



Sleeping Beauty

by Stephen Duckham

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SLEEPING BEAUTY

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

FAIRY QUEEN

LORD CHAMBERLAIN

FAIRY MOONBEAM

FAIRY SUNLIGHT

FAIRY STARDUST

CARABOSSE

KING SEPTIMUS THE SEVENTEENTH

QUEEN SYBIL THE SIXTH

PRINCESS AURORA

BARNEY – The Court Jester

NANNY NORA

PRINCE MICHAEL

BORIS)

ANDY) THREE ROYAL SUITORS*

LIONEL)

BEAST OF THE FOREST*

CHORUS: MEMBERS OF THE COURT

DANCERS: MEMBERS OF THE COURT / SPIRITS OF THE ENCHANTED FOREST

**Small parts. Can be members of the Company.*

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

SCENE 1	THE ROYAL CHAPEL
SCENE 2	THE ROYAL THRONE ROOM – 18 YEARS LATER
SCENE 3	THE PALACE GATES
SCENE 4	THE ROYAL THRONE ROOM
SCENE 5	CARABOSSE'S LAIR
SCENE 6	THE ROYAL THRONE ROOM

ACT TWO

SCENE 1	THE ENCHANTED FOREST – 100 YEARS LATER
SCENE 2	THE ROYAL THRONE ROOM
SCENE 3	THE PALACE GATES
SCENE 4	THE PALACE BALLROOM
SCENE 5	THE PETRIFIED FOREST
SCENE 6	CARABOSSE'S COTTAGE
SCENE 7	THE PALACE GATES
SCENE 8	THE PALACE BALLROOM

Notes on the production

Although there are a number of scene changes, the production need not be too complicated. For instance, the Chapel, Throne Room and Ballroom in the Palace can all be the same scene with just the furniture being changed. Carabosses' Lair, the Palace Gates and Petrified Forest scenes can be played on tabs with a little set dressing, and Carabosses' cottage can be flats with a sliding or revolving door on stage right.

The scene to end Act One, which shows the growth of the Enchanted Forest, can be easily staged in several ways. The easiest is to fly in entwined branches (possibly camouflage netting with painted rope and leaves attached), or pull them across on a tab track to cut off the main Throne Room scene. If either of these is impractical, the dancers could be dressed in green costumes representing trees and branches and carry extended pieces which they attach to various parts of the set or false proscenium. This scene starts Act Two, and the procedure is reversed as Prince Michael cuts through the forest to reveal the Throne Room.

Of course, if your company is able to mount a more extravagant production, the Chapel, Throne Room and Ballroom can all be different settings. Act One, Scene 4 can take place in another part of the Palace or even in a Garden Scene.

A permanent false proscenium is used throughout the production and is designed to look like castle turrets. On the downstage right proscenium is a large button for *Barney's special surprise*. Set in the turret downstage left is the RAVEN that appears at various times during the production. This can be a puppet operated by a stagehand or perhaps set behind a gauze window and lit only when required. It doesn't have to be a Raven. Carabosse refers to it as 'her pet', so it could be a dragon or some sort of mythical creature.

The 'Talent Contest' sequence in Act 1, Scene 4 can quite easily be adapted to whatever popular TV programme is on at the time.

All the characters are what you would expect to find in a pantomime, with some small cameo roles. Prince Michael can be played by a boy or a girl, but Nanny Nora should be a typical Panto Dame. The character of Carabosse has often posed the question as to whether it should be played by a man or a woman. In my version, she is a banished royal fairy and therefore is played by a female. This, of course, gives another part to an actress and one with dramatic content usually found in male roles.

The placing of musical numbers and who sings them is suggested in the script, but it is up to the director to decide what to use. A word of advice: Pantomime audiences – particularly the younger members – like the story to keep moving, so don't make the musical sequences too long, especially ballads.

I hope you enjoy doing this version of 'Sleeping Beauty' and have a great success with your production.

Stephen Duckham

ACT ONESCENE 1 THE ROYAL CHAPELMUSIC - UNDERSCORE

[The scene opens with the stage in darkness except for a spot DR where the FAIRY QUEEN is standing. SHE is looking at the darkness in the centre of the stage and wipes away a tear. SHE then turns and sees the audience.]

