

PUSS IN BOOTS

A PANTOMIME BY

STEPHEN DUCKHAM

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NODA LTD
 15 The Metro Centre
 Peterborough PE2 7UH
 Telephone: 01733 374790
 Fax: 01733 237286
 Email: info@noda.org.uk
www.noda.org.uk

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PUSS IN BOOTS

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

OGRE
 GRIM (The Ogre's Henchman)
 PATCHEM (The Town Cobbler)
 COLIN (Owner of the Old Mill)
 PUSS (His Cat)
 WHEELER
 DEALER
 KING BUMBLE
 QUEEN BEE
 PRINCESS MELINDA
 PUSS IN BOOTS

CHORUS OF VILLAGERS

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

SCENE 1 OUTSIDE THE OGRE'S CASTLE
 SCENE 2 THE MILL IN CATALAND
 SCENE 3 A STREET
 SCENE 4 INSIDE PATCHEM'S SHOE SHOP
 SCENE 5 OUTSIDE THE OGRE'S CASTLE
 SCENE 6 A CLEARING AND LAKE IN THE ROYAL WOODS

ACT TWO

SCENE 1 OUTSIDE THE OGRE'S CASTLE
 SCENE 2 THE PALACE BALLROOM
 SCENE 3 ON ROUTE TO THE OGRE'S CASTLE
 SCENE 4 THE SECRET ENTRANCE TO THE OGRE'S CASTLE
 SCENE 5 THE KEEP IN THE CASTLE
 SCENE 6 ON THE WAY HOME
 SCENE 7 THE WEDDING OF THE MARQUIS OF CARABAS

PUSS IN BOOTS 6 PRODUCTION NOTES

SCENERY

The scenery can be kept fairly simple with the use of two front cloths (or tabs) and five main scenes.

The first front cloth represents the outside of the Ogre's Castle and the second A Street in the village.

Act One Scene 2 should show the exterior of the Mill up right and Patchem's shop front on stage left. If it is possible to have a small bridge up left this will add to the overall scene, but it is not essential.

Act One Scene 4 Patchem's Shop could be played on a cloth, flats or a set of tabs with free standing practical shelves and a counter. If it is impossible to perform the vision sequence through a gauze in the back wall of the shop, put Patchem, Colin and Puss in a spot down right and act out the story down left.

Act One Scene 6 The Woodland Lake is a back cloth and tree wings. If you can build bushes up stage that separate to reveal Colin as the Marquis of Carabas this will add to the finale of act one.

The Ballroom in Act Two Scene 2 can be quite elaborate or simply done with drapes and double as the Finale.

Act Two Scene 3 is only possible if a car journey can be projected onto a screen. If not the scene can be omitted completely.

Act Two Scene 4 is one of the front cloths. If it is not practical to have a sliding wall flat as part of the Castle, the cast can refer to it as being just off stage and a sound effect of sliding stone will complete the illusion.

Act Two Scene 5, The Keep in the Ogre's Castle is the most difficult scene as there is a need for an opening up stage. If flats or a cut cloth are impractical, the effect can be achieved by hanging a series of dark coloured cloth panels that can be opened a few feet when required. Changing the Ogre into a mouse can be achieved in various ways depending on the facilities of your theatre. A motorised mouse is the most effective (radio controlled toy car disguised as a mouse), but a simple soft toy mouse on a fine wire pulled across the stage will work just as well.

CHARACTERS

Casting is fairly straightforward.

Colin can be played by a male or female. A good all round character with a strong singing voice is required.

As with most pantomimes there is always a shortage of female parts, therefore I recommend that Puss and Puss In Boots be played by women.

Melinda is the Principal Girl with a modern outlook on life and a spirited character. She must be pretty and possess a good lyrical singing voice.

Patchem is a pivotal character in the pantomime and should be played with a great sense of charm and humour. This is a part that can be played by an actor aged anywhere between mid thirties to mid fifties.

The Queen is the Dame and should always be played for laughs. She keeps the King in his place but is never over bossy or malicious. Her rapport with the audience is very important and any chance to include them should be acted upon.

The King is her foil. As his name implies he is a little *bumbling* in his manner, but basically he is a kind man and a big softy!

Wheeler and Dealer are the comedy knockabout couple. Wheeler usually takes charge of each situation with Dealer the proverbial beat behind everyone and everything.

Grim is one of the most interesting characters in the story. On no account should he be played similar to the Ogre. The audience will like to boo him as much as possible, but he should also be played for laughs. His character is one of a butler who feels the job is beneath him, but at all times must please his master.

The ~~Mmm~~reference in his dialogue is a nasal sound . only use it when stated, as too much will be overkill. His character should be based on a cross between Kenneth Williams, Noel Coward and Jeeves!

The Ogre is not a Giant. He is a bulky, ugly creature, slightly stooped with a menacing voice. He should be quite repulsive to any other human being.

MUSIC

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.

There is a Song Sheet available for this script. Please contact NODA if you wish to use it.

I hope you enjoy doing this version of ~~P~~uss in Boots and have a great success with your production.

Stephen Duckham

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ACT ONESCENE 1 OUTSIDE THE OGRE'S CASTLE

[After the overture the music becomes sinister and a low rumble of thunder is heard. The lights come up to reveal a front cloth depicting a forbidding looking castle. The OGRE enters left. HE sees the audience.]

