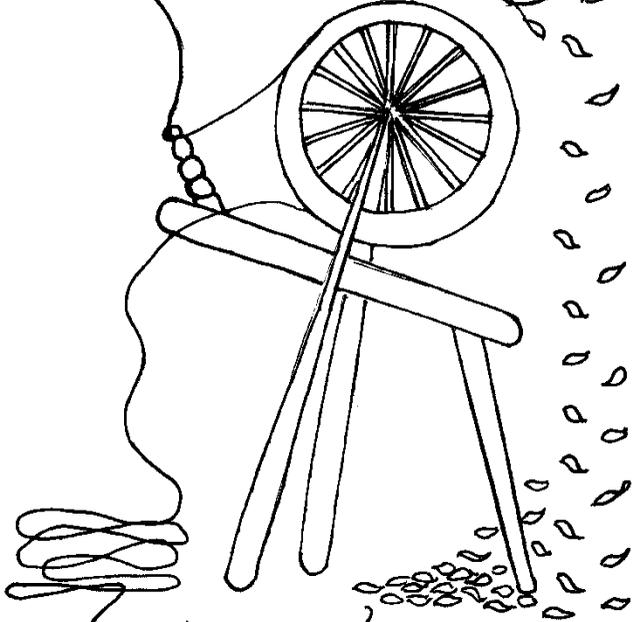


Sleeping Beauty



by Jo Smith

Sleeping Beauty

Cast List

The Immortals

Lilac a good fairy
Belladonna a bad fairy
Junior chorus of fairies and elves

The Mortals

King Harold of Ambrosia
Queen Matilda his wife
Princess Rose their daughter (*principal girl*)
Marigold her friend in the Palace
Nurse Constance nurse to the princess (*dame*)
Benjamin chancellor to King Harold
Gerald herald to King Harold
Prince Rufus of Faraway (*principal boy*)
Sir Rowan the prince's squire
Chorus of Townsfolk, Palace Attendants, etc

Sleeping Beauty

List of Scenes

- The Prologue On the road to Ambrosia (*Front of Tabs*)
- Act I Scene 1 Ambrosia, in the Palace entrance hall (*Full Set*)
- 2a With the Fairies (*Half Set*)
- 2b Somewhere in the Palace (*Front of Tabs*)
- 3 In the Palace ballroom (*Full Set*)
- 4a On the road to Ambrosia (*Front of Tabs*)
- 4b Somewhere in the Palace (*Half Set*)
- 5 A secret room in the Palace (*Full Set*)

**** INTERVAL ****

- The Interlogue Approaching Ambrosia (*Front of Tabs*)
- Act II Scene 1 Ambrosia, outside the Palace (*Full Set*)
- 2a Fairy Lilac's advice (*Front of Tabs*)
- 2b The Battle of the Brambles (*Half Set*)
- 3 A secret room in the Palace (*Full Set*)
- 4 Somewhere in the Palace (*Front of Tabs*)
 + Community Song
- 5 In the Palace ballroom (*Full Set*)

Prologue On the road to Ambrosia (*Front of Tabs*)

(*Enter Prince Rufus and Sir Rowan, through the auditorium*)

Prince That's enough for one day. We'll stop here for the night.

Sir Rowan But sire, we've only travelled from [*local town*] today. We'll never get there at this rate.

Prince Get where, Sir Rowan? I don't even know where we're going.

Sir Rowan To the enchanted palace ...

Prince The enchanted palace – pah! Sounds like some sort of fairy tale to me.

Sir Rowan More than a fairy tale, sire. We have it on good authority ...

Prince Good authority, my foot! My father's clown ...

Sir Rowan Your father's Prime Minister, you mean.

Prince I know what I mean. My father's *clown* tells us that there's a palace somewhere wrapped in a magic spell – and all of a sudden, we are dispatched to find it.

Sir Rowan Where's your sense of adventure gone?

Prince My sense of adventure left me in March 2020.

Sir Rowan You're forgetting the princess.

Prince Oh yes, the princess. A fairy-tale princess in a fairy-tale palace.

Sir Rowan And the treasure.

Prince Ah – and that's the real reason they've sent us, isn't it. They want their hands on that mythical treasure.

Sir Rowan According to their information, it's a fortune.

Prince And as our kingdom is so poor, we are sent away to bring it back – somehow.

Sir Rowan Somehow, sire.

Prince By offering myself to the princess.

Sir Rowan She is supposed to be beautiful.

Prince And where do you fit into the story? My father tells me you come

from that land – but you don't know where the palace is either.

Sir Rowan Not I – my grandfather came from there. As a young boy, I'm told, he escaped the spell and fled to your land – but he died many years ago, before I knew him.

Prince And the knowledge with him.

Sir Rowan Except for one thing. There's a secret proverb that was passed down to me.

Prince A secret proverb? How does it go?

Sir Rowan (*Looks around to make sure no-one else is in earshot*) It goes like this:–

Deadly nightshade may be frightening,
Through the thunder and the lightning,
Sheath your sword and trust to words,
Then you will find your future brightening.

Prince Makes no sense to me. What's it supposed to mean?

Sir Rowan It's something to do with the enchantment – or so I'm told.

Prince The enchantment again! What do you know of this enchantment?

Sir Rowan It's a long story.

Prince It's a long journey, Sir Rowan. You've plenty of time to tell me the story as we go.

Sir Rowan (*As they start to exit*) Well, sire, the legend goes like this. In the reign of your great-great-grandfather, there lived a king and queen in a country called Ambrosia who were much loved by their people – and the people were overjoyed when they announced the birth of their first child, Princess Rose ...

(They exit DL as curtains open on Act I, Scene 1)

Act I Scene 1 Ambrosia, in the Palace entrance hall (*Full set*)

(The chorus is on stage)

Song 1 Opening Chorus

(Benjamin the Chancellor enters UL)

Benjamin Now, my good people, have you got your invitations ready for inspection? Line up! line up! Only one pair per household remember.

Chorus 1 Ooh! He's being a bossy Benjamin.

Chorus 2 One pair per household?

Benjamin One per household. We can't afford to give them away to everyone.

Chorus 3 There's not that many of us.

Chorus 4 How many are you expecting?

Benjamin We have to be careful with our funds.

Chorus 5 But we're one of the richest kingdoms in the world.

Chorus 6 And it's not as if a princess gets christened that often.

Benjamin If we're richer than most, it's because we have exercised prudence in the past.

Chorus 1 Ah, prudence!

Chorus 2 Nice girl, is Prudence. I knew her mother.

Chorus 3 Didn't know she needed exercising though.

Benjamin Why do I have to spend my time among people like you?

(Constance the Nurserymaid enters UR)

Constance Now then! You leave my Benjie alone. He's got enough on his plate today without having to put up with your cheek.

Chorus 1 Benjie?

Constance I mean Chancellor Benjamin.

Chorus 2 We know who you mean.

Constance Pillar of Ambrosian society.

Chorus *(Cheekily)* Oooh!

Constance Conserver of the exchequer.

Chorus Oooh!

Constance And he has the King's ear, you know.

Chorus 3 The King's ear?

Chorus 4 That's not very nice.

Chorus 5 Where does he keep it?

Chorus 6 In his pocket?

Constance That's enough from you lot. The christening's that way (*points UL*) – time you were assembling.

(The Chorus start to exit UL)

Benjamin But I haven't checked their invitations yet.

Constance Checked their invitations? What do you need to check their invitations for? You've known them all your life.

Benjamin Nurse Constance, it would not be prudent ...

Constance Listen to you! 'It would not be prudent.' I'll tell you what would not be prudent. It would not be prudent to find you've forgotten to invite someone important – that's what. Never mind all this lot.

Benjamin I think that's unlikely.

Constance I don't. I know you, Benjie – you mean well, but you don't always get it right.

Song 2 Benjamin and Constance

Benjamin I wish you wouldn't call me by that name.

Constance (*Teasing*) Which name's that, then?

Benjamin You know which name I mean.

Constance Benjie!

Benjamin Yes, that one. Not while I'm on public duty.

Constance Very well then, Benjamin. But if you're on public duty, you'd better get on with it. The christening's about to start as soon as the King and Queen arrive.

Benjamin Ah, yes – I'll go and ...

Together ... check the invitations! Yes.