F.Q. Oh, hello! I didn't notice you there! You'll have to forgive me, but I'm quite overcome with emotion. Christenings always have this effect on me, especially Royal ones. *[SHE looks back at the darkness.]* Doesn't it all look lovely? *[Back to the audience.]* What's that? You can't see anything? Oh, silly me, whatever am I thinking of? *[SHE makes a magic pass, and the lights come up on the scene. In the centre is a beautifully decorated crib containing the baby PRINCESS AURORA. Standing on either side is the KING and QUEEN. Also, there is the LORD CHAMBERLAIN and the rest of the COURT. They are all looking at the crib.]* You see, King Septimus the Seventeenth and Queen Sybil the Sixth have been blessed with a beautiful daughter, and she has been christened Aurora.

KING *[Reaching into the crib and tickling the infant.]* Cuchi coo!
[The QUEEN pulls him away and indicates he should be quiet.]

F.Q. Everything is perfect down to the last detail. And to complete the ceremony, my three most senior Royal Fairies and I are about to bestow our magical gifts on the tiny babe.

L/CHAMBER. *[HE beats his staff of office on the stage.]* First to approach the Royal Princess is Fairy Moonbeam. *[FAIRY MOONBEAM enters and crosses to the crib.]*

FAIRY MOON From Royal babe to fair Princess, I give the gift of happiness.

L/CHAMBER. Second to approach is Fairy Sunlight. *[FAIRY SUNLIGHT enters and crosses to the crib.]*

FAIRY SUN To keep your heart so good and true,
I give the gift of love to you.

L/CHAMBER. Third is Fairy Stardust. [*FAIRY STARDUST enters and crosses to the crib.*]

FAIRY STAR With starlight dancing in your hair,
I give the gift of beauty fair.

L/CHAMBER. And lastly, our most illustrious guest and guardian to us all, the Fairy Queen.

[The FAIRY QUEEN approaches the crib.]

F.Q Your majesties, your daughter will grow up into a happy, loving and beautiful Princess, so my gift on this special occasion is –

[There is a crash of thunder and the lights dim. The RAVEN appears in a turret down left and squawks loudly. CARABOSSE is heard off stage, her voice echoing around the palace.]

CARABOSSE Special occasion? If this is such a special occasion, why wasn't I invited?

[The whole COURT looks around, wondering where the voice is coming from.]

F.Q Carabosse!

[CARABOSSE enters Down Left amid smoke and in a green light. ALL shrink back in fear.]

CARABOSSE Yes, that's right. It's me, Calabosse.

F.Q You shouldn't be here.

CARABOSSE And why not? Am I not also a Royal Fairy?

F.Q You relinquished that title years ago when you started using your powers for your own evil ends and not for the well-being of the court.

CARABOSSE How dare you dictate to me how I use my powers? *[Suddenly charming.]* But I'll not hold it against you today of all days. Your Majesties, I'm sure it was an oversight on your part that I wasn't invited. And as you've all been so generous with your gifts, I, too, wish to add my blessing to the infant Princess.

QUEEN There's no need. Really....

CARABOSSE *[Sharply.]* But I insist!

KING Oh, all right. Thank you for your attendance!

CARABOSSE Don't thank me too soon. *[Turning angry again.]* You haven't heard what gift I am about to bestow on your precious daughter! *[ALL show much concern at what is about to happen.]* Listen well, all of you. The Princess shall indeed grow in grace and beauty, beloved by all who know her. But before the sun sets on her eighteenth birthday, she shall prick her finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel and die!

QUEEN Oh no!

KING I order you to be banished from the Palace forever!

CARABOSSE Threaten me all you like, but I am Carabosse, the invincible. Remember, before the sun sets on her eighteenth birthday! *[With a great cackle of laughter, SHE exits down left. The RAVEN cries out and disappears.]*

QUEEN Oh, Septimus, what are we going to do?

F.Q Don't despair, your Majesty. I still have my gift to give.

KING Then you can undo this awful curse?

F.Q

Oh no. Carabosses' powers are much too great. *[SHE crosses to the crib.]* But I promise I will watch over you and protect you as best I can from any danger that may rear its ugly head. This is my gift to the fair Princess. *[The FAIRY QUEEN moves back down right as the lights dim on the christening scene.]* King Septimus, fearful for his daughter's life, ordered that every spinning wheel in the land be destroyed.

