



Puss in Boots

by Leonard Caddy

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SCENE ONETHE VILLAGE GREEN

A full-stage set; ground-row of hills, cottage wings etc. There is a Maypole C. and a signpost U.C. saying 'To the Castle' and pointing in both directions.

After the OVERTURE the accompaniment plays the introduction to MUSIC NO 1. The curtains open and the music stops dead. The CHORUS is in a tableau of a traditional Maypole Dance: there is a 'trill' as the picture is held.

FAIRY AURORA hurries on R.

FAIRY A. What's amiss? Why don't you move?
What causes this delay?

OGRE HARDCAST enters L.

FAIRY A. Oh, it's you. I might have guessed.
Your evil here holds sway.

OGRE H. They've been too happy here too long,
But that is altered now.
Yes, I have slept for many years,
But now I am on the prowl.
There's evil lurking over them,
Their fun has had its day.

FAIRY A. There's kindness too, protecting them,
And happy they shall stay.

OGRE H. We shall see.

FAIRY A. Indeed we shall.

OGRE H. My powers you little know.

FAIRY A. I shall prove a match for you,
Be off.

OGRE HARDCAST turns.

FAIRY A. We'll start the show.

OGRE HARDCAST exits L. FAIRY AURORA exits R.

MUSIC NO 1. CHORUS. Song and Maypole Dance.

TOWN CRIER Oyez! Oyez!

GIRL Get on with it.

TOWN CRIER I've got to do it properly. Oyez! Oyez! We have come to that
part of the proceedings where we announce the Queen of the May.
Oyez! Oyez!

ALL Oh no.

TOWN CRIER The one who has been picked as the prettiest girl in the whole
village. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Queen of the May!

Drum roll, fanfare which turns into comedy march as
HERMIONE enters U.L. She has a bag with some comedy
props. The cheers change into derisive laughter
then back to cheers as she circles the stage
enthusiastically queening it up.

HERMIONE Oh what a welcome. (To one Chorus Girl.) What are you
laughing at?

GIRL We thought you were the Queen of the May.

GIRL The prettiest girl in the whole village. (Laughs.)

HERMIONE Queen of the May? I'm not even Queen of September. Though I had my moments, I remember, In early January. Ooo, I must have a little sit down.

TOWN CRIER Well you can't sit down here, we are going to crown the Queen of the May. Oyez!

HERMIONE (Crossing D.L.) Can I sit down here?

TOWN CRIER Eh? Oh yes. Oyez!

HERMIONE I won't be in the way?

TOWN CRIER Oyez. I mean, oh no. Oh yes, Oyez!! (He is beginning to get cross)

HERMIONE 'Cause I don't want to cause any trouble. You're sure?

TOWN CRIER Oh yes. Oyez! I mean oh no. Oyez - oh heck!! You stupid woman!!!

HERMIONE Well get on with it. I thought you were going to crown the Queen of the May.

TOWN CRIER I'll crown you in a minute!!

HERMIONE Temper - temper. (Aside) And he seemed such a nice man.

TOWN CRIER looks as if he is about to explode. He threatens Hermione with his bell.

HERMIONE (Urgently) Don't do that!

TOWN CRIER (Genuinely) Why not?

HERMIONE You might drop a clanger.

He pursues her round the stage. MAISY enters R. and comes C. she looks cross. The chase stops as they come up to her.

MAISY Am I, or am I not, the May Queen?

TOWN CRIER You are Maisy.

MAISY And are you or are you not the Town Crier?

TOWN CRIER I am Maisy.

MAISY And should you or should you not announce me?

HERMIONE He should Maisy.

MAISY What is this? (Hermione)

HERMIONE (Looks over her shoulder) Where? Oh me. I bet you have never seen anything like me before.

MAISY I don't think anyone has seen anything like you before.

HERMIONE Nice girl. Pity she won't live to enjoy it.

MAISY Why have you burst into our celebration like this?

HERMIONE (To C.) Ah! It is a sad story. (CHORUS gather round.) A long - sad story. (CHORUS turn away.) Not that long! (CHORUS return.)

MAISY What happened?

HERMIONE I am a widow. ('Ah!') Not only that but my husband is dead. (She gives a nod to the M.D. who starts 'Hearts and Flowers'.) He was a miller and we all worked hard. He had three sons, a horse, a cat - and me. ('Ah!') When he died he left the mill to the eldest son. The horse to the middle son, and the cat to the youngest son. And to me - nothing! ('Ah!') Oh, the pity of it all.