(Benjamin exits UL)

Constance Poor Benjie! He means well, but ... *(To audience)* Ah – you’ll have come for the christening too. Hope you’ve got your invitations then!

Let me introduce myself. I’m Connie – Nurse Constance, nursemaid to the princess, to give my official title. The little Princess Rose. She’s a delight. The King and Queen are so happy – she’s their first, and – well, we’ve been a long time without a little prince or princess in Ambrosia. So it’s a very special occasion.

Benjie – sorry, Chancellor Benjamin, but we’ve known each other since we were *that* big, so he’s Benjie to me – well, he was asked to invite all the great and the grand to come here today, but I know him. He gets so tied up with all his rules and regulations that he forgets the simplest things sometimes. So let’s just hope he’s invited everyone he should have invited.

(Enter Belladonna with a flourish, SL)

Belladonna Yes, let us hope so indeed!

Constance Oo-er! And who might you be?

Belladonna You don’t know me?

Constance Are you *[topical scary personality]*?

Belladonna Don’t trifle with me! I am Belladonna.

Constance Bella what? Does it come with custard?

Belladonna Donna. Belladonna.

Constance Well, you’re not Belle o’ the Ball, that’s for sure.

Belladonna Silence, mortal, or you will regret it.

Constance Mortal? D’you mean that you’re imm – imm ...

Belladonna I am a fairy – yes.

Constance Well, you certainly came out impressively!

Belladonna And I am an angry fairy.

Constance I can see that by the way you’re stamping your little feet. And is that smoke coming out of your ears?

Belladonna Why was I not invited?

Constance Why were you not invited? Invited to do what?

Belladonna Why was I not invited to the christening?

Constance Ah, the christening. Oh, the christening! You mean ...

Belladonna Every fairy in the kingdom received an invitation, except me.

Constance Every f...

Belladonna Except Belladonna.

Constance I'm sure it was a mistake – just a slight ...

Belladonna A slight – yes. I have been slighted.

Constance Just a slight oversight, I meant. I'll have a word with Benjie – I mean the Chancellor – and see if he will ...

Belladonna Too late! He's had his chance. Belladonna slipped his mind once, but she will not do so again!

Constance ... find you an invitation.

Belladonna I will not be fobbed off – I will not be second best.

Song 3 Belladonna

Belladonna Now mortal, listen to me well – I shall not be ignored!
Tell the King, from Belladonna, that his princess is a gonner!

(She exits SL)

Constance Oh, that Benjamin – it's all his forgetful fault. What am I going to do now?

(A Herald enters UR)

Herald *(Proclaiming)* Make way for the King and Queen of Ambrosia – make way for the King and Queen of Ambrosia – make way for ...

Constance Yes, alright, alright – I heard you the first time.

Herald *(Still proclaiming)* King Harold and Queen Matilda of Ambrosia approach.

Constance Look, you silly herald, look. There's only me here. No need to shout like that.

Herald But that's what I'm employed for, to shout.

Constance Well go and shout somewhere else – I've got a crisis on and I need your shouting like a hole in the head.

Herald Suit yourself. (*To audience*) First they give you a part and say shout as loud as you can, because you're, like, a herald – then just when you're getting into it they say don't shout after all because there's, like, a crisis on. I wish some people would make their minds up.

(*Enter UR King Harold and Queen Matilda*)

King What's happened to our proclamation? Have you gone on strike, Herald?

Herald Right, that's it – I'm off, and don't expect me to be back for the next performance. (*Exits UL*)

Queen Harold, you really must stop upsetting the staff like that.

King But my dear, I only asked ...

Queen And today of all days should be such a happy occasion – we mustn't go upsetting people.

King I only said ...

Queen Ah, Constance – how is my little Rose? Have you settled her down?

Constance The princess is fine, your majesty – but ...

Queen A little sleep now and she'll be good and ready for the ceremony. Harold, have you finished preparing your speech?

King I've written a few words down.

Queen Good, that's what I like – a man of few words.

King (*Aside*) Not much chance of anything else.

Queen Pardon, dear?

King I said, is there anything else you'd like?

Queen I see. Constance, why are you bobbing around in that peculiar fashion?

Constance Something's happened, your majesty.

Queen Well, you'd better go and see to it then.

Constance No, nothing like that. It's to do with the princess.

Queen The princess? But just now you said she was ready.

Constance Oh, she's ready, your majesty. But, we've just received a – a message.

Queen A message? To do with the princess?

Constance Well – more of a threat, really.

King A threat? Summon the guard! Search the grounds! Launch the navy!

Queen Don't be silly, Harold – we haven't got a navy. What sort of threat?

Constance A threat from a fairy.

King A fairy?

Queen Yes, Harold, you know – live in the forests, wings, wands ...

King Yes dear, I know a fairy when I see one – but I thought they were supposed to be all peace and leotards.

Constance Not this one. Belladonna, that's his name. Nasty piece of work, if you ask me. And he holds a grudge.

King Not a wand?

Queen Harold, you're not helping. Carry on, Constance.

Constance He wasn't invited to the christening.

Queen Well, we can't invite every Faye, Puck and Sybil.

Constance He says we did. Except for him.

King Who did?

Constance Well ...

Queen & Constance Benjamin did.

(Benjamin enters UL)

Benjamin You called?

Queen We did, Benjamin. Tell us about the list.

Benjamin The list?

Queen The list, Benjamin. The guest list to the christening. Who's on it?

King I think she means, who's not on it.

Benjamin We had to exercise prudence, as you know.

Constance Not her again!

Benjamin We couldn't invite just anyone. We had to make hard choices.

Constance (*Pointing to the audience*) Well, you invited this lot – they're hardly choice!

Queen But did you forget anyone who might be important?

King For instance [*local dignitary*].

Queen I said important. Well?

Benjamin I can't think of anyone, ma'am.

Constance (*To audience*) Oh he's hopeless. You're going to have to help him. Who did he miss off the list?

(*Audience reaction*)

Queen The fairy Belladonna, Benjamin. Would you like me to spell it?

Benjamin I – T?

Constance (*To audience*) You have to pity him, don't you? (*To Benjamin*) You have single-handedly left a seriously significant fairy off the guest list. A seriously significant fairy who is now threatening seriously significant action against us.

Benjamin Easy for you to say! What action's that?

Constance Well, we're not quite sure, but it doesn't sound good. What he actually said was, "Tell the King, from Belladonna, that his princess is a gonner!"

King You didn't tell me that!

Constance I'm telling you now.

Queen My Rose, a gonner?

Constance That's what he said, and he looked like he meant it.

(*Fairy Lilac enters SR*)

Lilac He did mean it.

Constance Oh lor', here comes another one.

Benjamin Ah, but entering stage-right means she's a good fairy. The bad ones always enter stage-left. So that's alright.

Constance What do you think this is – Trivial Pursuit?

King Who are you?

Lilac I'm Fairy Lilac of the Wood,
And Benjie's right, I'm rather good!

Constance *(To Benjamin)* And you can stop looking so pleased with yourself. I suppose you remembered to invite this one.

Benjamin Well yes, I did actually.

Lilac Belladonna's really miffed
you missed him – and he'd bought a gift.
So now he means to thumb his nose
And take it out on little Rose.

Queen Take it out on Rose? How will he do that?

King Don't worry, my dear. It's all hot air.

Lilac Hot air it's not,
It's a serious plot.

Constance A gonner, she said.

Benjamin Oh, don't keep on about it.

Lilac He means to conjure up a wicked spell
to make sure one day Rose is less than well –
Well, no – let's call a spade a spade – he said
he's going to make sure Rosie ends up dead!

(At this the Queen swoons into the King's arms)

King, Constance & Benjamin Dead?

Lilac *(Nods)* Dead – that's what he said.

King Can't you do anything to help?

Benjamin *(Moves to him)* Well perhaps I can take one of her arms, sire.

King Not you, you idiot! *(Leaves Benjamin propping up the Queen by himself)* I mean the fairy. Can't you do anything to stop this spell. Have you no posers of your own?

Lilac Posers?

King No, that can't be right. The author must have hit the wrong key.
Have you no powers of your own?

Lilac Oh powers, yes, I've lots.

Song 4 Fairy Lilac

King, Constance & Benjamin But can you break Belladonna's spell?

