prince?

ANDREAS

Really. I am. I know I don't look much but I've been travelling for a long time, searching for my father, the king. I'm the Crown Prince of Rispalia.

Rosa is taken aback.

ROSA

Well, I don't know what to say ... your highness. *(to herself)* Just when I was beginning to like you, as well.

Dame Batterspoon enters in a fluster.

DAME

Oh Rosa, my dear Rosa, Have you been into the village again? You shouldn't go out on your own, it's not safe with those evil henchmen around. You don't know who you'll bump into.

ROSA

It's all right mother, I'm fine. In fact, I bumped into ...

Dame notices Andreas.

DAME

Oh dear, Rosa, how many times have I told you about bringing homeless people into the kitchen. We're not a charity, you know. *(to Andreas)* I'll give you farthing if you go away ... oh, all right, make it a ha'penny, if you've got one of those Big Shoes magazines. I have terrible trouble finding high heels that fit.

ROSA

Mother! This is Andreas, he's ...

DAME

Oh, it's actually got a name, has it?

ROSA

Mother!! Andreas is

DAME

Oh dear, I had always hoped that you'd find yourself a nice rich prince, maybe one of Princess Francesca's cast offs. But what do my wishes count for? All you ever bring home is wastrels and drifters.

ROSA

Mother!!!

DAME

What??!!

ROSA

Mother, I give you the Crown Prince of Rispalia.

DAME

Oh, would you, dear? That'd be lovely.

Andreas bows. Rosa is getting exasperated.

ROSA

Mother!

DAME

He's coming in now, is he?

Dame looks into the wings. Andreas is not exactly sure what to do next.

ROSA

Mother! It's Andreas!

DAME

Yes I know dear, we've already been introduced. He's the smelly one. Now, where's this lovely Rispalia fellow?

ROSA

Mother! Andreas is the Prince.

It takes a moment for the message to get through, then Dame is hit by moment of revelation.

DAME
Aaahh!

She turns to Andreas who has come round from behind table. Dame looks again at his shabby clothes.

DAME
Ooohh! You don't look much like a Prince.

Andreas steps forward.

ANDREAS
Madam, I apologise for my attire but I have been travelling for a long time, searching for my father, the King of Rispalia.

Dame
Oh, my little Rosa's found her very own Prince.

ROSA
Mother!

DAME
I've never been so happy.

Princess Francesca enters scowling.

FRANCESCA
I see at least someone is happy.

DAME
Oh, good afternoon, your highness, welcome to my humble kitchen.

ROSA
Is anything the matter Francesca?

FRANCESCA
It's absolute mayhem up there. My father is making such a fuss. It's just another prince, admittedly one of the richest, most handsome princes in the old world but, I mean, princes, sometimes you can have your fill of them.

DAME
Oh, I'd completely forgotten, Prince Dimitri is arriving today, to lay suit to our fair princess. I'll put a few more eggs on. And I must do something with my hair.

Francesca notices Andreas.

FRANCESCA
Well, hello there, who's your dishevelled but rather handsome friend, Rosa?

Andreas bows.

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ANDREAS

Your highness, I am ...

Dame steps in front to interrupt. She wants Andreas for Rosa and doesn't want Francesca getting her hands on him.

DAME

Oh, it's just Andreas, Rosa met him in the village.

ROSA

Mother! Francesca, this is Andreas, the Crown Prince of Rispalia.

DAME

Hands off! We saw him first!

FRANCESCA

Your highness.

Francesca looks him over.

FRANCESCA

You're not exactly dressed like a prince

ANDREAS

Your highness, I apologise for my attire but I ...

DAME

Yes, yes, we've heard it all before, skip to the next bit.

Footman enters and coughs.

FOOTMAN

Your Highness, your Royal father, His Majesty King Horatio, requests your presence in the ballroom.

FRANCESCA

(sighs) Yes, yes. I'll be up in a minute. Tell him to keep his wig on.

FOOTMAN

As you wish, your Highness.

Footman exits.

FRANCESCA

You know, I've got a good mind to tell my father that I'm not going to meet his prince. What do I know about him? Obviously that he's rich and handsome.

DAME

Surely that's enough. Who cares what his personality's like once you've got your hands on his wallet.

FRANCESCA

Oh Spooky, you're so old fashioned.

ROSA

Yes mother, you're so 13th century. Francesca wants to marry for love, not just a huge wallet.

FRANCESCA

What about what I want? Why does it always have to be what my father wants? Ooooh!