- OGRE Oh no! Don't tell me it's open day at the castle again! All you people traipsing around the grounds. And children! They tell me you can't beat children. Pity! Mind you, I quite like children . especially on toast!! *[Audience reaction.]* Now where is that servant of mine? *[Calling.]* Grim! Grim, where are you?
- GRIM *[Off.]* Coming master.
- OGRE Get here at once. *[GRIM enters left. He is the OGRE'S manservant and always carries a whip on his belt. (Note that whenever "Mmm" appears in GRIM'S dialogue it denotes the nasal delivery as described in the character breakdown.)]*
- GRIM What can I do for you master?
- OGRE I hear that the old Miller in the town is dead.
- GRIM Mmm, last week master. Very sad! *[HE chuckles evilly to himself.]*
- OGRE And he died without making a will I understand.
- GRIM Quite so master, quite so.
- OGRE Then by my reckoning all his belongings must be auctioned off to pay the death duties and the building and land revert to the landowner . which happens to be me!
- GRIM That is the law I believe master.
- OGRE I know it is - I made it!
- GRIM There *is* a son. Shouldn't the property go to him?
- OGRE *[Shouting.]* A son?
- GRIM Mmm. Yes master. He has been away from the town for many years. Off seeking his fortune I understand.
- OGRE Then he won't know anything about his father's death. By the time he gets home the Mill and the land will be mine. Go and deal with the auction.
- GRIM At once, master.
- OGRE Oh, there is another matter I wish you to attend to. The Princess Melinda is now of age and ready to take a husband. Make it known to their Majesties that I wish to offer her my hand in marriage!

- GRIM *[Surprised.]* Really master?
- OGRE Why are you so surprised? *[Grabbing GRIM by the lapels of his coat.]* I am more than worthy of her and have more to offer her than anyone else in this pathetic town!
- GRIM Of course you have master. *[The OGRE lets him go.]* And may I say you cut a dashing figure of a man. What woman could resist you?
- OGRE Yes, I do have that rugged sort of look, don't I? *[Audience reaction.]* Be quiet you snivelling brats! When I have married the Princess I can get rid of the King and Queen and rule the whole land myself. *[To GRIM]* Now go quickly and see to everything.
- GRIM Yes master. *[HE exits.]*
- OGRE And when I am ruler I shall make everyone do my bidding. They will all be forced to work for me and make me even richer than I am now! *[HE roars with laughter. Audience reaction.]* Oh keep quiet you raucous rabble! If you've come here for the tour why don't I take you down stairs to begin with, to the torture chamber? *[HE roars with laughter again as the lights fade out. The scene changes to*

SCENE 2 THE OLD MILL IN CATALAND

[The scene is outside the Old Mill, which is up right. There is a bridge up left, which crosses a stream running up behind the mill. On stage left is PATCHEM'S cobbler's shop and stage right are trees. A large sign saying "AUCTION TODAY" is outside the mill. The CHORUS is on as the scene opens.]

OPENING CHORUS

[At the end of the number some of the CHORUS notice the sign.]

- 1st MAN What's this? Who is auctioning off the Millers' property?
- 1st WOMAN I don't know. That sign appeared this morning.
- 2nd MAN But the Mill now belongs to Colin, the Miller's son. Surely he's not selling.
- 2nd WOMAN Nobody has seen him for over a year.
- 3rd MAN What about Patchem, the cobbler. He's Colin's friend. Let's ask him. *[ALL agree and call "Patchem". PATCHEM, the cobbler, enters from the shop, left.]*
- PATCHEM Morning all. I'm afraid I can't stop chatting. Today is my day for stocktaking. What's everyone so excited about?
- 1st MAN Did you know about this auction?

- PATCHEM No. Who's organised that?
- 1st WOMAN We don't know. Have you had any word from Colin?
- PATCHEM Not since I wrote and told him about his poor father. He should be arriving home today. *[GRIM enters down left.]*
- GRIM Greetings all! *[ALL groan at the sight of him.]* Glad to see a good turn out for the auction!
- PATCHEM Have you arranged this?
- GRIM On the orders of my master, the Ogre.
- 1st MAN But he can't do that. The Mill belongs to Colin.
- GRIM There is no will, so the property is forfeit to pay the outstanding debts.
- PATCHEM We'll see about that when Colin gets here.
- GRIM By then it will be too late. The auction is about to start and everyone has been notified. Even their Majesties are going to attend!
- PATCHEM Looking for a few bargains no doubt. The word is the royal household is as poor as we are since the Ogre started taking everything he could get his hands on.
- GRIM *[Cracking his whip.]* Be careful of what you say. Upset my master and you could be residing in the dungeons for the rest of your life!
- 2nd MAN Who is presiding over the auction?
- GRIM I have engaged a very reputable firm to handle the proceedings. They should be here any minute. *[Aside.]* I must report to my master that everything is going according to plan. Mmm! *[HE exits down left.]*
- PATCHEM This is dreadful. We can't let the Ogre swindle Colin out of his inheritance. *[The CHORUS agrees. COLIN appears on the bridge. He is carrying a travelling bag and a note.]*
- COLIN Who's trying to swindle me?
- PATCHEM Colin! *[ALL greet COLIN who crosses down centre.]*
- COLIN Hello my friends. I came home as soon as I got your note Patchem. What's going on?
- PATCHEM Oh Colin, we're all very sorry about your father. *[ALL sympathise.]* But the Ogre is trying to get his hands on the Mill and all the land, which by right belongs to you.
- COLIN *[Putting down his bag.]* Oh he is, is he? Then it's time to put up a fight. *[ALL agree.]*

- PATCHEM But how? The Ogre has powers than none of us can comprehend. I've heard he can turn himself into all sorts of terrifying monsters!
- COLIN We must work out a plan. In the meantime don't let on that I'm back.
- 1st MAN What about the auction?
- COLIN Let it go ahead. Only there won't be anything in the Mill to auction because we'll move everything out into the old barn. *[ALL agree with the plan.]*
- PATCHEM I'd like to see the look on the Ogre's face when he finds out! *[There is a loud "meow" and PUSS, the Mill cat, bounds on and up to COLIN.]*
- COLIN Puss! How good to see you again. Have you missed me? *[PUSS nods then pulls at COLIN'S clothes and indicates the sign.]* Don't worry. I'm not going to let them auction you off! I'm back for good!