Lilac Maybe.

Constance Only maybe?

Lilac I'll have to go and check my book.
I'm sure there's something if I look.
But don't you fret, there's lots of time – I mean
his spell won't take effect till Rose has turned sixteen. (*Exits SR*)

Queen (*Coming round*) Turned sixteen? What does she mean?

King It means, my dear, that for now at least we can forget the curse and
get on with the christening. I'll get the Herald to announce ...

Constance You won't – he walked out, remember? Benjie, you'll have to
do it.

Benjamin Oh really, Constance, I'm not the heralding type.

(*Herald enters UL*)

Herald It's alright, I'm back – if I can do my job without interruption this
time.

King Proclaim away to your heart's content, Herald. No-one will stop you
this time.

Herald So the crisis is over, right?

Constance Right.

Herald Right. (*Clears throat*) And I can shout as loud as I like now, right?

King Right. Just get on with it!

Herald Right. (*Clears throat again*) And ...

(*Chorus enter UL and UR*)

Chorus 1 When's this ceremony going to start?

Chorus 2 We've been waiting for ages.

Chorus 3 The guests are starting to eat the food.

Chorus 4 And the baby's getting restless.

Constance Oh dear, I'd better go and see to the dear little thing.

Queen *(to King)* Yes, come on – we can't keep the guests waiting.

Herald Just a minute, I haven't made the announcement yet.

Chorus 1 You're too late, Gerald.

Chorus 2 You can announce it to yourself.

Chorus 3 We're going to the christening.

Song 5 Chorus

(Curtain at end of song)

Act I Scene 2a With the Fairies *(Front of Tabs – to Half Set for dance)*

(Enter SL Belladonna)

Belladonna So, the lily-livered Fairy Lilac thinks she can break my spell, does she? We'll see about that. I use the most powerful recipes known – I get them from *[well-known cookery book]*. Yes, I can see you're impressed.

But like all good recipes, they take time to mature. Sixteen years in this case. And on her sixteenth birthday – beware! She will meet with a little prick, on her finger. Such a small event, she may not even notice – but I will, and my magic will start to take effect. I'll spare you the details because I can see that you're a sensitive audience – but it won't be pretty. You don't mess with Belladonna and get away with it lightly.

(Enter SR Fairy Lilac)

Lilac Well, you're a scary fairy and no mistake!

(To audience)

At least, he thinks he is, but goodness' sake,
He couldn't cast a proper spell to save his life –
So, lucky he's immortal.

Belladonna Save my life? You namsy-pamsy little goody two-shoes!
When was the last time you cast a spell worth talking about? I could blast
you right out of your frilly fairy frock, if only I could find the right page.
(Consults his book)

Lilac Now, now – you know it’s a family show,
and I don’t think that’s where we want to go!

Belladonna They’re not here to enjoy themselves – they’re at [*your
organisation*] pantomime.

Lilac *(To audience)* How to be enchanting – not;
a talent Belladonna’s got!

Belladonna When did being enchanting ever get you anywhere?

Lilac To be perfectly honest, my dear Belladonna,
I thought that’s what fairies were here for.
But since you’re not sure, and to check out our honour,
Let’s see what the audience cheer for.
A referendum. *(To audience)* Now, what do you find?
Do you think that we fairies are helpful and kind?

Belladonna *(To audience)* Do you believe in fairy tales, then?
(Business with the audience)

Lilac Of course they do – you know it’s true.

Belladonna We’ll see if they do by the end of the show. I’m off to start
the brew – it says simmer for sixteen years, so I’d better get weaving.
Don’t want to be late for the birthday party. *(Exits SL)*

Lilac He’s not as nasty as he looks,
But never eat a thing he cooks!

Now, if you don’t mind, and you’d be so kind,
We’re going to move you along in time –
Remember, this is pantomime –
So when our little dance is through,
Though it may not seem long to you,
Sixteen years will have passed you by –
Where’s your life going? I hear you cry!

Dance 6 Fairies

(Fairies enter and perform a dance – curtains close at the end)

Act I Scene 2b Somewhere in the Palace *(Front of Tabs)*

(King and Queen enter SL)

Queen What have we done to deserve this, Harold?

King What's that, dear?

Queen Our daughter, dear.

King Now don't make a scene – it is her birthday.

Queen Not make a scene! All the guests are about to arrive, and where is she?

King Getting ready, I should think.

Queen You should think! Do you know how many dresses she's tried on this morning? Perfectly good dresses which I'd bought for her, but none of them were right, oh no. And now she's locked herself in her room, to stop me interfering if you please, and Lord knows what she'll turn up in.

King Fashions change.

Queen And the make-up! I didn't know what make-up was when I was sixteen.

King *(Aside)* Probably hadn't been invented.

Queen Pardon?

King I believe Cleopatra used make-up to striking effect when she was young.

Queen Yes, and look what happened to her. Struck down by a snake.

King There are no snakes in Ambrosia.

Queen You haven't forgotten the fairy's curse?

King Sometimes I think having a teenage daughter is curse enough.

(Enter Benjamin SL, carrying a guest list)

Benjamin Your majesties, the guests will be here shortly. Should I ...

Queen Harold, exert your paternal authority – go and get her.

Act I Scene 3

Sleeping Beauty

King Oh, very well. Wish me luck. Frankly, I'd rather be leading my troops into battle. *(Exits SL)*

Queen I hope you've got the guest list right this time, Chancellor.

Benjamin I have taken every care, ma'am.

Queen Let me see. *(She takes the list from him)* H'm – Baron Hardup, he doesn't look too promising. And Richard Whittington – who's he?

Benjamin I believe he's some rat-catcher who made good.

Queen Got money, has he? That's what I like.

Benjamin We're hardly in need of money, ma'am. Due to our prudence over the years, we have acquired a considerable amount in the State Coffers already.

Queen We can always do with more, Chancellor – we have a teenage daughter. This Ali Baba, now – is he in oil?

Benjamin I'm told that he has had friends in oil.

Queen Well, that's a start.

Benjamin The gifts from the guests are laid out in the Ballroom – if your majesty would care to inspect them.

Queen We might as well, while we're waiting for Rose to grace us with her own presence.

Benjamin With her own presents? Ah, presence! Yes, I see – very droll, ma'am.

Queen *(Giving him a withering glance)* We are not droll, Chancellor. We are a teenager's mother. Lead me to the gifts.

(They exit SL)

Act I Scene 3 In the Palace Ballroom *(Full Set)*

(The chorus is on stage)

Song 7 Chorus

(Constance enters UL)

Constance Oh, I do like a party, don't you?

Chorus 1 Bet you can't remember when you were sixteen, can you Nurse Constance.

Chorus 2 There were still dinosaurs around then, weren't there?

Constance That's enough of your cheek, thank you very much.

(Herald enters UL)

Herald Make way – make way, for his ...

(The King enters UL in a hurry)

King Yes, thank you, thank you Herald. No time for all that. Has anyone seen my daughter.

Constance Princess Rose? She was in her room.

King She was in her room. She's not there now.

Constance Well, perhaps she's in the, er, you know where.

King Perhaps you'd like to try looking there, Nurse.

Constance Don't worry, your majesty – we'll find her before the guests arrive.

King I'm not worried about the guests – I've got her mother breathing down my neck wanting to know what she's wearing, that's what worries me. Now then Herald, we haven't tried this corridor yet – come along. The rest of you, search the palace for her. *(He exits in haste UR, followed unwillingly by the Herald – the chorus leave by various exits)*

Constance Ah, sweet sixteen. It seems like only yesterday that I was sixteen. No, don't laugh. I remember it well. At my birthday party I was all sophistication – a dear little dress with matching accoutrements, bouffant hair-do, even a touch of make-up. Oh yes, daring times those!

(Rose pops her head round the corner DR)

Rose Pssst!

Constance What's that?

Rose It's me, Rose.

(Rose enters – she is wearing the latest cult fashion)

Constance Good Heavens! What are you wearing?

Rose You don't approve.

Constance Good Heavens!

Rose Is that all you can say? 'Good Heavens'.

Constance I was just thinking about my own sixteenth birthday, and –
Good Heavens!

Rose It's the fashion today.

Constance Suddenly I feel very old. Has your mother seen it?

Rose What do you think?