[The COURT dissolves, and almost in silhouette, we see people crossing upstage from right to left with cut-out spinning wheels. After this, the lights fade out except for the spot on the FAIRY QUEEN.] So now the years roll by, and the babe grows into a happy child. *[A light comes up centre stage and a LITTLE GIRL of about six stands in the light playing with a doll.]* And then into a studious young girl. *[Into the light comes a GIRL of about thirteen reading a book.]* And finally, a beautiful Princess. *[PRINCESS AURORA comes into the light.]* Today is her eighteenth birthday. *[The light on AURORA fades.]* The whole court is preparing for a great celebration. So that's where we will join them. *[SHE waves her wand and exits as the lights come up on -]*

SCENE 2 THE ROYAL THRONE ROOM

[Two large thrones dominate the upstage area. The whole COURT is preparing for the birthday celebrations. On the downstage right proscenium arch is a button used for BARNEY'S surprise.]

MUSIC - OPENING CHORUS [CHORUS]

[At the end of the number, BARNEY, the Court Jester, enters with four balloons coloured red, yellow, green and blue.]

BARNEY Hello everyone.

ALL Hello Barney.

BARNEY I've been blowing up balloons for the party. Oh, I'm quite out of breath!

MAN They're very nice, but you know we've got an awful lot of red ones. *[HE bursts the red balloon and exits.]*

GIRL And I've always disliked yellow. *[SHE bursts the yellow balloon and exits.]*

2nd MAN And green is supposed to be unlucky! *[HE bursts the green one and exits.]*

2nd GIRL And nobody wants to be blue at a party! *[SHE bursts the blue one and exits. By now the entire CHORUS is off.]*

BARNEY *[To the audience.]* Oh, look, they've taken my breath away! *[Sympathetic "Ahh" from the audience.]* Never mind. I'm not going to be depressed. We're going to have a party for Princess Aurora, and I'll let you in on a little secret. I've got a special surprise for her as a birthday treat. *[HE crosses to the button.]* It happens when you push this button. But no one must push it yet. *[HE reaches off stage and gets a sign that reads 'DO NOT PUSH' which HE hangs on the button.]* There, that should do the trick. But just to make sure no one ignores the sign, I need someone to keep watch. *[Looks at the audience.]* I know – you're all my friends, aren't you?

[Audience reaction.] Well, could you watch and let me know if anyone tries to push it? *[Audience reaction.]* Oh, thank you. Just shout out 'Barney, the button', and I'll come running. Shall we have a practice? *[Audience reaction.]* OK, pretend I'm someone else and shout out when I reach for the button. *[HE crosses back to the centre of the stage and then turns to creep up on the button. The audience calls out.]* Oh, you've got to be a lot louder than that. Let's try again. *[HE repeats the process.]* That's much better. Now I know the surprise for the Princess will be safe.

[The LORD CHAMBERLAIN enters.]

L/CHAMBER *[Announcing.]* Her Royal Highness, Princess Aurora.

MUSIC - FANFARE

[The CHORUS enters excitedly. PRINCESS AURORA enters and moves centre, greeting everyone.]

AURORA Hello everyone.

ALL Happy birthday, your Highness.

AURORA Thank you all for making everything so perfect. I know today is going to be a very special day.

MUSIC - SONG (AURORA & COMPANY)

[Towards the end of the number, a large birthday cake is wheeled on and out pops NANNY NORA.]

NANNY Surprise! Happy birthday.

AURORA Nanny, how wonderful. *[NANNY gets out of the cake. SHE is wearing a dress just like the cake. Some of the CHORUS wheel the cake off. BARNEY also exits.]*

NANNY I had to do something to make this day special for you!

AURORA You don't have to do anything special – you are special. For as long as I can remember, you've always been there for me.

NANNY *[Getting tearful.]* Oh dear, I'm feeling all of a doo dah! *[SHE pulls out a large handkerchief, sobs into it and then wrings it out.]* Now come along, all of you, take Her Highness into the nursery where there is a mountain of presents to be unwrapped!

AURORA Presents?