SONG . COLIN, PATCHEM & CHORUS

[At the end of the number ALL exit into the Mill. WHEELER and DEALER enter over the bridge.]

- WHEELER Here we are. The old mill by the stream!
- DEALER *[Singing.]* Nellie Dean!
- WHEELER Shut up. Save your voice for the auction.
- DEALER Oh yes, the auction. Care, what is an auction?
- WHEELER Shh! Not so loud. We're supposed to be Messers. Wheeler and Dealer, a reputable firm of liquidators.
- DEALER But I'm not a liquid hater. I like a pint of Guinness!
- WHEELER Not that sort of liquid! We've got to dispose of any assets!
- DEALER *[Backing away – his hand to his rear.]* I don't like the sound of that!
- WHEELER Look, it was too good an opportunity to miss. We needed a job and this seemed right up our street.
- DEALER What do we have to do?
- WHEELER *[Pointing to the Mill.]* Sell all the contents of that mill for the most money.
- DEALER Oooh, do we get to keep it?
- WHEELER Of course we don't get to keep it!
- DEALER Well what's the point of doing it for nothing?
- WHEELER We don't do it for nothing; we get a percentage of the final amount.

DEALER Oh!

WHEELER Which we split half each. Thirty percent to you, seventy to me! *[GRIM enters down left.]*

GRIM Ah, there you are.

DEALER Good grief! It's - *[Topical name.]*

GRIM Isn't it about time you got the auction underway?

WHEELER Just about to start your honour! Dealer, you go and get the lots!

DEALER The lot? All by myself?

WHEELER The lots! Each item is a lot.

DEALER I know - especially sideboards and double beds!

WHEELER Just get the small things. I'll help you with the others.

GRIM Are you sure you know what you're doing? My master wouldn't like it if anything went wrong.

WHEELER Of course! We're very experienced in this business. We've auctioned some of the oldest antiques in the world.

DEALER He's been out with most of 'em!

GRIM *[Disparagingly.]* Mmm. Really?

WHEELER Yes. The first penny black.

DEALER Cleaned it up and sold it for tuppence!

WHEELER The Boy David

DEALER He was harmless enough!

WHEELER Elgin's Marbles!

DEALER *[To WHEELER.]* I didn't know he'd lost 'em!

WHEELER The Constable's Haystack!

DEALER The Moaning Lisa!

GRIM Yes all right, all right. Let's see how much you can raise today.

WHEELER *[Calling.]* Roll up, roll up. Grand auction about to start. *[GRIM exits down left as the CHORUS enters. Among them is PATCHEM.]*

PATCHEM You can't start yet?

WHEELER Why not?

- PATCHEM Their Majesties aren't here.
- DEALER Their Majesties?
- PATCHEM Yes. They especially wanted to attend this morning.
- DEALER *[Aside to WHEELER.]* Ere, I didn't know royalty was going to be here. If they find out we're not who we say we are, they could throw us into the clink!
- WHEELER Don't be daft! Just act as though you've been doing this for years! Come on. *[THEY exit into the Mill.]*

FANFARE

[The music plays and the KING is heard off stage.]

- KING Make way, make way. *[HE backs on stage over the bridge.]* Make way for their Majesties, King Bumble and Queen Bee! *[HE turns and comes down stage.]* Oh it's so humiliating not having someone to announce you!
- PATCHEM *[Bowling.]* Your Majesty.
- KING Morning Patchem.
- PATCHEM But where is the Queen, sire?
- KING Just parking the carriage! Last time she left it on a double yellow line and the horse got clamped! He's never been the same since!
- QUEEN *[Off.]* Bumble, where are you?

FANFARE

- KING *[Crossing up to the bridge.]* Here she is now. Make way for her Majesty, Queen Bee! *[The QUEEN enters over the bridge and trips and bumps into the KING who falls over.]*
- QUEEN Have that bridge removed! *[ALL bow and curtsey.]* Where is the King? He always keeps me waiting! *[The KING goes to get up but the QUEEN steps on him as SHE crosses the stage.]* Bumble, Bumble where are you?
- KING Here my dear!
- QUEEN *[Turning to look at him.]* Well get up. There's no need to grovel to me!
- KING *[Standing.]* No dear.
- QUEEN And put your crown straight!
- KING Yes dear!
- QUEEN Good morning everyone.