Constance Silly question. I'd have felt the rumble through the walls. Who
put you up to this?

Rose Nobody 'put me up to it'.

Constance You didn't go out yourself and buy it. And the hair ...

Rose Marigold helped me.

Constance Ah ha! Enter, stage right, Marigold. (*Marigold enters SR*) I
might have known you'd be involved too.

Marigold So?

Constance 'So'! It's an equation I've learnt over the past few years: Rose
plus Marigold equals Mischief.

Rose She wanted me to have a good time on my birthday.

Constance You'll have a good hiding when your parents see you. You
know they want you to make a good impression on the guests.

Marigold They want to marry her off to some rich old geriatric. That's
gross.

Constance He'll think twice before he fancies this lot. (*Indicates Rose*)

Rose (*Sarcastically*) Thank you so much for your confidence.

Constance I thought that's what you wanted – to put them off.

Rose Yes, but not that way.

Marigold She wants to pull them in and spit them out.

Constance Oh really? Well, let's try it on Benjamin then. (*Calls*) Oh,

Benjie!

(Benjamin enters SL)

Benjamin You called? *(Sees Rose)* Oh, my goodness!

Constance Now let me ask you, Benjie, in strictest confidence mind – are you drawn by this young lady?

Benjamin But it's Rose!

Constance Yes I know it's Rose, but if it wasn't Rose – would you be drawn?

Rose *(Flirting)* Or even if it was Rose.

Constance Enough of that, young lady.

Benjamin Yes, quite enough.

Marigold I think he's drawn, Rosie.

Benjamin I don't know what to say.

Constance You don't have to. I think you'd better get on with your business. *(She ushers him off)*

Rose So?

Constance I don't know, I really don't.

Song 8 Rose, Marigold and Constance

Constance Now if you want to keep the peace, you'd better make yourselves scarce before the Queen gets here.

Rose Then we'll make our grand entrance when everyone's arrived – and it's too late for her to do anything about it. Come on Marigold, let's find somewhere to hide out till then. *(They exit SR)*

Constance *(After them)* You are skating on very thin ice, young ladies.

(The Queen and Benjamin enter UL)

Queen Ah, Constance, I've come to look at the gifts. Who was that you were just talking to?

Constance Talking to? No-one. I mean, I think I must have been talking to myself.

Queen First sign of madness, Constance.

Constance You could be well right, ma'am. Do you think it's madness, Benjie?

Benjamin In a manner of speaking it probably is, yes.

Queen You know about this affliction too then, Benjamin? Well, you'd better get it seen to, Constance. We can't have people in the palace suddenly embarrassing the guests.

Constance Quite so, your majesty. I'll, er, see to the problem. *(Exits SR)*

Queen Now then, Benjamin, where are these gifts? Come on man – you look dazed. Don't say you've got the affliction too?

(The King enters UL)

King I've been all round the palace, and there's no sign of her.

Queen Really! Children – who'd have them?

Benjamin The princess, sire?

King The princess, Benjamin – who else?

Benjamin I have it on good authority that the princess has been found, sire.

Queen Well you kept that to yourself. Where is she?

Benjamin That I cannot say, ma'am.

King You know she's found, but you don't know where?

Benjamin I know where she was found, sire, but – oh dear, this is getting very difficult – I don't know where she is now.

Queen Chancellor, are you sure you're quite all right?

(The Herald enters UL)

Herald Your majesties, ladies and gentlemen, the guests are arriving.

Queen The guests arriving and we still don't know where the wretched girl is. Harold, do something.

King Benjamin, do something.

(Benjamin looks round for someone else – just as Constance enters)

Benjamin Constance, do something.

Constance Cut!

King I beg your pardon?

Constance Cut! Like they do in the films. *(To the wings)* Bring on the chorus! We need a passage of time to sort this thing out.

Queen Just a minute ...

King A passage of time?

Constance Your majesty, trust me – I’m a nurse. I know about these things.

(The chorus drift in looking bewildered)

Chorus 1 This entrance wasn’t in the script.

Chorus 2 We were in the middle of a game of cards.

Constance Sorry, this is live theatre. Change of plan.

Chorus 3 Change of plan? You can’t just change the script whenever it suits you.

Constance Why not? Everyone else does.

[Of course, if you are blessed with a cast that is always word perfect, you might like to delete the line above!]

Chorus 3 But ...

Constance No buts – the princess has gone missing and the Queen says we must do something.

Chorus 4 Do something? What sort of something?

Constance Why, you idiot, the something we always do in pantomime when there’s a problem – we sing a song!

Song 9 Principals and Chorus

(Curtain closes at end of song)

Act I Scene 4a On the road to Ambrosia *(Front of Tabs)*

(Enter SR, Prince Rufus and Sir Rowan)

Prince Let me get this straight – when the guests arrived for the princess’s sixteenth birthday party, you say she wasn’t there to meet them.

Sir Rowan So the legend goes, sire. And nor could anyone find her

according to my grandfather. Apparently he remembered helping in the search for her, all over the palace.

Prince But she couldn't just vanish into thin air.

Sir Rowan That's what everyone said. But she did just vanish, it seems.

Prince Sir Rowan, I'm weary of this journey. First you tell me we're trying to find an enchanted palace, and now a disappearing princess.

Sir Rowan Confusing, isn't it?

Prince Well, if you're confused, what hope have I got?

Sir Rowan You've had the advantage of a [*local school*] education, sire. I'd have thought you could work these things out better than I can.

Prince I think I'm beginning to lose confidence in you.

Sir Rowan Don't do that, sire. We're still in this together.

Song 10 Prince and Sir Rowan

Prince And are you sure we're on the right path.

Sir Rowan My nose tells me we are.

Prince What's your nose got to do with it? Don't tell me you can smell your way to the palace.

Sir Rowan No, I think this smell's the coffee they're making for the interval.

Prince Really? In that case I think we'd better make a move.

Sir Rowan Good idea, sire. This way? (*Points SL*)

Prince Any way, Sir Rowan, so long as it's away from that coffee!

(They exit SL)

Act I Scene 4b Somewhere in the Palace (*Half Set*)

(Rose and Marigold enter SR)

Marigold We've never been here before, Rose. You sure we're not lost?

Rose We're up in one of the towers – I think.

Marigold You think.

Rose Well we climbed enough steps. Must be.

Marigold No windows though. Isn't that odd? I thought there were windows in all the towers.

Rose Well – this is, like, a corridor, isn't it. We'll come to a proper room soon.

Marigold Hope so. Shouldn't we go back the way we came?

Rose You scared?

Marigold Me, scared? Course not! Well – only a little bit. How about you?

Rose Only a little bit, too. Which way did we come in?

Marigold (*Going to SR*) This way, I think.

(They try to find a way out SR, but fail)

Rose Can't find the door. Are you sure?

Marigold No, I'm not sure any more.

Rose (*Suddenly*) Look – what's that?

(She points to stage left, where elves are about to enter)

Marigold Rose, did I say I was a little bit scared? I'm a lot scared now!

Song? 11 Elves

A junior chorus of Elves enter DL. They jostle among themselves getting up onto the stage ...

Elf 1 We'd better be getting back – you know he doesn't like us taking time off.

Elf 2 That's right.

Elf 3 Not fair! He works us too hard.

Elf 4 Don't let him hear you say that, or you'll be for it!

Elf 1 We're probably for it anyway.

Elf 2 But we only took a few minutes off. We can't work all day without a break.

Elf 3 He thinks we can.

Elf 4 So, we'd better get back.

All Elves Oh dear!

(They exit SL)

Marigold Who were they? And who is this he they kept talking about?
He doesn't sound very friendly to me.

Rose I've no idea. Shall we follow them and find out?

Marigold I'm not sure that's a good idea.

Rose This is my palace, and I've a right to go where I want.

Marigold Rose – let's be sensible about this. We're in a room where the door
just disappeared, and then we see these weird little hobbit things ...

Rose Looked like elves to me.

Marigold Elves, hobbit things – whatever, Rose – I don't know about
these things. But I do know I don't want to follow them.

Rose *(To the audience)* What do you think? Do you think we should
follow them? I think we should.

Marigold And I say we shouldn't.

(Audience reaction: "Oh no you shouldn't", etc.)