ALL Oh! The pity of it all.

HERMIONE But there is worse to come.

ALL. Worse?

HERMIONE Yes. The two eldest sons threw us out.

ALL. No!

HERMIONE Yes. My youngest son, the cat, and me. ('Oh!') They said the cat was no good at grinding corn and I was no good at catching mice. Cast out - useless.

TOWN CRIER Like a load of rubbish.

HERMIONE (Aside) Watch it. For miles and miles we have tramped. Over hills and over dales - thorough bush and thorough brier. Day after day and mile after long and weary mile. My poor, poor feet; look at them. (Displays booted foot)

CHORUS (Drawing back) Eaugh!!

HERMIONE Yes we have travelled from a remote and inhospitable land.

MAISY Where?

HERMIONE (Local village or district.)

MAISY But isn't remote.

HERMIONE Have you tried to get a bus there after nine o'clock?

MAISY You said your son was with you, is he handsome?

HERMIONE Oh yes, he is a very good looking lad; good looks run in the family you know.

TOWN CRIER (To Hermione) Run away in your case by the look of it.

MAISY Where is he?

MAISY and the GIRLS of the CHORUS ignore Hermione, they look about then off L.

HERMIONE Yes, tramp tramp tramp. Through wind and rain, snow and blizzard. Onward ever onward, excelsior and mind my bike.

HERMIONE, over-acting her travails, has moved down D.R. MAISY and the GIRLS have seen Ralph approaching off U.L. There is a bustle of 'Ooo's' and 'There he is' All CHORUS move U.L. except one small child who still listens attentively to Hermione D.R.

HERMIONE (Almost inaudible because of the excitement upstage, 'Isn't he handsome' etc.) Not caring what happened to us - not caring what - what - what - (To U.L.) What is going on?

RALPH enters U.L. to a cheer from the Chorus.

RALPH It's only me Mother. (Comes C.) What a beautiful little village.

HERMIONE You have caught up at last have you, and about time too.

RALPH (Flirting with Maisy) A very beautiful village.

MAISY (Giggling) It's better now you have come along.

HERMIONE Put that girl down, you don't know where she has been.

RALPH (Putting his arm round a second Girl.) You know what the poet said, a thing of beauty is a joy to behold. Mother don't let's go any further, let's stay here. I am sure we could all be happy.

HERMIONE You could be happy wherever there are pretty girls.

MUSIC NO 2. (Optional) RALPH & CHORUS
A bright number about happiness.

RALPH I feel at home already. Now Mother, where shall we live?
(Looks at signpost) Up by 'The castle' or up by - 'The Castle'?

HERMIONE Well make up your mind. (Centre)

MAISY No, there is a castle up there. (R.)

TOWN CRIER And there is a castle up there. (L.)

They are standing either side of her.

MAISY In that one. (ALL look R.) lives King Oliphant and the Princess.

TOWN CRIER And in that one. (ALL look L.) lives the evil Ogre Hardcast.

MAISY (ALL look R.) The King is alright, as Kings go, we don't see him often - as long as we pay our rates.

TOWN CRIER (ALL look L.) But the Ogre is ever so mean and horrible.

MAISY (HERMIONE looks R.) But he has been to sleep for years and hasn't bothered us.

HERMIONE Hold on, hold on; this is worse than Wimbledon. I don't think we will stay here after all son, not if there is an Ogre sleeping up on the hill.

RALPH If he is asleep it doesn't matter does it? Anyway who's afraid of an old Ogre?

ALL We are!

HERMIONE And what's more important - so am I! So come on. Go and find that Moggypuss of yours and we will be on our way. I have got to find some work - you know that social security hasn't been invented yet.

But their departure is interrupted by the entrance of the CASTLE HERALD. (Preferably a small Castle Herald.) He marches through, completely ignoring them all and after some ceremony and not a little difficulty blows a very loud and incredibly tuneless fanfare.
ALL put their fingers in their ears.

RALPH What was that?

HERMIONE Sounded like a left handed elephant in agony. (To Town Crier) What was that.

TOWN CRIER (Taking his fingers out of his ears) Has he finished? Oooo, he hasn't done that for a long time. He is a page from the Castle.

HERMIONE He is hardly big enough to be a page from a diary.

MAISY It meas the King is coming here.

HERALD (In a very loud voice.) The King is coming here.

HERMIONE Now he sounds like a page from 'The War Cry.' The King eh? I shall meet him. Royalty and I have a lot in common you know.