- ALL Good morning your Majesty.
- QUEEN *[To the audience.]* What a good turn out! How are you all? *[Audience response.]* Come along now, speak to Queeny! *[SHE gets the audience to respond.]* Now I don't hold with too much royal protocol. We're very progressive at the palace! I'd like us all to be friendly and use first names. Would you like that? *[Audience responds.]* Oh good! *[Indicating the KING.]* Now this is Bumble and I'm Bee! Isn't that original? Now I want you all to shout out your names! Will you do that? *[SHE gets the audience to shout out their names and quickly repeats any SHE can hear.]* Well I think I got them all! Now we all know each other every time I see you I'd shout 'Hello my people+' *[SHE waves a regal hand.]* - and you shout back 'Hello Bee+' and wave to me. Will you do that? *[Audience responds.]* Let's have a practice! *[SHE shouts out and they all shout back. This happens a couple of times.]* Wonderful. Now what about this auction? Who's handling it?
- [WHEELER and DEALER enter rather agitated and move down stage. THEY bow.]*
- WHEELER We are, your Majesty. Messers. Wheeler and Dealer, auctioneers extraordinaire!
- QUEEN Well now I'm on the look out for a new dishwasher.
- PATCHEM Is the old one worn out?
- KING Yes and my hands will never be the same again!
- QUEEN And I could do with a new chest -
- KING No comment!
- QUEEN - of drawers!
- WHEELER I'm afraid there's been a hitch.
- QUEEN *[Starting to scratch.]* What sort of an itch?
- WHEELER There doesn't seem to be any items in the Mill to auction.
- KING What? Nothing?
- DEALER No. The 'lots' gone. *[HE laughs at his own joke.]* The lots gone . get it!!
- QUEEN This is preposterous. You're just trying to stop me having first pick of the good clobber! Come along Bumble, I want everyone to know what I've marked. *[SHE exits into the Mill.]*
- KING I'm not showing my bruises to anyone! *[HE follows HER off. ALL laugh.]*

PATCHEM Well that was a quick auction. *[To WHEELER and DEALER.]* It looks as though you two are out of a job! *[ALL exit except WHEELER and DEALER. PATCHEM into his shop.]*

DEALER Now what do we do?

WHEELER There's something not quite right here. *[GRIM enters down left.]*

DEALER Yes and it's just walked on!

GRIM What's happening? Why haven't you started the auction?

WHEELER We haven't started the auction because there's nothing to auc!

GRIM What?

DEALER Someone has whisked away the whatnots!

GRIM So these simple folk are trying to trick me are they? Mmm, well no matter, the Mill and land is still forfeit. No doubt the contents would have fetched a paltry sum.

DEALER You mean we're selling it for chicken feed?

WHEELER Shut it. *[To GRIM.]* What about us? You hired us to do a job. It's not our fault there's nothing to do it with!

DEALER Yes! Where's our money?

GRIM Perhaps you would like to talk to my master. He authorises all payments. Come this way. *[HE exits left. DEALER goes to follow but WHEELER pulls him back.]*

WHEELER Where do you think you're going?

DEALER To get our money! I'm going to ask him straight. I'd not mince words!

WHEELER No, but he'd mince you and have you for dinner. *[DEALER swallows hard. THEY look at each other.]*

BOTH Job centre!! *[THEY exit. COLIN enters from the mill followed by PUSS.]*

COLIN Well Puss, at least we've managed to save all our belongings for a while. Now we've got to figure out a way to save the Mill from the Ogre's clutches. *[PUSS nods.]* If only I could find the money to pay off the debts. *[PRINCESS MELINDA enters over the bridge. SHE is dressed quite simply. COLIN turns and sees her.]* Oh good morning.

MELINDA Hello. Where is everyone?

COLIN Gone I'm afraid. There was no auction after all. *[PUSS is "purring" around MELINDA.]*

- MELINDA Hello Puss. You're very friendly. *[SHE strokes PUSS.]* Where have you come from?
- COLIN The Mill. We both live there.
- MELINDA Oh you're the long lost Miller's son.
- COLIN Yes. My name is Colin. You know I'm sure we've met before somewhere. *[Giving her a nudge.]* It wasn't in the back row of the . *[Name of local cinema.]*- during a showing of . *[Name of latest blockbuster film.]* . was it?
- MELINDA I'm afraid I've never been to the . *[Cinema.]*
- COLIN Are you sure? I don't usually forget a face. Especially not one as pretty as yours! *[PUSS nudges COLIN towards MELINDA.]* Puss, stop it! *[PATCHEM enters from his shop.]*
- PATCHEM Oh, good morning your Royal Highness.
- COLIN *[Stunned.]* Royal Highness?
- MELINDA Good morning Patchem. I've come to collect my new shoes.
- PATCHEM Oh your Royal Highness, I would have sent them to the palace!
- COLIN *[Weakly.]* P-Palace!!
- MELINDA It's all right. I felt like some fresh air, so I decided to walk into the town. I thought I'd find mummy and daddy here, or maybe they're at the . *[Name of cinema.]*
- COLIN *[Bowing.]* Princess Melinda! Your Royal Highness! Please forgive me . I know I . I mean I didn't know .
- MELINDA *[Laughing.]* What's your name again?
- COLIN Colin Macnam. Oh whatever will you think?
- MELINDA *[Teasing him.]* I think you should stop taking things so seriously.
- PATCHEM I'd get your shoes right away, your Highness. *[HE exits into shop.]*
- COLIN I should be going too.
- MELINDA What for?
- COLIN Well it's not right for me to be here with you . like this. I mean - Royalty and all!
- MELINDA Don't be silly. I don't hold with all that protocol. *[Getting an idea.]* I know. Why don't you pretend I'm the girl you thought I was at the cinema?
- COLIN But highness .

MELINDA Not highness . Melinda. We're sitting there watching a scary movie.
[COLIN smiles.] No. A romantic one.

COLIN [The smile disappearing.] Oh oh!

MELINDA Where the boy and girl have just met and fallen madly in love.

COLIN But .