Rose Well, I'm going anyway! *(She exits following the Elves)*

Marigold Oh, Rose! Don't go. Is she silly, or what? I suppose I'm going
to have to follow her now! *(She exits following Rose)*

(Constance and Benjamin enter SR – he has a map of the Palace)

Constance I'm sure I heard voices coming from in here.

Benjamin It's not a part of the palace that I'm familiar with.

Constance I'm not surprised – I counted a hundred steps climbing up here.
You wouldn't want to do that every day. I'm whacked!

Benjamin The air does seem a little rarefied. In fact, I feel quite light-
headed.

Constance Oh, situation normal then.

(The King, Queen and Herald enter SR)

Herald (*Faintly*) Their majesties the King and Queen!

King Don't strain yourself, Herald. There's no-one here to proclaim to.

Constance Except us, and we don't count.

Queen When I find that daughter of mine, there'll be some proclamation!

King Save your breath, my dear. You'll use up all the oxygen. Where do we go next, Benjamin?

Queen Down, I hope!

Benjamin We appear to be off the map, sire.

King Off the map? How can we be off the map when we haven't left the building?

Benjamin I confess I'm not entirely sure.

Constance You are an airy-fairy Benjie, and no mistake. Here, let me have a look.

(They all four pore over the map, and trace out a path which ends up off the top of the page)

Benjamin Now do you believe me? – we're up here, off the map.

King So it would seem. We didn't have any extensions built, did we?

Benjamin None, sire.

Song 12 King, Queen, Constance, Benjamin

Queen Off the map or not, we haven't looked that way yet – so let's go.
(She goes towards exit, SL)

King If you say so, dear, but ...

Herald (*Moving to be first at exit, SL*) Make way, make way ...

King Don't be a silly herald, Gerald. There's no-one but mice along there to hear you.

Constance (*To audience*) They hope! (*They exit SL*)

Act I Scene 5 A Secret Room in the Palace (*Full Set*)

(Chorus and Elf workers are on stage, weaving, etc – there is also, of course, a spinning wheel)

Song 13 Chorus & Elves

(Enter SL Belladonna)

Belladonna *(To audience)* Thought you'd seen the last of me, didn't you? Thought that after sixteen years I'd have forgotten about my curse? You wish!

This is where the dirty deed will be done, here in my magic workshop. No, it's not on the map, because it's invisible to mere mortals like you unless I choose to let you see it. And I'm choosing now.

Today, on her sixteenth birthday, I let princess Rose see the magic door, and she's passed through it – and she's on her way up here, to meet her fate. Ha! I'll teach those royals not to ignore Belladonna.

You disapprove? Ahh, diddums! And I suppose you're hoping it will all turn out right in the end, like in a pantomime. Well let me tell you, this is not a pantomime.

(Business with audience)

So, you think you know better than Belladonna, do you? Beware, or I'll give you all the same treatment. *(To the elves)* Elves, bring me the wheel.

We'll see how brave you are now, my fine mortals. Who dares spin a yarn with Belladonna?

(She indicates the spinning wheel – Further business with audience)

You think it has a poisoned spindle? My dears, whatever gave you that idea? You mustn't believe everything you read in Fairy Tales. But in this case – Belladonna and poison – makes sense, doesn't it. Yes. One touch, and bye-bye Rose. Sweet Rose – innocent Rose – dear Rose ...

(Enter suddenly SL Rose and Marigold)

Rose Here, what's all this then?

Belladonna *(Aghast)* Rose?

Rose Princess Rose to you. What's going on?

Belladonna Dear little Rose?

Rose I'll 'dear little Rose' you, you old bag. Does my old man know about this scam?

Marigold Looks dead dodgy to me – like some sort of sweat shop.

Belladonna Sweet sixteen and never been ...?

Rose Never mind all that – you haven't told me what you're doing here.

Marigold I reckon we could shop the lot, Rose. Counterfeit goods, immigrant labour, you name it.

(The elves exit in haste on hearing this)

Belladonna *(To audience)* I think I might have made a mistake.

Rose What planet are you on?

Belladonna Tell me, do you get on well with your parents?

Marigold *(Hoots with laughter)* Blimey, Rose – how many times have they threatened to chuck you out?

Belladonna That's what I was afraid of. I must be a bit old-fashioned.

Rose Old-fashioned? I can't believe you were ever in fashion.

Belladonna I thought that getting rid of you would be a curse to them. But I can see I was wrong – you're already a curse!

Marigold Takes one to know one, eh Rose?

Belladonna *(To Marigold)* And you're no better.

Marigold Charmed, I'm sure.

Belladonna So, after all these years of planning, it turns out I needn't have bothered. I'll leave them to cope with you as you are. Nothing could be worse than that!

Rose Here – are you trying to tell me something?

Marigold Don't push your luck, granddad – she turns nasty when she's in a strop.

Rose *(To Belladonna)* Are you in some sort of position to tell me what's what? I don't think so.

Marigold Leave him be, Rose. He's sad enough as he is.

Rose *(Noticing the spinning wheel)* And what's your weird contraption? Does it play a tune? Like, classical music?

Belladonna Don't touch that!

Rose Some old antique, is it? – like you.

Belladonna Keep away!

Marigold Sounds like he means it, Rose.

Rose I am Princess Rose – this is my palace – and I shall do what I want.
So there!

Marigold Not a good idea, Rose.

Belladonna No, don't touch that!

(Rose touches the spinning wheel and collapses on the floor)

Marigold Rose!

Belladonna Foolish child!

(Enter SL the Herald, King, Queen, Constance and Benjamin)

Herald Make way, make way for ...

Queen *(Bursting past the Herald)* Rose? Are you here? *(Then, seeing her on the floor)* Rose!

King *(Pointing to Belladonna)* Seize that person.

Belladonna Too late! – see here the outcome of my curse,
and be aware, it cannot be reversed.
And here's the joke, I tried to stop her, but she went ahead,
so now, within the hour, your daughter will be dead!

(Belladonna exits SL)

Queen Dead!

Benjamin Within the hour, ma'am – we have an hour. Constance, you're a nurse ...

Constance A nursery nurse, Benjie. My training covered awful smells, not magic spells.

King Herald, go and summon the Court Physician – quickly.

Herald Yes, your majesty.

(Fairy Lilac enters SR)

Lilac No, stop – you really might as well all stay –
There’s nothing you can do for her today.

Marigold You mean, she’s going to die whatever we do?

Lilac That Belladonna, he’s a one –
It’s his idea of having fun!
He dabbles in the dark arts every day –
comes up with lots of potions, and I’d say
about a third of them have some effect.

Queen Only a third? So it might not work?

Lilac That’s normally the case, but I expect
this one will do the job – it’s very strong –
not likely to be one that goes all wrong.

Constance There’s no hope then?

Benjamin There’s always hope, Constance.

Constance The little baby girl I nursed – cut down by a curse.

Lilac But there’s a but – that’s why I’ve come along.
Although, like I just said, the potion’s strong
and can’t be stopped entirely, let’s get real –
I’m happy to announce a special deal!

King Name your price. I’d empty my exchequer to save my daughter.

(Benjamin is seen to have a choking fit at this)

Constance Now, now, Benjie. Rose is more important than Prudence.

Lilac The sort of deal I have on offer
won’t affect your teeming coffers –
but, it will affect the life
of you, your daughter and your wife –
and any others in the palace.

Queen What’re you saying?

Lilac Donna’s malice
can’t be stopped, but can be changed –
magically rearranged by me –
instead of being dead,
she’ll sleep for years and years instead.

Constance How many years?

Lilac That's elementary
my dear Constance – one whole century.

Queen A hundred years?

Benjamin That is generally what is meant by a century, ma'am.

King Thank you, Chancellor – I think we all know that.

Constance So, we'll never see her again – because by the time she wakes up, we'll all be well past our 'use by' date. Even you, Marigold. Pushing up the daisies.

Lilac Ah no, 'cause you'll be sleeping too –
Each mortal in the palace here
will fall asleep when Rose does –
snoozing with her through the years.

Oh, one more thing before I go – now what d'you think of this? –
I've fixed it so a handsome Prince will wake her with a kiss.

Marigold Just one prince?

Lilac Sorry ducky, that's the rule.
But p'raps he'll bring a friend with him.

Marigold Oh, cool!