NANNY Of course. *[The rest of the CHORUS exit with AURORA.]* Well now, let's have a look at who we've got here. *[SHE peers out into the audience.]* Oh, what a motley crowd! I hope you're all ready to have a good time at Princess Aurora's party. Are you? *[Audience responds.]* You don't sound very enthusiastic! Are you all ready to have a good time? *[Audience responds – hopefully louder.]* Oooh, that's better. I'm Nanny Nora, and I'm very pleased to meet you. *[SHE curtseys, and a ratchet sound is heard.]* Oh dear! That's my whale bone corset! I think the whale's still in it! Anyway, I'm glad you're in the mood to enjoy yourselves because I like a good do! It's been a long time since I had a good night out. Even when my husband was alive, I could never drag him away from the TV. He'd sit there day after day staring at it with a bottle of Newcastle Brown and a packet of cheese and onion crisps! I don't know why I married him! I could have had eight husbands, you know! Oh yes, the vicar told me. It's in the marriage service. Four better and four worse! *[SHE starts to get tearful.]* Then, eventually, he was taken from me! You know he had one motto in life: "It's better to give than to receive". The trouble was that he received and got fifteen years! So I'm on the lookout for someone to share the twilight of my years with! You know, between you and me, I think that Barney fancies me! I do! Every time I smile at him, his face sort of twists, and he gets all hot and bothered! It's the first sign of passion welling up in a man! I'm sure he wants to commit. He is always telling me I should be committed. *[SHE sees the button.]* Hello, what's this? Oh, I wonder what'll happen if I push it? *[SHE goes to push the button. The audience shouts out, and BARNEY runs on.]*

BARNEY *[To audience.]* Thank you. *[To NANNY.]* Here, leave that alone.

NANNY Oh, Barney, you made me jump. *[NANNY crosses to him.]* Hello handsome! How about you and me hanging out at *[Name of local nightclub]* later? I hear – *[Name of a female pop singer.]* – is singing.

BARNEY You've got to be joking. All that flouncing around with a hairy chest and deep voice.

NANNY She's not that bad.

BARNEY I'm talking about you!

NANNY Ohh, couldn't you just eat him?

[SHE starts to chase him around the stage. The LORD CHAMBERLAIN enters. BARNEY escapes and runs off. NANNY almost bumps into him.]

L/CHAMBER What are you doing?

NANNY About twenty miles an hour!

L/CHAMBER Stand back. I have an announcement. *[Announcing.]* Their Majesties, King Septimus the seventeenth and Queen Sybil the sixth. *[HE announces with such force that NANNY gets spittle in her face.]*

NANNY I think he's sprung a leak!

[The QUEEN enters and crosses down stage. LORD CHAMBERLAIN bows and exits.]

QUEEN Ah, Nanny Nora, where is our darling daughter?

NANNY She's in the nursery, your majesty. Opening her birthday presents.

QUEEN Ask her to join us here, if you would.

NANNY With pleasure, your majesty. *[SHE manages a curtsy, then turns and bumps into the KING, who has just arrived.]* Oh, I do beg your pardon, sire.

[THEY are almost in a position where they could take hands and begin to dance.]

KING No problem, Nanny. *[Cheekily.]* Do you fancy a rhumba?

NANNY *[Feigning embarrassment.]* Oh, sire. You are a one!

QUEEN Septimus!

KING Yes dear. *[Aside to NANNY, with a wink.]* Maybe later!

[Giggling, NANNY exits.]

QUEEN Come along. Don't dawdle!

KING Yes dear.

QUEEN Have all the invitations gone out for tonight's party?

KING Yes dear.

QUEEN Has the catering been taken care of?

KING Yes dear.

QUEEN Everything must be perfect for our darling daughter's birthday.

KING Yes dear.

QUEEN We don't want anything to go wrong, do we?

KING Yes dear – I mean no dear!

[PRINCESS AURORA enters, followed by NANNY.]

AURORA Hello mummy, hello daddy.

QUEEN Happy birthday, my dear.

AURORA Thank you.

KING How's my little girl today?

AURORA I feel fine. But I'm not your little girl anymore, Father. I'm eighteen.

QUEEN Oh, I can hardly believe it. It seems like only yesterday when I held you in my arms for the first time. Everyone said you looked just like me!

KING But you were healthy enough, so we didn't worry! *[The QUEEN gives him a look.]*

AURORA Oh, mummy, I'm so happy today. Everyone has been so kind.

QUEEN Nothing is too good for my precious Aurora. And to make this day complete, your father has some special news for you.

KING I have?

QUEEN Yes you have!

KING What's that?

QUEEN You know. *[SHE goes into an elaborate mime describing a marriage service.]*

KING Could you repeat that? *[The QUEEN mimes again, this time humming the Wedding March.]* You know, I really think you should get out more!