MELINDA We all need a little love . [To PUSS.] . don't we Puss? [PUSS nods,
looks front and yawns.] You see . Puss agrees.

DUET . MELINDA AND COLIN

[During the number, PUSS sits to one side watching them. At the end
of the number the KING and QUEEN enter.]

QUEEN [To audience.] Hello my people! [Audience responds.] Melinda, my
dear.

MELINDA Hello mummy . daddy.

KING What are you doing here?

MELINDA I've just come to town to pick up my new pair of shoes Patchem has
made for me.

QUEEN You shouldn't be out on your own. It's not the done thing!

MELINDA But I can't not on my own. I have a charming escort.

KING And who are you young fellow me lad?

COLIN Colin, your Majesty. I'm the miller's son.

QUEEN Oh it's you who's led us a wild goose chase, is it? Arranging an
auction with nothing to sell.

COLIN I assure you your Majesty, I knew nothing about an auction. I only
arrived back in town this morning. This is all the work of the Ogre.

KING Ugh! Not him. That awful creature. He's taking more and more of our
land and there's nothing we can do about it.

COLIN I wouldn't be too sure of that. Now I'm back I intend to put a stop to all
the injustice that's been going on.

QUEEN I don't hold out much hope of you succeeding. The Ogre and his
dreadful Henchman Grim, have powers very few of us know about.
[GRIM enters down left.]

GRIM Did somebody mention my name? [ALL recoil away from him.] Ah,
your Majesties. I'm so glad I've run into you!

KING Well you can run away again!

- GRIM My *gentle* master the Ogre has commanded me to offer Her Royal Highness Princess Melinda his hand, his wealth and his unworthy self in marriage.
- MELINDA What??
- COLIN Never!
- KING/QUEEN The Ogre??
- QUEEN For our daughter? One could hardly make a worse choice!
- KING *[Taking her to one side.]* On the other hand my dear, he is very rich and our funds are very, very low!!
- MELINDA Daddy!
- QUEEN Really Bumble! How could you think of such a thing?
- KING Er, quite so, quite so! *[Crosses to GRIM.]* It's out of the question, quite out of the question! *[GRIM cracks his whip. The KING runs back to the QUEEN.]*
- GRIM May I remind you that my master is very powerful. *[Crossing up centre – looking MELINDA over.]* Mmm! *[Taken with what HE sees.]* Oh! Mmm! And is not used to being turned down. *[To the QUEEN.]* Mmm!
- QUEEN *[Looking at the KING and copying GRIM.]* Mmm! Well tell your master he must apply formally, in triplicate, for the hand of the Princess at the appro . *[SHE gets stuck on this word.]* Appro . *[Tries something else.]* The right time.
- GRIM Mmm! I shall be back at the *appropriate* time your Majesties! *[HE bows and moves onto the bridge.]*
- KING So kind of you to call. Any time you're over the river . do drop in! *[GRIM snarls and exits.]*
- COLIN This is terrible. Your Majesties, you can't possibly think of letting your daughter marry the Ogre.
- QUEEN You're quite right young man. We must do something and quickly. I know, we must arrange for her to be married to a person of high standing and good breeding. An Earl or a Lord. Who do we know who's available?
- MELINDA Mother, I would like to have a say in who I marry!
- QUEEN Of course my dear. I know we'll give a grand ball and invite all the eligible young men in the kingdom.
- KING But that will cost a packet!
- QUEEN Oh put it all on the plastic and pay for it later! Besides, we'll make a fortune with all the merchandising and T.V rights! *[Getting carried*

away.] Oh the marriage will be the talk of the year! Marriage! Such a beautiful word!

- KING It's not a word, it's a sentence!
- MELINDA *[Near to tears.]* Oh this is too much! *[SHE runs off.]*
- KING Melinda!
- QUEEN Don't worry, I'll have a talk with her. *[PATCHEM enters carrying a pair of shoes.]*
- PATCHEM Oh, has her Highness gone? I've got her new shoes here.
- KING I'll tell her when I see her. I expect she'll call for them later.
- PATCHEM Thank you, Sire. And the bill.
- KING Bill? Never heard of him! *[HE moves away.]*
- COLIN Your Majesty, I'm very worried about the Princess. With that Ogre and his henchman about, she shouldn't be walking around unaccompanied.
- QUEEN Bumble, this young man is quite right. Anything could happen to her. Have a couple of guards assigned to her at all time.
- KING But we don't have any guards. We couldn't afford to pay them - remember?
- QUEEN There must be some people around who are looking for an interesting position with board and lodgings .
- KING - and no pay!
- QUEEN Ssh! *[SHE calls.]* Come here everyone. I have a royal announcement. *[CHORUS enters.]* We have, at the palace, vacancies for two royal attendants. *[WHEELER and DEALER rush on.]*
- WHEELER Look no further.
- DEALER We're vacant!
- PATCHEM You can say that again!
- KING I trust you have excellent references?
- WHEELER Impeccable, your Majesty.
- DEALER I wrote them myself. *[WHEELER hits him.]*
- QUEEN *[Enthusing.]* How fortunate! How splendid!
- KING How much?

- WHEELER For you Sire, there will be a very special price.
- KING Well it can't be too special for me!
- QUEEN Start immediately. Go straight to the palace and get yourselves dressed in the royal livery.
- DEALER I'd prefer to wear clothes! *[WHEELER hits him.]*
- QUEEN Now that's settled we can think about the ball. We'll throw it this Saturday. Everyone's invited. Send out the word that all eligible young men of breeding
- KING - and money!
- QUEEN - may ask to be considered as suitors to her Royal Highness. *[General excitement.]* Patchem, I shall require a new pair of shoes for the occasion. I'll call in later for a fitting.
- PATCHEM Yes, your Majesty.
- QUEEN Well today hasn't turned out so bad after all. All this talk of balls and weddings makes me feel like celebrating!