Lilac Now, no more chat, it's time to sleep.
Lights out! –

*(She snaps her fingers – there is a blackout – then the lights come up slowly,
and everyone except Lilac is asleep.)*

Sweet dreams and slumber deep.

(Junior chorus of fairies enter to dance during the next song)

Song 14 Fairy Lilac – The Lilac Fairy's blessing

Lilac There will now be an interval of a hundred years.
Refreshments will be served. Thank you.

(The curtain falls)

*** INTERVAL ***

The Interlogue Approaching Ambrosia (*Front of Tabs*)

(*Enter SL, Prince Rufus and Sir Rowan*)

Sir Rowan I think we were successful in avoiding the coffee, sire.

Prince The coffee, yes – but I wonder what other hazards lie before us?

Sir Rowan Nothing so fearful as that, I should imagine.

Prince We must arrive at this enchanted palace before long. What was it you were saying to me about the vanishing princess?

Sir Rowan As my grandfather told it, the princess just disappeared and soon afterwards the palace became spellbound.

Prince How come he didn't become spellbound with it?

Sir Rowan He says he was saved by a fairy.

Prince Sir Rowan – so far in this story we have had an enchanted palace and a vanishing princess, and now you want me to believe that your grandfather was saved by a fairy.

Sir Rowan That's about it.

Prince Why am I beginning to wonder if you're quite alright?

Sir Rowan I seem to remember you've been thinking that since the beginning of the journey, sire.

Prince Well, let's assume you're sane, just for a moment – though I'm finding that difficult to believe. Why would a fairy want to save him in particular?

(*Fairy Lilac has entered SR –*

Sir Rowan sees her, but the Prince has his back to her)

Sir Rowan I don't know. You'll have to ask the fairy.

Prince Oh, and where might I find a fairy to ask?

Sir Rowan Er, behind you.

(*The Prince turns to see Fairy Lilac*)

Lilac Prince Rufus, welcome – and your friend.
Your journey's almost at an end.

Prince You know my name?

Lilac Of course I do. I've waited here expecting you.
And you, Sir Rowan – may I say you're rather
like the man I once saved.

Sir Rowan My grandfather?

Lilac Right. And it was I who pulled him clear
to stop him lying there a hundred years.
I sent him on a mission, far away –
to bring a Prince back on this special day.

Prince A special day?

Lilac The day the princess may
be wakened by a kiss – that's what they say.
And you're the man to do it, Rufus lad.

Prince (*To Sir Rowan*) So you were right about your old granddad!

Lilac I trust you're feeling up to it.

Sir Rowan He'll cope.

Lilac Well, after all this time we live in hope!
But now we've things to do, so no more chat –
Welcome to Ambrosia, and the Second Act.

(The curtain opens, and Lilac steps to one side, SR)

Act II Scene 1 Ambrosia, outside the Palace (*Full set*)

(A chorus of townsfolk greets them in song)

Song 15 Chorus

Prince Now will somebody tell me, which way's the palace?

Chorus 1 You mean the old palace?

Sir Rowan We mean the enchanted palace. That's where we're heading.

Chorus 2 I hope you've brought your gardening gloves with you, then.

Chorus 3 And a good pair of shears.

Chorus 4 Need a chain-saw, more like.

Chorus 1 You'll need more than that – nobody's been able to get into that place for a hundred years.

Chorus 2 What makes you think you can do it?

Lilac He comes here with a key to see him through –
a magic key invisible to you.

(Enter SL Belladonna with a flourish)

Belladonna Don't be so sure about that, my flighty fairy friend. You've reckoned without Belladonna, yet again.

Prince Are you addressing me, madam?

Belladonna I wasn't, but I am now. I'd strongly recommend you turn yourself about and go back the way you came, you and your squire.

Sir Rowan Sir, you are addressing a Prince of the Realm.

Belladonna I don't care if I'm addressing [*current famous person*] – it's all the same to me. Be warned – there are dark powers at work here that you don't understand.

Prince And what you don't understand, old man, is that I don't care a fig for your dark powers or your threats. I'm here to do what a Prince must do. (*Slaps thigh*)

Sir Rowan Well spoken, sire.

Belladonna Well spoken? You childish mortals! When will you learn? Do you think this is a game? Do you think you have any hope at all in a contest with me? You will have to learn the hard way not to meddle with Belladonna! Farewell for now, but don't say I didn't warn you. (*Exits SL*)

Prince Goodbye and good riddance! Is that the sort of welcome we're going to get here?

Lilac What fungus-features says is sort of true,
but luckily he doesn't know that you
have powers yourself to put his to the test –
those magic words I gave your grandpa – yes?

They are the key to let you in, Guide's Honour!
Now, 'scuse me, I must see to Belladonna. (*Exits SR*)

Prince Magic words? What does she mean?

Sir Rowan Search me, sire. (*To the audience*) Anyone know what she means by the magic words?

(Business with audience)

Prince Aha! Those words you mentioned at the start of our journey. You remember? They must be the ones. What were they again?

Sir Rowan You know that feeling when something's on the tip of your tongue, and you can't quite spit it out?

Prince Don't say we've come all this way and you've forgotten the words!

Sir Rowan Well, you were telling me how ridiculous the story was, and how silly I was, and ...

Prince Yes, yes – I'm sorry – I apologise. Now, what were the words?

Sir Rowan (*Tries several variations and gets them all wrong*)

Prince (*To the audience*) It's no good, he can't remember. Can you remember?

(More business with audience – You may like to use your Junior chorus to remind the audience of the right words!)

Sir Rowan Ah yes, that's right:—

Deadly nightshade may be frightening,
Through the thunder and the lightning,
Sheath your sword and trust to words,
Then you will find your future brightening.

Prince (*To the audience*) I think you'd better stick around – I'm not sure he'll remember them when we need them. (*To the chorus*) Right, now where did you say the palace was?

Chorus 1 You can see it from here.

Prince I can?

Chorus 2 Well, you could if it wasn't for all the brambles in-between.

Sir Rowan A few brambles shouldn't be a problem.

Chorus 3 Wait till you get among them, then you might think differently.

Prince I can't wait to try.

Song 16 Prince, Sir Rowan and Chorus –

Prince Now, lead us to your brambles.

(All exit as the curtain falls)

Act II Scene 2a Fairy Lilac's advice *(Front of tabs)*

(Enter Fairy Lilac SR with junior chorus of fairies)

Lilac Steel won't give him what he needs.
You see, they're really magic weeds,
that Belladonna spread around –
and what he needs to tear them down
isn't tools – that may take hours –
it's knowing how to use his powers.
Now, will you help him? Brilliant! So –
This is what he needs to know ...

Song 17 Lilac & Fairies – **“Brambles, get Crashing!”**

(To the tune of “Pop Goes the Weasel”)

When the Prince is not getting far,
When his sword is slashing,
He will need these magic words –
“Brambles, get crashing!”

When you hear the thunder roll,
When the lightning's flashing,
Shout out loud with all your might,
“Brambles, get crashing!”

Lilac So now you know what you must do,
Let's see the way it all comes true.

(Lilac & Fairies exit SR)

Act II Scene 2b The Battle of the Brambles *(Half Set)*

(The full set can be divided by a gauze, behind which the Princess, King,

Queen, etc, are asleep. In front of the gauze are the magic brambles.)

(Prince Rufus and Sir Rowan enter SR)

Prince So, these are the famous magic brambles.

Sir Rowan They don't look too frightening to me.

Prince Nor me. I can't imagine what all the fuss is about.

Sir Rowan *(Draws his sword)* Let's see how they stand up to a taste of steel.

(Sir Rowan strikes at the brambles – as he does so, there is thunder and lightning, and he is struck rigid – Belladonna enters SL)

Belladonna Now perhaps you believe me. Mortal steel is no match for Belladonna's brambles.

Prince What have you done to him?

Belladonna I? I have done nothing to him. He's just got caught by the brambles, that's all. *(She laughs unpleasantly)* And the same will happen to you if you try the same thing.

(The Prince tries to pull Sir Rowan away from the brambles – more thunder and lightning, and they both get bowled over onto the ground)

Belladonna Now you've both had a taste of Belladonna's power. Are you willing to give up yet?

Prince *(To Sir Rowan)* Are you alright?