TOWN CRIER Yes, he's been crowned and you ought to be. You must stand back.

HERALD (Equally loud.) You must stand back. The King!

The CHORUS has drawn back into lines. The Royal Party enter U.R. KING OLIPHANT, CHANCELLOR CLAUD DULLBODY, PRINCESS CORAL, TRIP and ATTENDANTS as Nec.

They have just started to enter when the HERALD blows another similar fanfare. ALL cover their ears and cringe; he pauses, they start to straighten up, he gives another loud blast, they all revert.

KING (Cautiously) Has he finished? Chancellor, you know what to do.

CHANCELLOR Of course Sire. (Crosses down and ceremoniously puts a large cork in the end of the Herald's trumpet.)

KING That's better.

The Royal Party now come centre.

HERMIONE Ah, King Elephant, how pleased you are to meet me.

CHANCELLOR The name is 'Oliphant' Madam

HERMIONE Oh, you're 'Oliphant' and he (The King) is 'Elephant', how quaint.

CHANCELLOR This is King Oliphant.

HERMIONE And you are the Elephant.

CHANCELLOR Did you have to practise long to be so stupid?!

RALPH (Drawing her back) Mother, don't make an exhibition of yourself.

HERMIONE What do you think I am? The Albert Hall?

KING Where did this woman come from?

TOWN CRIER (As before) Sire.

KING Oh, that explains it. Right Chancellor, make your announcement.

CHANCELLOR It will be a pleasure your Majesty.

TOWN CRIER That means it's bad news.

CHANCELLOR You were all very good and paid your rates and taxes on time.

ALL We know.

CHANCELLOR Well now you will all have to be very good and pay them all over again.

There is uproar

HERMIONE What did you say?

CHANCELLOR I said, Madam, that all the rates and taxes must be paid again.

HERMIONE What's your middle name? ? (topical reference)

MAISY It's not fair we have already paid.

TOWN CRIER What have you (King) done with them?

KING I haven't done anything with them. They have gone, and everyone in the village will have to pay again.

CHANCELLOR And that means you! (Hermione)

HERMIONE Why me?

CHANCELLOR You heard what the King said, 'everyone in the village', and you are here in the village.

HERMIONE But I didn't pay last time.

CHANCELLOR Better and better, now you will have to pay twice.

HERMIONE I think I'll go back to

RALPH (Who has been looking at the Princess,) No Mother, I am sure there must be some good reason for the King to be acting like this. I think we should stay in this village.

MAISY (To King) You mean old man, why should we all have to pay again?

CHANCELLOR (Horried) Come away, you cannot speak to the King like that.

HERMIONE No, but I can. Well, you mean old man, why should they all have to pay again?

KING It doesn't matter why, they must all pay and that's that.

CHANCELLOR They might just as well be told your Majesty. They will find out soon enough. And 'bad news shared' is 'bad news doubled' I always say.

HERMIONE You would.

VILLAGERS (In unison and overdramatically) You don't mean -

KING (Equally overdramatically) I do.

VILLAGERS It can't be -

KING It is.

VILLAGERS He hasn't -

KING He has.

VILLAGERS Oh horrors.

KING Worse. It's the Ogre.

VILLAGERS No!

KING Yes.

VILLAGERS Ahhhhhhh. (Sobs and faints from all the females)

CHANCELLOR (Calmly to Hermione) Now what did you say Madam?

HERMIONE What was all that about?

CHANCELLOR I should have thought it was plain enough. It means that the Ogre has woken up again.

Another burst of sobs from the villagers.

HERMIONE Is that bad?

CHANCELLOR Bad? It's terrible. (Wails from VILLAGERS) there will be grief and woe. (He relishes the telling) Gloom and despondency. (More Wails) Misery and despair. (Louder wails)

HERMIONE You are enjoying this aren't you?

CHANCELLOR (Evilly) It is rather fun isn't it?

TOWN CRIER But it won't be fun for us now the Ogre has woken up again.

KING And it is no fun for me, he has demanded all the money from me so I shall have to demand some more from you.

TOWN CRIER It's the bad old days all over again.

MAISY You are the King, why don't you do something about the Ogre?

KING How can I? The Ogre has always been with us. Always has been - always will be.

RALPH (Stepping forward) You could give a reward Sire.

KING Been tried, doesn't work. Anyway, there's nothing left to give; Ogre's had it all.