NUMBER . COMPANY

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

SCENE 3 A STREET

[Front cloth scene depicting another part of the village. GRIM enters down left.]

- GRIM I'd have to keep an eye on that young miller's son. I think he could prove to be a minor irritation in the future. But should he get in the way of my masters plans he'll find himself languishing in the castle dungeon until his bones rot! The master won't be pleased that his claim on the Mill has met with a few obstacles. I shall have to placate him with thoughts of being married to the Princess. Mmm. And marry him she will, I shall see to that! Those two numbskulls have got themselves a job at the palace. Unbeknownst to them, they will be of use to me there. Now I must report back to the Ogre. *[HE laughs and exits. WHEELER and DEALER enter right.]*
- WHEELER A job at the palace. That's not bad you know.
- DEALER Here, do you think we'll get board and lodging and meals thrown in?
- WHEELER I don't see why not.
- DEALER And a decent wage! No more doing jobs for nothing like the last one!
- WHEELER No. We should insist on our first week's wages in advance.

DEALER Good idea. Here's the King now. Why don't you ask him?

WHEELER Right. *[KING enters right.]* Hello there, your Majesty!

KING Ah, the new Royal attendants. How do you like the job?

DEALER Very nice thank you!

WHEELER We were thinking about our remuneration.

KING Eh?

DEALER Wages.

WHEELER Our usual contracts require a week's wages in advance!

KING In advance?

WHEELER *[Talking in a posh voice.]* Yes. We have a lot of out of pocket expenses to keep up appearances as becoming a member of the Royal household!

KING Well . yes I suppose you do. How much were you thinking of?

DEALER About forty .

WHEELER *[Covering DEALER'S mouth.]* - fifty-pounds should do as a start!

KING Fifty pounds?

WHEELER Each!

KING A hundred pounds? But the royal personage never carries money. It's not the done thing.

DEALER Oh that's all right. We'll lend it you.

KING *[Suddenly excited at having some money.]* Would you really?

WHEELER Of course.

KING I say, that's awfully decent of you. *[WHEELER and DEALER give him money.]* Now, a hundred pounds you say.

DEALER That's right!

KING Here you are then. *[HE starts to count the money out into WHEELER and DEALER'S hands.]* One, two, three, four, how long have you two been working together?

WHEELER Oh for about ten years.

KING Really? Ten. *[Counting.]* Eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen. Do you have any family?

DEALER No, but my parents had twenty children.

KING How many?

DEALER Twenty.

KING Twenty! *[Counting.]* Twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three. Do you live around these parts?

WHEELER Yes. *[HE gives the name of a local street.]* Number seventy-six.

KING Seventy six! *[Counting.]* Seventy-seven, seventy-eight.

DEALER And I'm at ninety-six.

KING Ninety-six *[Counting.]* Ninety-seven, ninety-eight, ninety-nine and one more is one hundred. There you are.

WHEELER Thank you, Sire.

KING Now run along and get what you need!

DEALER We will. Nice doing business with you.

KING See you at the palace. *[WHEELER and DEALER exit left as the QUEEN enters right. SHE carries a big dress box.]*

QUEEN Hello my people! *[Audience shouts out.]* Ah, Bumble there you are. What are you up to?

KING *[Pocketing the rest of the money.]* Oh just taking care of palace affairs, my dear. *[Indicating the box.]* You haven't bought another new outfit?

QUEEN Yes, I couldn't resist it when I saw it hanging in *[Local shop name.]* window.

KING But my dear we are exceeding our allowance.

QUEEN Oh I'm sure the Royal purse can stretch a little.

KING Any more stretching and the elastic will give altogether!

QUEEN But I had to have something to set off my new shoes from Patchem.

KING New shoes? Oh really!

QUEEN They're for the ball. We have to create a good impression for all our wealthy guests!

KING I suppose so.

QUEEN Have you made out a list of who's going to be invited?

KING I was on my way back to the palace to do just that.

- QUEEN *[Pointing to the audience.]* What about this lot out here? They're my friends you know. Well most of them! There are certain ones who might not fit in! I mean look at what some of them have got on!
- KING And look who they're with!!
- QUEEN Yes. *[To someone in the audience.]* Hello dear, is that your husband next to you or is it novelty night? Oh it is and it is!!
- KING Now, now dear. Don't upset the populace!
- QUEEN No, you're right. I mustn't upset my friends. *[SHE calls out.]* Hello my people! *[Audience responds.]* I tell you what, how would you like to see my new dress? *[Audience responds.]* All right, I'll give you a sneak preview! *[SHE opens the box and takes out a dress that is made up of the American Stars and Stripes.]* Isn't it fabulous?
- KING *[Open mouthed.]* I can't begin to tell you what I think of it!
- QUEEN It's called the 'American Look'
- KING The American look?
- QUEEN Yes. One yank and it's off! *[The KING reels in amazement.]* Come along now Bumble, don't dawdle. There's a lot to do. *[SHE exits left followed by the KING. COLIN and PUSS enter right.]*
- COLIN I don't know Puss, it's been a strange sort of day. First I arrive back in town to find my home ready to be sold from beneath me! Then I meet the loveliest girl I've ever seen only to find out she's a Princess and way above my station. *[PUSS gives him a nudge.]* It's true. I'll never stand a chance with her even if I did go to the ball. She'll only have eyes for all those Lords and Earls. *[PUSS shakes his head.]* And look at this. My only pair of boots has got a hole in them. Not the sort of thing to go dancing in! I wonder if Patchem could mend them.
- [PATCHEM enters.]*
- PATCHEM Mend what?
- COLIN Oh Patchem, I was just showing Puss the large hole in my boots!
- PATCHEM Oh dear, they have seen better days, haven't they? Why don't you drop by my shop and I'll see what I can do.
- COLIN *[In low spirits.]* Thank you.
- PATCHEM Cheer up Colin, a hole in a pair of boots isn't the end of the world!
- COLIN No, but thinking I could be a suitor to the Princess is.
- PATCHEM Oh.
- COLIN I need to show that I'm worthy of her hand. I need a title or something.