Francesca starts to storm off then stops and turns.

FRANCESCA

Well, are you coming? I'm not going to meet this Prince Dimitri all on my own.

Francesca exits.

Rosa, Andreas and Dame look at each other. Rosa and Andreas exit.

Scene 6 A Corridor in the Palace

Francesca, Rosa and Andreas enter on one side, King Horatio and Queen Hortense on the other.

KING

Francesca! There you are. What are you all doing hiding down here? Dimitri will be here at any moment!

FRANCESCA

Oh, daddy, don't be such a fusspot!

KING

Well!

QUEEN

Francesca! Your father is not a fusspot!

Francesca realises she has overstepped the mark.

FRANCESCA

Sorry, daddy.

QUEEN

No, he's a worrier, which is a completely different thing entirely.

KING

Thank you dear, I think. Now, can we get up to the ballroom, please?

They all set off.

QUEEN

Stop!

All stop. King turns to Queen.

KING

What is it, now, dear?

Queen indicates Andreas. She is not impressed.

QUEEN

What on earth is that? And why is it following us?

FRANCESCA

Oh, I'm sorry, mummy, this is Andreas, the Crown Prince of Rispalia.

King is interested.

KING

Prince, eh?

Queen looks Andreas up and down.

QUEEN

He doesn't look much like a Prince.

ANDREAS

Your majesty, I apologise ...

DAME

Travelling ...

ROSA

Searching ...

FRANCESCA

Father ...

ANDREAS

Etcetera etcetera.

KING

You don't happen to have your bank statements on you, do you?

FRANCESCA

Daddy!

KING

Got this evil sorcerer down the road burning crops and blowing up houses, you see. Costing me a fortune. To tell you the truth, I'm rather relying on Francesca marrying this Dimitri fellow. He's absolutely rolling in it.

FRANCESCA

Daddy!!!

ANDREAS

(excited) An evil sorcerer?

KING

(unsure) Yes.

ANDREAS

Then fate must have led me here. An evil sorcerer, the Lord Elbirret, tried to take over Rispalia, he held the land to ransom and terrified the people. My father refused to give in to him and, after a terrible struggle, won back control of his kingdom.

ALL

Hurrah!

ANDREAS

But the sorcerer escaped and my father was determined he would not rest until he had rid the world of the fiend once and for all. So he set off to track him down. And now I'm searching too.

KING

Then you must join us in our struggle. But first, you must help us welcome Prince Dimitri, you know, the one with all the cash.

FRANCESCA

Daddy!!!

QUEEN

Yes, dear, that was a little indiscreet. And I'm afraid Andreas can't possibly come looking like that. I'd never be able to live it down. I can't imagine what the Queens' Institute would say.

KING

Oh, Hortense, we're in a bit of a hurry. And who really cares what those old dears of the Queens' Institute think?

QUEEN

Well I do, for one. A little bit of gossip goes a long way. Look what happened to Queen Guinevere over that young fellow with the lance Rosa, my dear.

ROSA

Yes, your majesty.

QUEEN

Take Prince Andreas and find him something a little more suitable to wear.

KING

Fine. Rosa, Andreas, we'll meet you in the ballroom.

Rosa and Andreas exit the way they entered.

KING

Now, where were we? Oh yes, we were hurrying to meet Prince Dimitri.

Queen stands her ground.

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QUEEN

Sometimes I wonder about you, Horatio.

KING

Really, my dear.

QUEEN

All this rushing about. It can't be good for you, and what is it all for?

KING

Oh, Hortense, do you really need to ask after all these years? Everything I do, I do it for you.

A chord is played. King takes a breath and opens his mouth.

QUEEN

Oh no, don't think you're singing that, Horatio.

KING

I was just trying to be romantic, my dear.

QUEEN

Romantic? Surely the King doesn't have time for romance in his hectic Royal schedule?

.....although, when we first met, you were very romantic, Horatio

KING

Yes, I was rather, wasn't I? I remember the first time we met, it was at a ball at your father's palace and, of course, I was looking particularly dashing

QUEEN

..... of course! Then you asked me to dance.

KING

Yes, I asked you to dance

SONG: "Shall We Dance?" (from The King & I)

As the King and Queen dance, the curtains open onto scene 7....

Scene 7 - The Palace Ballroom

.... The music continues from Scene 6. The King and Queen continue to dance. The Palace ballroom is full of courtiers. They all dance until the music ends.

KING

He's not here yet is he?

Fanfare.

FOOTMAN

(announces) The Prince Dimitri

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