RALPH There is your daughter Sire. You could offer her hand in marriage to anyone who gets rid of the Ogre for you.

KING That sort of thing doesn't happen in real life.

HERMIONE (Referring to his get-up.) Neither does this.

KING Oh, alright then. But there will always be an Ogre.

CHANCELLOR Always has been.

KING Now then let's get back to the castle. (To Hermione) Don't forget - pay up!

HERMIONE Can't. No work - no money.

KING Can you scrub?

HERMIONE I beg your pardon.

KING Can you clean? Scrub and polish and such like. Need a char at the Castle.

HERMIONE But sire, I am a respectable woman, a woman of quality.

KING I'll pay you fourpence a week.

HERMIONE (Quickly) When can I start?

KING Good that's settled then. Come along my lot - back to the Castle. (To CORAL, who is demurely watching Ralph.) Come along child, don't stand there like that.

CORAL Father, couldn't I stay here and watch the festivities for a while?

KING No of course you can't; you are the Royal Princess. 'Stay here and watch the festivities', I never heard such a thing.

HERMIONE Yes you have - she just said it.

KING Out of my way woman. (Hermione) And don't be late in the morning, I want the whole Castle cleaned by lunch time.

CHANCELLOR There are only four hundred and twenty seven rooms.

HERMIONE Oh that's all. - Eh!!

The ROYAL PARTY has formed up except TRIP who is with the Princess.

KING Trip! Get into your place.

TRIP Right ho mate.

CHANCELLOR He is the King.

TRIP Right ho king mate.

KING Right Mister Chancellor, I think we can risk it.

CHANCELLOR takes cork out of Herald's trumpet.
HERALD marches purposefully out U.R. blasting away with his tuneless fanfare. The ROYAL PARTY follow. VILLAGERS cringe; as the sound fades away they relax.

HERMIONE So that was his Majesty.

RALPH And that was his Majesty's daughter?

HERMIONE (Realising the implication of this remark.) You can't fall for the Princess! You are only a common boy.

RALPH But she is so pretty Mother.

MAISY (Piqued) You said I was pretty.

RALPH You are, very pretty. (MAISY is pleased.) But the Princess is prettier. (MAISY is not pleased.)

HERMIONE What are you going to do now that the Ogre has woken up again?

TOWN CRIER Same as we always do.

HERMIONE What is that?

TOWN CRIER Blooming well put up with it.

TOWN CRIER and CHORUS gradually exit U.S.

HERMIONE (In general to the departing villagers.) You don't want to be afraid of a nasty old thing like an Ogre. You want to be brave and strong like me. (While she is speaking TRIP re-enters U.R., she does not see him.) You wouldn't catch me being scared of anything. No where we come from we wouldn't -

TRIP taps her on the shoulder, she jumps violently and all but faints. She is held up by the others.

HERMIONE (Weakly) Perhaps we would. (Her old self again) What did you do that for?!

OPTIONAL BUSINESS:- TRIP makes contact with the audience. At the Producer's discretion he greets them and gets them to respond throughout the show. 'Hi Kids' - 'Lo Trip' or some such. HERMIONE is bemused and gets progressively more cross as the performance progresses as, although she looks, she can never seem to see anyone through the lights and cannot make out who he is talking to.

HERMIONE (To Maisy) Who is he?

MAISY That is Trip, he works at the Castle. Everybody know Trip.

TRIP I'm a footman.

HERMIONE Never mind, perhaps when you are bigger they will make you a yard boy. (She laughs heartily at her own joke; no one else does.) Oh aren't I funny.

TRIP Yes I can honestly say that you are the funniest - looking person I have ever seen. (To Maisy) Where did it come from?

MAISY (Same local reference)

TRIP (As if that explained everything.) Oh. (To Hermione) But I didn't nip back here to talk to you, so if you will step aside, preferably into the canal, I will talk to this young man here. (To Ralph) I don't know who you are -

MAISY (Crossing and taking one of Ralph's arms.) This is Ralph. He is going to live here in the village.

TRIP That's good.

MAISY With his Mother.

TRIP That's not.

HERMIONE (To Trip.) I can see you and I are going to get on -

RALPH (Trying to keep the peace.) Mother.

HERMIONE Like a jelly and chopsticks!

RALPH Ignore her.

TRIP (Pretending Hermione isn't there.) Who?

MAISY What are you doing here Trip, you should be with King.

TRIP The Princess asked me to come back. She asked me to find out - (Nudges Ralph) who you were.