Sir Rowan Just about, I think.

Belladonna Have you had enough? Or must Belladonna inflict more pain on you?

Prince Sir Rowan! Your grandfather's words.

Sir Rowan *(Still recovering)* What's that?

Prince Remember your grandfather's words.

Sir Rowan No time for games now, sire.

Prince How did they start?

Sir Rowan They started: "Deadly nightshade may be frightening."

Prince And another name for deadly nightshade is – Belladonna!

Belladonna Yes, it's a pleasant plant – in fact my favourite ingredient.

Prince The second line – how did that go?

Sir Rowan Something about thunder and lightning.

Prince We've just had that, when we touched the brambles. Go on – what came next?

Sir Rowan “Sheath your sword and trust to words,
Then you will find your future brightening.”

Prince But what words?

Sir Rowan It didn't say.

Belladonna So, you have half a verse. That's not much good to you without the rest, is it? It doesn't tell you what to do – just what not to do – and you've already found that out for yourselves.

Prince There must be a clue in there somewhere. Can't you think of anything, Sir Rowan.

Sir Rowan Not a clue, sire. *(He notices that Lilac has just entered SR)*
But there's a person over there who looks like she might be able to help.

Belladonna *(To Lilac)* You stay out of this, fancy drawers! Go and weave your own magic.

Lilac Why, Belladonna, what a fuss!
Heavens! You must surely trust
your spells to keep mere mortals out.

Belladonna I would if you weren't here!

Lilac Don't shout.
I've only just popped by – okay?

Belladonna Just 'happened to be passing?' Yeah!

Lilac I'm just here to tell the Prince
to listen to the audience!

Prince The audience?

Lilac Those folk out there!
They have a message we prepared.

Belladonna *(To the audience)* What have you got to say for yourselves, then? You wouldn't cross Belladonna, would you?

(With a bit of encouragement, possibly, from Lilac, the message gets to the Prince and Sir Rowan that they have to say: "Brambles, get crashing!")

Belladonna *(To the Prince)* Don't listen to them – they know nothing.

Lilac Oh yes they do! *(etc)*

Prince Well, it's worth a try. What do you say, Sir Rowan?

Sir Rowan I say it's worth a try, sire.

Prince Well, go on then.

Sir Rowan 'Go on then' what?

Prince Go on and say it.

Sir Rowan To the brambles?

Prince To the brambles.

Sir Rowan Those brambles?

Prince Those brambles, Sir Rowan. Just creep up to them and say the words. See if it works.

Sir Rowan They've already inflicted pain and suffering on me once, sire.

Belladonna And they will do so again!

Sir Rowan *(To Prince)* I think it's your turn this time.

Prince Sir Rowan, I am a Prince of the Realm, and you are ...

Sir Rowan ... just a squire, sire.

Prince Precisely.

Sir Rowan But on the other hand, if it hadn't been for my grandfather ...

Prince ... you wouldn't be here.

Sir Rowan *(Looking confused)* That's not quite what I meant.

Prince Sir Rowan, we are comrades in arms, are we not? I tell you what then – we will face this challenge together. We will go to the brambles and say the words, side by side.

Sir Rowan (*Looking even more confused*) Say ‘Side by side’?

Prince (*Sighs*) Side by side we will say the words.

Sir Rowan Ah, right.

Prince Good. Here we go, then. Ready?

Sir Rowan Ready, sire.

(As they approach the brambles, there are ominous flashes and rumbles)

Sir Rowan Well, maybe not quite so ready.

Belladonna Go home while you still have strength to walk. Belladonna will not be beaten!

Prince Are you a daring squire, or a damp squib?

Sir Rowan I must be a daring squire, sire, because damp squibs don’t go off – and I do! (*He makes to exit, but the Prince pulls him back*)

Prince Oh no you don’t! Where’s that stiff upper lip?

Sir Rowan Above these knocking knees.

Prince Shame on you! Let’s try again. Ready now?

Sir Rowan Ready now, sire.

Prince Steady?

Sir Rowan Steady.

Belladonna You will regret this, mortals – I warn you!

Prince Go!

(They approach the brambles again, facing yet more flashes and rumbles)

Prince & Sir Rowan Brambles, get crashing!

Belladonna No!! Brambles stay! *Persta et semper obdura!* – *Persta et semper obdura!*

(But the brambles part, with whatever technical effects you can muster – and possibly with the assistance of small fairies. Belladonna exits in despair, Lilac in joy – the gauze reveals a scene of somnolence – and there is silence)

Act II Scene 3 The secret room in the Palace (*Full Set*)

(The Prince and Sir Rowan study the scene in awe for a few long seconds)

Sir Rowan (*Quietly*) Sire.

Prince Ssh! They're asleep.

Sir Rowan My grandfather was right.

Prince Your grandfather was right.

Sir Rowan And now you're supposed to wake the princess with a kiss.

Prince I know. But which one is the princess?

Sir Rowan (*Looking at Constance*) Well hopefully not this one!

Prince If it was, I'd let you do the job! (*Moves to the Queen*) This one looks like the Queen – better leave her alone!

Sir Rowan (*Seeing Marigold*) How about this one?

Prince That's a bit better. (*Seeing Rose*) Or this one?

Sir Rowan Mm, could be either one, sire. How do we choose?

Prince Well now, I know I'm supposed to kiss the Princess – but nothing says I can't kiss a few others on the way – just to make sure!

Sir Rowan They might have laws against that here!

Prince But all the policemen are asleep. Anyway, there's really only two contenders.

Sir Rowan Then you kiss that one (*points to Marigold*) and I'll kiss this one (*points to Rose*).

Prince Promoting yourself to Prince now, are you? It's no good – the magic will only work when I kiss the Princess, you know.

Sir Rowan So?

Prince Alright – have it your own way.

(Prince kisses Marigold and Sir Rowan kisses Rose – nothing happens!)

Sir Rowan (*Not looking at all disappointed*) Oh dear – looks like we'll have to try again.

Prince Are you sure this is going to work?

Sir Rowan I don't know, but it's worth another try, isn't it?

(Prince kisses Rose and Sir Rowan kisses Marigold – magic! – the whole court wakes up)

Sir Rowan Certainly worth a try!

Marigold Just a minute – where did you come from?

Sir Rowan It's a long story.

Marigold The fairy's just about to put us to sleep you know, for a hundred years.

Sir Rowan No – you have just woken up after a hundred years.

Constance Really? Well, that's the longest lie-in I've ever had, and that's for sure.

Marigold Are you the Prince?

Sir Rowan Ahem – no, that's the Prince over there. Are you the Princess?

Marigold No – but who cares? I think you're better looking than he is.

Queen *(To the Prince)* Excuse me, sir, but that is our daughter you are canoodling with – and she's only sixteen.

Benjamin Er, I think you'll find, ma'am, that she is now one hundred and sixteen.

Queen Ridiculous, Chancellor – does she look a hundred and sixteen?

Benjamin *(Inspecting the Queen)* No ma'am – she doesn't.

King Enough of that, Benjamin – she's never at her best first thing in the morning. *(To the Prince)* Am I to understand, young man, that you are he who was sent to save us.

Prince I am Prince Rufus of Faraway, your majesty, come many miles to claim your daughter's hand.

Queen And have you money?

King Really, my dear, that is hardly a consideration when he has just saved us from a fate worse than death.

Queen I'm not sure that he's saved Rose from a fate worse than death!

King Ah, marriage, indeed so. Such a fate.

Queen Harold – that’s not what I meant!

Rose Do I get to have a say in all this?

Queen Quiet, Rose – we’re having an argument.

Constance Situation normal, then.

Rose Excuse me! I’m not just some thing to be argued over – I do have a mind you know.

Constance That’s my Rose. Still a teenager at a hundred and sixteen.

King Rose, it is normal when the marriage of the Princess of the Realm is under consideration for the parents to make ...

Rose Normal? A man comes to rescue us from a fairy’s curse, and you think that’s normal? What sort of a world do you live in, dad?

King Well, I ...

Rose Anyway I think I’m well old enough to make up my own mind now.

Queen Well I hope it’s better than your fashion sense. If I’d seen those clothes you’re wearing before the party started I’d have told you to go back to your room.

Rose (*Modelling*) Not bad for a hundred and sixteen, eh?