- PATCHEM Sorry, I only deal in shoes!
- COLIN How do people get titles?
- PATCHEM They do brave and courageous deeds then get great honours bestowed on them!
- COLIN Brave deeds? Like what?
- PATCHEM Search me! *[PUSS starts to shadow box as though fighting someone.]*
- COLIN Puss, what are you up to? *[PUSS walks around trying to look fierce.]*
- PATCHEM *[Laughing.]* He's trying to look like some fiercesome beast! *[PUSS nods and fights again.]*
- COLIN *[As an idea dawns.]* That's it! He's trying to tell me I should go and fight the Ogre! *[PUSS wipes his brow and staggers off stage.]* If I rid the land of him I'm sure to get a title and then I can marry Melinda!
- PATCHEM Oh fine talk! And how do you propose to do that? You know he has all sorts of magical powers. You could never defeat him.
- COLIN Well I won't know unless I try! And anyway, what have I got to lose?

NUMBER . COLIN AND PATCHEM

[At the end of the number THEY exit and the lights fade. The scene changes to

SCENE 4 PATCHEM'S SHOE SHOP

[There are shelves of shoes and a counter. There are two doors, one to the outside and the other to the back of the shop. (See Production notes in the introduction.) When the scene opens the CHORUS is helping with the stocktaking.]

NUMBER . CHORUS

[This can be a number or possibly a short choreographed piece showing them all stocktaking. At the end PATCHEM enters from the street.]

- PATCHEM Oh thank you all for helping me. I don't know what I've done without you.
- 1st WOMAN No problem, Patchem.
- 2nd WOMAN Anything to help a friend. *[PUSS bounds on. ALL make a fuss of him then exit.]*

- PATCHEM Hello there, Puss. Have you come for a pair of boots? *[PUSS nods and tries to walk on two legs.]* Oh yes, I'm sure you would look very elegant! *[COLIN enters.]*
- COLIN Well Patchem, if I'm going to fight that Ogre, I'd better get these boots mended!
- PATCHEM You're really serious about this, aren't you?
- COLIN Indeed I am.
- PATCHEM In that case, wait here a moment. *[HE exits into the back of the shop. PUSS mimes to COLIN that he wants a pair of boots.]*
- COLIN Oh, you want some too? That's going to be very expensive. Twice as much leather! *[PUSS looks at his four paws, and then stands up on two.]* Why you clever old thing. You'd be talking next! *[PATCHEM comes back with a brand new pair of boots.]*
- PATCHEM Here, try these on for size.
- COLIN Patchem, they're brand new. I can't afford these.
- PATCHEM Don't bother about the cost. If you are going to do what you say, I'd make you a present of them.
- COLIN I couldn't possibly.
- PATCHEM I'd tell you a story about these boots.

[The lights fade down to put PATCHEM, COLIN and PUSS into a spot on one side of the stage. The light comes up through the back wall of the shop. The characters and action that PATCHEM describes is played out in "pantomime" by members of the COMPANY and accompanied by music.]

MUSIC . PATCHEM'S STORY

Years ago when I had just finished my apprenticeship, an old man made his way into town. No one knew him or had seen him before and people grew very suspicious. The Ogre had already started to plunder and pillage other towns and we wondered if this stranger was one of his henchmen. To everyone's surprise he said he was just passing through and wanted to find the local cobbler. He came into the shop and asked me to carry out a very special task for him. He wanted a pair of boots making. Not any old pair of boots, but ones to a specific design, shape and size. He gave me the leather and more than enough money for the work and insisted that I stay up all night to complete the task. At first I told him that would be impossible but something about him . something magical . made me agree to his request. All through the night I worked, never stopping for food or drink. On and on until finally, as daybreak came, I hammered in the last tack. I was so exhausted I fell asleep at the workbench. The old man came back into the shop and woke me up. I showed him the boots and he was very pleased with my work. A feeling of immense

satisfaction came over me and the old man looked as though a great burden had been lifted from his shoulders. Then he said a very odd thing. He asked me to put away the boots and keep them safe for one day a young man would be in need of them. I asked him who that young man was and his parting words as he left the shop were ~~You~~ know. You know when the moment is right to give the boots away. *[The lights fade on the up stage scene and return to the shop.]* From that moment on the stranger was never seen again. But I never forgot his words. You know when the moment is right to give the boots away. I think that moment is now.