RALPH The Princess? I didn't think she had even noticed me.

TRIP She noticed you alright.

MAISY You cannot think of the Princess. She is not allowed to meet anyone below the rank of Prince - class A.

HERMIONE And you even failed your C.S.E.

RALPH (Aside) But I loved her at first sight.

MAISY (Aside) And I loved him (Ralph) at first sight.

TRIP (Aside) And I have loved her (Maisy) for years.

HERMIONE And I just think I am wonderful.

MUSIC NO 3. HERMIONE, MAISY, RALPH and TRIP
A light-hearted or comedy song about love.

HERMIONE Right back to the plot. What are we going to do about the Ogre?

They start to exit U.L. all more or less talking
at the same time. FAIRY AURORA enters D.L.

MAISY I don't know there is nothing we can do.

TRIP Why don't you (Hermione) go and frighten him?

HERMIONE Where is that cat of yours? (Ralph) He is never around when he should be.

RALPH Don't worry about him, he will turn up, he always does.

MAISY If only there was someone to help us.

TRIP There isn't anyone to help. How can there be?

They have gone.

FAIRY A (Not realising she is alone.) But there is someone to help.

Fairy Aurora is here on hand,
To help you from now on.
Yes, I can help, but understand
That - (Looks round) Oh no, where've they gone?

(Aside, more casually) It's always the same, I come on here,
Willing to help the show,
Full of kindness and common sense;
But do they listen? - No.

But that won't stop me helping them,
As Fairy I'll never give in.
I'll fight the Evil, and enjoy it too,
'Cause in the end I'll win.

(Back to formal Fairyness) The boy called Ralph has noble heart,
In love and keen to please.
He is a power for good I feel,
I'll help - I'll give him these!

She waves her wand and casts a spell and:-
EITHER some small ATTENDANTS enter with the Magic Boots.
OR part of the scenery opens or moves (with flash) and the
boots are seen. They are placed U.C.

There should be nothing casual about this effect. The fact that these Boots are precious and important should be conveyed right from their appearance.

FAIRY A. Ralph will find these magic boots,
I'll see he comes this way.
No one else must use them,
So hidden they shall stay.

PUSS enters U.L.
FAIRY AURORA covers the boots with a light cover of some sort, PUSS watches with typical feline interest. FAIRY AURORA gives one last look to the Boots and exits R. PUSS watches her go and then investigates the stage, (At this point Puss is just a very ordinary clumsy and not very intelligent cat) . This could be developed into a CAT ROUTINE as he plays with a balloon or chases his tail. Then he finds the covered boots, investigates and finally uncovers them. Their power impresses him, he treats them in awe. He takes one under each arm, their magic takes effect, he stands erect then prances round the stage, though still bent-kneed and catlike. He comes centre and stops; puts the boots down and steps into them.
(This should be enhanced by drum roll and lighting effect.) By discarding baggy leggings and standing erect PUSS now stands there a handsome, elegant creature.
MUSIC NO 4. PUSS then CHORUS (Optional)
Puss starts solo with a song about freedom or happiness then Chorus enter and join in to bring the scene to a close.

CURTAIN SCENE ONE

SCENE TWO A STREET IN THE VILLAGE (Or similar)
A front-cloth scene to cover change behind.

RALPH and TRIP enter L. talking. (Trip breaks off to say 'Hi' to the audience.)

RALPH Pay attention. Do you understand? You must flatter them.
That's how to win a girl.

TRIP Ooo, I want to win Maisy, I think she is super.

RALPH You must be masterful.

TRIP Masterful. (He looks anything but masterful.)

RALPH You must say things like - 'hello my dear, aren't you a pretty little thing' - and - 'My heart yearns for you' - and - 'What a face'.

TRIP is carefully trying to remember all this.

RALPH Then tell her how pretty she is.

TRIP Suppose she is ugly?

RALPH You don't go out with ugly girls.

TRIP You don't know my luck. Anyway I'd rather marry an ugly girl than a pretty one.

RALPH Why?

TRIP Well, a pretty girl might leave you.

RALPH So might an ugly one.

TRIP Yes but in that case who cares. (Mutters trying to remember) 'pretty little thing - heart yearns - what a face'.

RALPH I don't think you've ever been out with a girl.

TRIP I have too. I went out to see one last night.

RALPH Did you see her?

TRIP I did. But if I hadn't bobbed down behind the hedge she would have seen me too. I don't understand it, I'm suave, debonair, charming.