King And you, Prince Rufus, how do you feel about this ... (*indicates Rose*) ... daughter of mine.

Rose Hang on – how about asking this daughter of yours how she feels about Prince Rufus first?

Queen Rose!

Prince And how do you feel about me, Rose?

Rose Well, actually ... (*looking him over*) ... I think you’re rather dishy.

King Do I take it that means you accept his offer?

Rose He’ll do.

Queen Really! “He’ll do”! It’s marriage we’re talking about, my girl, not a one-night stand. Girls these days are intolerable.

Benjamin With respect, ma’am, it’s not ‘these days’ any longer.

Constance Benjy! I don't think you're helping at this precise moment.

Prince Your mother's right, Rose ...

Queen Course she is ...

Prince If you marry me you'll be a queen yourself one day, and then ...

King She might become like her mother.

Prince That's a challenge I'm prepared to accept ...

King Brave lad!

Prince ... if Rose is happy to accept me.

Constance (*As Rose hesitates*) It's time to grow up and act your age, Rose.

Rose He'll more than do! He's better than I dreamt he'd be.

Prince Do I take that for a 'yes'?

Rose Oh, yes!

(The chorus enter)

Chorus 1 Well, here you are!

Chorus 2 We've been looking all over the palace for you, your majesty.

Chorus 3 The other guests seem to have given up and gone home.

Constance Oh, they did that years ago.

Chorus 3 Pardon?

Chorus 4 And who are these two strange men?

Constance These 'strange men' have just saved us all from sleeping into the next millennium.

King Where's my Herald?

Herald Here, your majesty.

King Dust yourself off, and go and announce to the realm that Princess Rose is to marry Prince Rufus of ... where did you say it was again?

Prince Faraway, your majesty.

King Oh, don't bother with the 'your majesty' stuff now – call me dad.

Queen And you may call me mother.

King Ye-es ... now where was I? Ah yes, Herald, off you run and ...

Sir Rowan A moment, your majesty. There's a double celebration to be announced – Marigold and I are also to marry.

Marigold The fairy said she'd have the Prince bring me a friend, and she did.

King Excellent news! Chancellor, you'd better check the coffers are still full – looks like we'll have to throw prudence to the wind and organise another major celebration.

Song 18 Chorus & Principals –

(Curtain closes at end)

Act II Scene 4 Somewhere in the Palace (Front of Tabs)

(Constance and Benjamin enter through tabs)

Constance And were the state coffers still full after a hundred years, Benjy?

Benjamin After I cleared out the mice, yes.

Constance That's alright – no expense spared for this feast, then.

Benjamin It's difficult to change the habits of a lifetime, Connie. Prudence and I go hand in hand.

Constance And you've lived two lifetimes, so that makes it even more difficult.

Benjamin *(Sadly)* I suppose so.

Constance But you've got me to help you.

Benjamin *(More brightly)* Yes, I suppose so.

Constance Benjy ...

Benjamin Connie?

Constance You do realise, don't you, that we've been sleeping together for years now?

Benjamin Well, if you put it that way ...

Constance Then don't you think you should – do the decent thing?

Benjamin You mean go and have a good wash?

Constance That's not what I meant.

Benjamin That's a relief, because I've already had one.

Constance I meant ...

Benjamin I really think we should be getting on with preparations for the marriage ceremony.

Constance Yes, that's what I meant.

Benjamin Right, well come along then – the Princess will be waiting for us to make the arrangements for her. *(He goes to exit SL)*

Constance But I didn't mean their marriage! *(Following him off)* Men!

(Enter SR Fairy Lilac)

Lilac I'm sure they'll work it out in time,
just like they do in pantomime.
Now, Fairy Lilac of the Wood
has done her little bit of good –
so let's hope this time Belladonna
really is a fairy gonner!

(Enter SL Belladonna)

Belladonna Wrong again! I'm back, you see. You thought that you'd get rid of me!

Lilac We live in hope! But now you're here,
perhaps you'd like to help me, dear.

Belladonna Help you? I'd rather sing in the church choir!

Lilac I pity the poor congregation!
Listen – for your information,
now your spell has failed to cause the grief you planned,
you might as well give in and lend a hand.

Belladonna What do you take me for – a Girl Guide? Sixteen years it took me to concoct that spell – and you ruined it!

Lilac Temper, temper! Maybe in another hundred years or so

you'll learn enough to have another go.
 Meanwhile, why not admit that you were wrong at least,
 and get yourself invited to the wedding feast.

Belladonna Admit that I was wrong?

Lilac Apologise – starting with the children you made cry.

Belladonna (*Business with the audience*) Was I really such a bad boy? Do you think I should say “sorry” and go to the wedding feast? They won't arrest me, will they? (*etcetera*)

Lilac Right, that's enough! You're going on too long.
 I think we'd say it better in a song.

Belladonna You're encouraging me to sing again?

Lilac Bad move, perhaps – but here's the refrain –

Song 19 Lilac & Belladonna (Community Song) –

(*At the end, Belladonna starts to exit SL, but Lilac takes her arm and escorts her off SR – she is now a good fairy!*)

Act II Scene 5 In the Palace Ballroom (Full Set)

(*Chorus of Townspeople & Palace Attendants on stage as curtain opens*)

Song 20 Chorus –

(*At end of song, Herald enters from upstage*)

Herald My lords, ladies and gentlemen ...

Chorus 1 Oh dear, he's at it again!

Chorus 2 No peace for the wicked.

Herald Listen, you do your job and I'll do mine – alright?

Chorus 3 Get on with it!

Chorus 4 'We'll once more hear Orsino's embassy.'

Herald Wrong play! Have you finished?

Chorus 1 The show's nearly finished. Hurry up!

Herald My lords, ladies and gentlemen ...

(The King and Queen enter from upstage)

King Was that our cue I heard?

Herald Oh, not again! Well, if you want me next year, I'm not available.
(Exits in a huff)

Queen Do you think he overslept?

King Well, I suppose we'll just have to do our own proclamations from now on.

Queen The humiliation!

(Constance enters leading the Herald by the scruff of his neck)

Constance No need, your majesties. Gerald the Herald's done a U-turn.

King That was very skilful of you, Constance. How did you do it?

Constance Let's just say I have a way with men!

Queen Really?

Constance Ask Benjie! Now then, Gerald, you get on with your heralding. The rest of you, rewind back to your original positions. *(She shoos the King and Queen offstage)* Now, cue the walkdown – lights, music, action!
(Exits)

Herald My lords, ladies and gentlemen ...

(He waits expecting an interruption, but none comes)

Chorus 1 Go on, Gerald!

Chorus 2 It's your big moment.

Herald No more interruptions?

Chorus 3 No interruptions.

Herald Are you sure?

Chorus 4 Just do it!

Herald *(Sighs with relief)* Well, just before I make this announcement, there's one or two people I'd like to mention ... *(he unrolls his scroll, which is a long one!)*

Chorus 4 Oh no!

Herald First of all, I'd like to thank my mother and father for having me. Without them there would have been no Gerald the Herald. Next, my agent who got me this part and ... *(but a long hooked stick appears from the wings and pulls him offstage while he is still speaking!)*

Chorus 1 That's a relief!

Chorus 2 Ladies and Gentlemen, what he meant to say was –

Chorus 3 “Make way for the King and Queen of Ambrosia ...”

Chorus 4 “... and their wedding party!”

Song 21 Chorus

(During this number we have the walkdown of principals: King & Queen, Herald, Constance & Benjamin, Sir Rowan & Marigold, Prince & Rose)

(After everyone has taken their bow ...)

Constance Benjamin!

Benjamin Yes, my love?

Constance You didn't forget again, did you?

Benjamin Forget what?

Constance Not what – who! You-know-who!

(Enter SR Lilac and Belladonna)

Lilac Don't worry, she's with me this time.

Belladonna And now I'm good, I speak in rhyme!

(They take their bow)

Constance So, Right has triumphed as it should.

Benjamin And Connie's got me now for good!

Queen Ambrosia can live in peace.

King And you may shortly leave your seats.

Sir Rowan We've made our play ...

Prince ... We've done our duty.

Rose That's the end of ...

ALL ... **Sleeping Beauty!**

(Reprise of favourite songs)

***** END OF SLEEPING BEAUTY *****