QUEEN Oh, for goodness sake. Tell her about the wedding!

AURORA Wedding?

KING *[Stumbling over his words.]* Well, you see, your mother and I thought that as you are now of age, you might think about – you know, if you would like to – with some chap or other – if you were willing – and he was willing, of course! Well, it might be a good idea to – you know – *[HE mimes diving.]* – take the plunge!

QUEEN *[Taking charge of the situation.]* What your father is trying to say is that we think you ought to get married. It would be in the best interests of the Kingdom.

NANNY What about her interests?

KING Nanny, I think you can leave the affairs of State to us!

NANNY Yes, and a right state you'll get them in!

QUEEN Really Nanny, you take far too many liberties with His Majesty.

KING Who's been talking?

NANNY Oh, I'm sorry, your Maj, but I just can't bear to think of my little precious being married off to the first Prince that passes by.

QUEEN Neither can we. That is why we've arranged for some prospective candidates to be at the party tonight, so they can be properly vetted.

NANNY Ooooh, I'll vet 'em! When I've finished with them, they'll be inspected, vaccinated and completely newt... – new men!

AURORA But I would like to have a say in who I'm going to spend the rest of my life with.

KING Of course, my dear. No one is going to make you marry someone you don't like.

NANNY I think I should give them the once over! After eighteen years of looking after Her Royal Highness, I think I know what sort of man would 'light her fire!' as they say!

- KING** Who says?
- AURORA** Oh, yes, let Nanny interview them. Please mummy.
- QUEEN** Oh, very well. But whoever is chosen must get Royal approval.
- AURORA** Of course.
- QUEEN** Well, that's settled then. [*SHE sees the button and crosses towards it.*] I don't remember seeing that button. What's it for, I wonder? [*SHE goes to press it, and the audience calls out. BARNEY runs on.*]
- BARNEY** [*To audience.*] Thanks very much. [*To QUEEN.*] Now, now, your Maj. Leave that alone.
- QUEEN** What are you talking about?
- BARNEY** [*Aside, quietly to the QUEEN.*] It's a little surprise – for later.
- QUEEN** Oh, I see. Talking of little surprises – [*To the KING.*] Come along, Septimus, it's time to inspect the rest of the palace.
- KING** Yes dear. [*QUEEN exits. KING speaks to AURORA.*] I'll see you later, my sweet, have a lovely day.
- AURORA** Thank you daddy.
- QUEEN** [*Off.*] Septimus, I'm leaving.
- KING** I wish she would!
- QUEEN** [*Popping her head around the pros.*] What was that?
- KING** Coming, my dear. [*THEY both exit.*]
- NANNY** [*To AURORA.*] Don't you worry, my precious; I'll make sure the right man comes along for you. Who knows, the right man might come along for me, too!

AURORA Oh nanny, what would I do without you? [*SHE gives her a kiss on the cheek.*]

NANNY Oh, now stop that or else you'll have me going off again! [*SHE looks around.*] I don't see many decorations up for this festive day. Barney was in charge of brightening the place up. Whereas he got to?

BARNEY [*Entering with a large box.*] Here I am, don't panic.

NANNY Barney, light of my life. [*SHE puckers up to him.*]

BARNEY Gerroff!

NANNY [*Calling to the COMPANY who enters.*] Come on, everyone. Let's get this party going.

[Everyone helps BARNEY decorate the scene throughout the next number.]

MUSIC - COMPANY NUMBER (BARNEY, AURORA, NANNY & CHORUS)

[At the end of the number, the lights fade, and the scene changes to

SCENE 3 THE PALACE GATES

[A front cloth. CARABOSSE enters down left in a spot. The RAVEN is in the turret.]

CARABOSSE So, eighteen years have passed since the King and Queen insulted me by not inviting me to the christening of their wretched daughter. Now I see there is to be another Royal occasion to which I've been left off the guest list. So I shall have to make sure my prophecy comes true, even though King Septimus has banned all spinning wheels from the Kingdom.

[The FAIRY QUEEN enters down right in a spot.]

F.Q Oh, Carabosse, why don't you let bygones be bygones and leave the court in peace?

CARABOSSE No one treats me the way they did and gets away with it. My vengeance shall be swift and sure.