RALPH Let's have a rehearsal. Look pretend I am a girl.

TRIP That is a bit confusing isn't it?

RALPH Walk up to me masterfully.

TRIP tries to but without success, he trips as ever.

RALPH I think you will have to practice the walk. Then having introduced yourself you must come over all romantic. (He adopts a love-lorn posture.)

TRIP Rheumatic?

RALPH Romantic! (Rather like a love-sick poet) 'Such warm appealing eyes, irresistible ears, and cheeks that have a warm faint blush'.

TRIP I like that bit - 'cheeks that have a warm faint blush'

MAISY enters L. She does not react to the others.

RALPH Look who has come along, now is your chance.

TRIP I can't.

RALPH Yes, just remember what I have said.

TRIP 'Pretty little thing - my heart yearns - what a face'

RALPH 'Eyes' - 'Ears' - 'Cheeks'.

TRIP The faint blush.

RALPH Off you go. (TRIP starts to cross) Masterfully!

TRIP tries his masterful walk but looks more like a weak kneed cowboy. RALPH keeps U.S. of him.

TRIP (Blurting out to Maisy) You're a funny little thing.

RALPH Pretty little thing.

TRIP Sorry. (Trying again) I've got heart-burn for you.

RALPH (Prompting) Her face. And get it right.

TRIP Oh yes, (To Maisy) Get your face right. I mean - what a face. (He makes this sound extremely uncomplimentary.)

RALPH (Prompting how it should be said) What a face.

TRIP (About himself) What a mess.

RALPH (Although highly amused, encourages still.) The romantic bit.

TRIP Right. (Adopts his version of the romantic posture.) Such warm appealing eyes.

RALPH is impressed and even MAISY begins to show an interest

TRIP Such irresistible ears.

MAISY turns to him, surprised and pleased.

RALPH Go on.

TRIP And hair like a worn paint brush! I mean cheeks - (He gives up)

MAISY You are the one with a cheek. (Crosses to Ralph.) Hello Ralph. Fancy us meeting again like this where are you going can I come too?

RALPH Hello Daisy.

MAISY Maisy.

RALPH I'm going to the sign-post on the green.

MAISY Why?

RALPH I'm not sure. (The Fairy's magic is drawing him really.)

PUSS has entered U.S. of them. They do not see him.

RALPH By the way have either of you seen that cat of mine? He should have caught us up by now.

During the following PUSS manages to always keep behind the others as they turn and they never see him.

MAISY No Ralph. What does he look like?

PUSS Absolutely splendid.

RALPH He's a bit ordinary really

MAISY I thought you said he was splendid.

RALPH No I didn't

PUSS Yes you did.

MAISY (To Trip) No he didn't

TRIP Don't bring me into this. I've never seen the cat.

PUSS Yes you have, he is splendid.

TRIP Yes I have, he is splendid. No I haven't!

MAISY What did you say you had for then?

TRIP I didn't

PUSS Yes you did.

MAISY I said you did.

PUSS So did I.

TRIP (To Ralph) Did you?

RALPH No.

TRIP Wait a minute, there is something odd here. How many of us are there?

MAISY One.

RALPH Two.

PUSS Three.

TRIP Four. That's alright then - FOUR!
 MAISY You are silly, you can't count properly.
 TRIP Can.
 MAISY Don't mess about this time. One.
 PUSS Two.
 RALPH Three.
 PUSS Four.
 TRIP Five - five??!
 RALPH Let's have a look.

They circle the stage looking, but PUSS follows behind them and makes an 'aren't I clever' face to the audience.
RALPH ends D.L. PUSS U.C. and MAISY and TRIP D.R.

MAISY It must have been you (Trip) messing about.
 TRIP No it wasn't Maisy, honest.
 MAISY You must think I'm silly.
 PUSS Yes you are.
 MAISY What did you say?
 PUSS He thinks you are awful.
 MAISY Awful?
 TRIP No I didn't - I mean - I think you are - 'awful'? - awful - awfully nice.

MAISY scoffs and exits D.R.