F.Q Just remember that we, the Royal fairies, have Aurora's interests at heart, and we will never let you harm her.

CARABOSSE Oh, it's all about you and the court and Aurora! No one is ever sympathetic to what I want.

F.Q I told you before, it's your own fault. If you had not chosen to deal in the darker side of magic, this would never have happened. You should obey the rules.

CARABOSSE Rules! And who made the rules? You!

F.Q For the good of everyone.

CARABOSSE For the good of yourself, you mean. Well, it's about time I got a look in!

F.Q Carabosse, I feel sorry for you.

CARABOSSE I don't want your pity. Now just leave me alone. *[FAIRY QUEEN exits.]* As I cannot be seen anywhere inside the Palace, my faithful pet shall be my eyes and ears. *[To the RAVEN.]* Go, my friend and inform me of everything that is going on. *[RAVEN lets out a cry of understanding and disappears. CARABOSSE sees the button.]* Oh, I wonder what happens if I push this. *[SHE starts to move towards it. Audience reacts, and BARNEY runs on from stage right. CARABOSSE pulls her cloak over HER face so as not to be recognised.]*

BARNEY Now, now, old woman, leave that alone.

CARABOSSE *[In a shaky voice.]* Sorry, young man, I just stumbled towards it. I meant no harm!

BARNEY Oh, that's alright then.

CARABOSSE *[Aside.]* I must get back to my lair and plan the downfall of the Royal Palace and everyone in it. *[SHE exits.]*

BARNEY *[HE looks off.]* Look out, here she comes. The Palaces' answer to - *[Name of well-known personality. NANNY enters.]*

NANNY Ah, there you are, my little dream topping!

BARNEY What are you talking about?

NANNY Oh, come on Barney, you know you can't resist me.

BARNEY What gave you that idea?

NANNY I can attract any man!

BARNEY You can't even attract flies!

NANNY Now, don't be awful, or I won't let you come out with me tonight.

BARNEY Where are you going?

NANNY To the dogs!

BARNEY Oh, yes? Which trap are you in?

NANNY Barney, you know you want to spend the rest of your life with me!

BARNEY I do?

NANNY You see, I knew it! *[SHE grabs him and tries to kiss him.]*

BARNEY *[Pushing her off.]* Oh, stop it. Stop it! Can't you be good for fifteen minutes?

NANNY With a bit of luck, I'm good for the next fifteen years!

[PRINCE MICHAEL enters down right.]

MICHAEL Good day to you both.

NANNY *[Fluttering her eyes.]* Oh, I say, and who might you be looking for?

MICHAEL I have heard there is a lady of rare beauty here at the Palace. I was hoping I might meet her.

NANNY Look no further, your dreams have all come true – your ship has come in – your lottery numbers have come up at last! Here I am, handsome!

MICHAEL Er – I was under the impression that it was a *young* lady.

NANNY Well, I'm only just pushing thirty!

BARNEY From the wrong direction!

MICHAEL Permit me introduce myself. I am Prince Michael of Murania, and I have come to seek the hand of Princess Aurora in marriage and thereby form an alliance between our two countries.

NANNY Oh, how romantic! Barney and me are going to form an alliance between our two bank accounts!

- BARNEY** Why don't you go and get ready to meet the candidates, and I'll take Prince Michael to meet their Majesties.
- NANNY** Oh yes, I've got lots to do. Their majesties are auditioning suitors for Aurora's hand. It's very exciting. I've got to give them the thrice over.
- BARNEY** Don't you mean the once over?
- NANNY** I know what I mean! *[Flexing her hands, SHE exits.]*
- MICHAEL** Who was that?
- BARNEY** Nora, Princess Aurora's Nanny – and I'm Barney, court entertainer and general everything else!
- MICHAEL** I am very pleased to meet you.
- BARNEY** Likewise.
- MICHAEL** Tell me, are there many other candidates invited here tonight?
- BARNEY** I wouldn't know. Everything has been organised in such a rush that we don't know where we are!
- MICHAEL** I've heard the Princess is a young lady of rare beauty.
- BARNEY** She is that. And a wonderfully warm personality, a dazzling smile, an infectious giggle and a stunning figure! Oh, she could make the dullest man happy. I know she does me!
- MICHAEL** But isn't Nanny Nora your intended?
- BARNEY** That's right – shatter my dream!
- MICHAEL** Oh, sorry.
- BARNEY** No, it's all right. The Princess must marry a suitable Prince as decreed by their Majesties. And, between you and me, you could stand a pretty good chance!