TRIP Don't go off like that Maisy. I like you ever so much really.
 MAISY (Returns briefly) If you are going to follow me for goodness sake keep up! (Goes again)
 TRIP No I'm not following you Maisy, I'm - I'm - (He has gone D.R.)
 RALPH Poor Trip, I don't think he will ever win the heart of Maisy. I wonder if I shall ever win the heart of the Princess. - I wonder if I shall ever see her again. I must find a way somehow.
 PUSS You will.
 RALPH Yes I know, but how. (Looks round) Who spoke then? Oh hello Puss, caught us up at last have you? You are hungry I suppose. (He doesn't pay much attention to his cat, he is more interested in trying to trace the voice he has heard. He looks about the stage.) There must be someone hiding somewhere. Can you see anyone?
 PUSS No.
 RALPH No, neither can I. You can't hear voices can you?
 PUSS Only yours.
 RALPH Oh, that's alri... (It dawns.) 'Puss! You're talking! Can you talk?
 PUSS Very well.
 RALPH Why haven't you told me you could talk before?
 PUSS Because you have never asked me before. (He struts about the stage in his best manner.)

RALPH (To himself) You don't go round asking cats if they can talk.
 (To Puss) And look at you, I have never seen you looking so smart.

PUSS I am rather fine am I not?

RALPH Where did you get those boots from?

PUSS Found them.

RALPH Well, don't get into any trouble. (Makes to exit R.)

PUSS Where are you going?

RALPH Only for a walk so that I can think.

PUSS A walk towards the castle no doubt.

RALPH If you must know - yes. (Ruefully) I can see your being able to talk is going to have it's drawbacks - yes I am going up to the castle.

RALPH exits R. PUSS watches him for a moment.

PUSS My poor master, I think he really is in love this time. How awful for him. But I will help him; when I was only a kitten he saved my life when they threw me into the millpond, he was my only friend; and now it is my turn to repay him. Yes I will help you Master, and you will be surprised what crafty tricks a cat can get up to - especially when he wears magic boots!

PUSS exits R.

(If more time is needed for the scene change an extra item should be inserted here.

EITHER - JUVENILES enter L. for Song and dance.

OR - TRIP & JUVENILES meet and do a number.

OR - Broken hearted solo from TRIP

OR - MAISY & TRIP return for a number.

CURTAIN SCENE TWO.

SCENE THREE

THE KING IN HIS CASTLE

A full-stage set; stone column wings and back-cloth, arches curtains, flags etc., a throne is raised on a dias C.
 (As near a Fairy Story Castle as possible.) Entrances L. & R.

KING OLIPHANT is on his throne. PRINCESS CORAL sits near looking very sad. CHANCELLOR DULLBODY stands there looking as miserable as ever. CHORUS (the Court) is in attendance, they are not sad, there is an entertainment in progress:- Speciality item from dancer, minstrel, jester or magician. OR courtly dance from CHORUS.

TRIP and HERALD have been standing in attendance, they now step forward.

TRIP ('Hi Kids') And that concludes the first part of the entertainment.

KING Ah - 'end of part one'.

HERALD goes to blow another frightful fanfare but TRIP takes the trumpet out of his hands just in time and nothing but strange mouth noises are heard.

KING Thank you Trip.

TRIP (Putting the trumpet back.) Any time Sire.

HERALD gives one ear-shattering blast and smiles with satisfaction, apparantly unaware that the trumpet was ever out of his control.

KING (Coming down stage.) Are you sure he is having lessons?

CHANCELLOR Oh yes Sire, at great expense.

KING What in? Woodwork? (To Princess) Cheer up dear, the programme wasn't all that bad. Think yourself lucky they haven't started 'Coronation Street'. (Or some such.)

CHANCELLOR And it does help take your mind off the Ogre.

ALL The Ogre. (Each time they say this there is a rumble on the drums and they all look over their shoulders and above in a fearful manner.)

KING Don't keep saying that.

CHANCELLOR What?

KING Ogre.

ALL The Ogre.

KING It makes the people jumpy. And it frightens me to death. Just look at the poor state my daughter is in.

CHANCELLOR I don't think that is anything to do with the Ogre.

ALL The Ogre

KING I shan't tell you again.

CHANCELLOR I bet you do.

KING What is the matter child? Tell your poor old Dad all about it.

CHANCELLOR Yes tell your poor - old - Dad about it.

CORAL It's nothing Daddy.

KING Oh come along, there must be some reason -

He gets no further as a clanking sound from off R turns out to be HERMIONE on hands and knees scrubbing the floor; she backs on; she is very busy and is making a lot of noise.

BUSINESS:- Several attampths are made by the KING to continue, but these prove futile as HERMIONE moves him, or dusts him, or somebody else. She then decides that the conductor, or anyone else within reach could do with a bit of a clean. Several attampths are made to stop her. Eventually they think they have succeeded - she seems to have gone - but no, she is now in the auditorium cleaning the theatre. (Or audience.) She returns to the stage and is persuaded to call a halt to her progress.