MICHAEL Well, thank you very much, Barney. I hope you're right.

[The LORD CHAMBERLAIN enters.]

BARNEY Lord Chamberlain, this is Prince Michael, another contender for the hand of the Princess.

L/CHAMBER Your Highness, I'm afraid you are too late. All the suitors have already been presented to their Majesties.

[At this point, there is a light change, and the FAIRY QUEEN enters and freezes the scene.]

F.Q. Now I really shouldn't do this, but the happiness of Princess Aurora is very important to me. Prince Michael is a fine young man, and I would be shirking in my duties as guardian to the Princess if I didn't at least allow them to meet! *[SHE waves her wand over the scene and exits. The others unfreeze.]*

BARNEY Go on, Lord Chamberlain. Can't you slip another one in?

L/CHAMBER Oh, I don't know. It's very irregular. If you would care to wait here, I'll see what I can do. *[HE exits.]*

BARNEY I'll see you later. Good luck.

MICHAEL Thank you. *[BARNEY exits.]* What did Barney say? A warm personality, a dazzling smile and an infectious giggle. Oh, Aurora, you don't know how I've longed for someone like you to come into my life.

MUSIC – SONG (MICHAEL)

[At the end of the number HE exits as the lights fade and the scene changes to

SCENE 4 THE ROYAL THRONE ROOM

(See Production notes.)

[The scene is as before, but the thrones have been replaced with a long table and three chairs. Set on the table are three buzzers, and on the front are three lights that, when lit, show an X.]

L/CHAMBER *[Like a TV announcer.]* And now, the moment you've all been waiting for. We are proud to present the ever-popular – How Do You Solve a Problem like The Palace Strictly Has Talent Idol, Not Just Any Prince Will Do! Please welcome tonight's judges, King Septimus the Seventeenth, Queen Sybil the Sixth, and their lovely daughter, whose fate is to be determined tonight, Princess Aurora. *[Fanfare. The KING, QUEEN, and AURORA enter SR and walk to behind their table with 3 buttons USR. The CHORUS all move USL to form a crowd/audience on stage, watching the show.]* And here are your co-hosts –Barney Ant and Nanny Dec! *[Or another pair of TV hosts.]*

[BARNEY and NANNY enter SL, crossing to centre stage.]

NANNY Oh, thank you all for that warm hand on my entrance! *[BARNEY looks at her.]*

BARNEY *[Hurrying on.]* Yes, well, ...hello everyone. And what a great show we've got lined up for you tonight. So without further delay, let's meet the contestants who aim to prove once and for all that the palace strictly has got talent... ermm, idol. Indeed!

NANNY Our first contestant is Prince Boris.

[BORIS enters SL, carrying a trombone. HE has a strong German accent, wears lederhosen, a monocle and has a long Bavarian moustache. NANNY is looking at BARNEY as BORIS crosses and the trombone hits her on the backside.]

NANNY Oh, three pints please!

[BORIS turns to the KING and QUEEN and bows.]

BORIS *[Standing and clicking his heels.]* I am Boris, and I am coming from Bavaria!

AURORA *[Sarcastically.]* Great. Nice lederhosen.

QUEEN Ah, Prince Boris. We're delighted you could make it.

BORIS *[Crossing up to her.]* Jar! Of course, you are my little apple strudel!

KING I say, steady on, old chap!

BARNEY And what do you do in Bavaria, Boris?

BORIS I am Prince! But when I'm not doing official duties, I like to slap my thighs and blow my horn. Oom par, oom par!

BARNEY Stick it up your jumper.

NANNY And what is your act?

BORIS I shall play a traditional Bavarian lullaby on my trusty flugelhorn.

NANNY And what an impressive instrument it is! Off you go then.

[NANNY and BARNEY step back to allow BORIS to perform. HE does so, emitting a cacophonous dirge as he stomps around the stage – CHORUS respond with horror- Judges QUEEN and AURORA press their Xs almost immediately, but the KING seems to be quite enjoying it, so then AURORA reaches over and presses his button for him]

BARNEY *[BARNEY and NANNY step forward again]* Well, that was certainly unusual. Thank you very much for that, Prince Boris.

[BORIS walks USL and joins the crowd.]