CHANCELLOR For goodness sake woman, what are you doing?

HERMIONE What do you think I am doing? Milking a cow? (She is C. with them.) Old 'thingy' here told me to -

CHANCELLOR You cannot talk about his Majesty like that; he is the King.

HERMIONE That's right, Kingy thingy; he told me to clean the Castle, and clean it I will. (Aside) I'm like that you know. (Starts dusting Chancellor.)

CHANCELLOR Madam, Desist!

HERMIONE Language.

KING May we get on?

HERMIONE Oh yes, I have finished with him. (Chancellor). You may proceed.

CHANCELLOR Madam.

HERMIONE Yes.

KING & CHAN Be quiet!!! (There is a pause. Then just as they are about to continue.)

HERMIONE I know when I'm not wanted.

Another pause, they look at her, she smiles. KING opens his mouth to speak -

HERMIONE I won't say another word.

They glare. KING opens his mouth and waits expecting another interruption but nothing comes. He and CHANCELLOR exchange a smile; they have quietened her. He starts to speak again and 'crash' HERMIONE drops her bucket.

HERMIONE Whoops, silly me.

TRIP picks it up and leads her U.S.

CHANCELLOR Now than, what were we doing when that woman came in?

KING We were getting on with the script, that's what we were doing.

CHANCELLOR Your daughter Sire.

KING Oh yes. Coral my child.

PUSS enters U.S. and whatches what is going on.
(From behind throne if practical.)

KING Why are you so sad? You should be happy, everyone should be happy.

CHANCELLOR Despite the Ogre.

ALL (As before) The Ogre.

KING Yes, despite - what he said.

CORAL It's nothing Daddy, really.

TRIP (Coming down to her) You might as well tell them your Highness. (To others) It's just that she is in love, that's all. It will pass

CORAL It won't

KING In love?

CHANCELLOR Oh, I hope not. The wedding will cost a fortune.

KING Who with child? I hope he has lots of money. Who is he?

CORAL No one you know Daddy.

KING But I know everybody who is anybody. He would have to be of royal blood, a Duke at least. (He and CHANCELLOR confer together.) Perhaps it's the Prince of Paddington or the Baron of Battersea.

CHANCELLOR I hope not, he has no money.

KING Besides she would never understand what he said.

(Use local areas or districts. illiterations if possible.)

KING (To Coral) Who is it dear?

CORAL Well, he is not actually a Prince.

KING Oh, a Duke? (CORAL shakes) An Earl? (CORAL shakes)

CHANCELLOR A Marquis? (CORAL shakes)

KING A Baron. (CORAL shakes) He's not - foreign?! (Or 'Welsh?' or 'Cornish' or some such.)

CORAL No Daddy. He is nothing. He is just an ordinary boy. - But I loved him as soon as I saw him.

KING When did you see an 'ordinary' boy.

CORAL This morning.

KING You don't mean -

CHANCELLOR - Her - (Hermione)

HERMIONE, who has eased forward a little, drops her bucket in surprise.

CORAL (Firmly) Yes.

Shock and/or amazement from the whole company.

KING Impossible, quite impossible

CHANCELLOR Absolutely unthinkable.

KING Out of the question.

The CHORUS agree.

KING But Daddy.

KING No. Never. Never never. (He exits U.L. but turns) And that is final! (Goes)

CHANCELLOR Quite final! (Exits U.L followed by HERALD)

CHORUS exit muttering 'Impossible' 'could never be' etc.
HERMIONE goes D.L. CORAL crosses sadly D.R. TRIP watches her. PUSS emerges and sums up the situation, he makes a decision and exits U.R.

TRIP (Crossing to Coral) Your highness.

CORAL Eh? Oh, hello Trip.

TRIP I know I am only a footman, and not a very good footman, but can I say how sorry I am - about you and young Ralph.

CORAL Thank you Trip.

TRIP I know what it is like to love someone and have to suffer the pangs of unrequited love.

CORAL 'Unrequited love'

TRIP Yes, I don't know what it means - but it sounds right.

CORAL (Sitting on steps of throne, or some other unprincesslike place.) It's not much fun being a Princess. Not being able to meet the people you want to, and join in the fun with everyone.

TRIP You have the entertainment here at the Castle.

CORAL It's not the same Trip.

TRIP (Sitting beside her) That's true.