- COLIN But Patchem .
- PATCHEM Try them on. *[COLIN does and walks around in them.]* A perfect fit.
- COLIN I can't thank you enough.
- PATCHEM Don't thank me. Those boots have found their rightful owner. *[PUSS starts to paw at the boots.]*
- COLIN What's the matter with you Puss? You like them? Beauties, aren't they?
- PATCHEM I think he'd like a pair! *[PUSS nods.]*
- COLIN Puss, I'm ashamed of you. Cadging off Patchem!
- PATCHEM I wish I could fit you up, but business isn't exactly roaring. I need to get rid of the existing stock.
- COLIN Why don't you come with me? We'd team up and go and fight that Ogre together!
- PATCHEM Nothing I'd like better, but who would mind the shop?
- COLIN I'm sure your friends in the village would help. Oh do come Patchem.
- PATCHEM You know, I will! I could do with some adventure in my life!
- COLIN Get a few things together and we'd leave tonight. *[MELINDA enters.]*
- MELINDA Hello again. I'm afraid I left without taking my shoes, Patchem.
- PATCHEM I have them here your Highness. *[HE goes to the counter and gets her shoes.]*
- MELINDA *[Noticing COLIN'S boots.]* They are very fine boots.
- COLIN Patchem gave them to me. I needed a new pair before I set off on my journey.
- MELINDA *[Crestfallen.]* You're going away?
- COLIN I intend to find a way to rid the town of that dreadful Ogre.

- MELINDA But Colin, that's too dangerous. Anything could happen to you.
- COLIN Don't worry. I shall have two allies with me. *[PATCHEM stands one side of COLIN and PUSS the other.]*
- MELINDA I must say you're all very brave. Please be careful.
- COLIN *[Moving towards HER.]* We will, don't you worry. *[THEY are staring at each other. After a moment PATCHEM coughs politely holding out the shoes.]*
- MELINDA Oh! Well I must be getting back to the palace. *[SHE takes the shoes and crosses to the door.]*
- COLIN But you can't go alone. It's not safe in the street with the Ogre and his henchman around. Is it Patchem?
- PATCHEM Not safe at all. *[Mischievously.]* It's better see Her Royal Highness home.
- COLIN *[Firmly.]* It's all right Patchem; I'll escort the Princess. You've got some packing to do! Meet me in an hour at the woodland lake. *[HE opens the door and HE and MELINDA exit.]*
- PATCHEM I don't know Puss, it's a good job I am going with you. Anything could happen while he's in this state! Are you going to help me get ready? *[PUSS nods.]* Well go into the back and I'll shut up the shop. *[PUSS exits. PATCHEM goes to close the door but sees someone coming.]* Oh don't tell me I'm getting customers now! Oh no, it's only the Queen. I was hoping it would be someone with money! *[The QUEEN enters.]*
- QUEEN Hello my people. *[Audience responds.]*
- PATCHEM Hello Madge. I mean Your Majesty!
- QUEEN I've come for a pair of shoes for the ball. Have you anything in stock?
- PATCHEM *[Looking around at the abundance of shoes.]* It's funny you should ask! I do happen to have a few pairs! Would Your Majesty care to sit down?
- QUEEN Thank you. *[SHE sits and PATCHEM brings a pair of shoes to her. Note: All the shoes she tries should be outrageous Dame's footwear.]*
- PATCHEM Try these. Genuine hide!
- QUEEN *[Putting them on.]* They seem a bit tough!
- PATCHEM Wait a minute, I'll get the tenderiser! *[HE gets a mallet from the counter and starts hitting the shoes.]*
- QUEEN Here wait! I don't want my tootsies tenderised! *[SHE takes the shoes off.]* They won't do at all!

- PATCHEM *[Fetching another pair.]* What about these?
- QUEEN *[Putting them on.]* Oh yes. They're very nice. *[HE helps HER - leaving the shoehorn in the back of one of them. SHE stands and walks around with a hobble.]* Oh dear, my foot's gone numb!
- PATCHEM If Your Majesty would allow me. *[HE removes the shoehorn.]*
- QUEEN That's better. *[SHE walks around again. This time the shoes squeak. Note: This can be a sound effect or an off stage squeak noise.]* These are no good. They squeak!
- PATCHEM Well they're not used to being worn! You'd squeak if you'd been on the shelf for twenty years!
- QUEEN *[Shooting him a look.]* But I can't go around in squeaky shoes!
- PATCHEM Couldn't you take them off when no one was looking?
- QUEEN Do me a favour! Have you ever walked on our floors? Ice cold marble! It sends shivers right through you! I've heard of frozen fish fingers, but freezing frosty footsies . . . forget it!!
- PATCHEM Let me take a look at them. *[SHE sits and takes off the shoes. HE kneels down and grabs her toes.]*
- QUEEN *[Giggling.]* Hee hee! Stop it! What are you doing? Oh do it again, I like it!!
- PATCHEM You know something? You're the trouble! You've got squeaky feet!
- QUEEN What?
- PATCHEM Listen. *[HE wiggles HER foot. Squeak.]* There! *[HE gets an oil can from the counter and oils her feet.]* Now try. *[The QUEEN walks. Squeak.]* Ah! I've got it! Bend down. *[SHE does a knee bend. Squeak.]* Squeaky knees! *[HE oils HER knees.]* Try again. *[SHE moves. Squeak.]* I know what it is. Kneel down. *[SHE does and HE picks HER legs up like a wheelbarrow. THEY move a few paces. Squeak.]* That's your trouble. Squeaky elbows!! *[SHE stands.]*
- QUEEN Oh really!
- PATCHEM I'll settle it. *[HE oils HER elbows.]* There, now put your shoes back on. *[SHE does.]*
- QUEEN Oh yes. A lovely fit. Ta ever so! Just what I needed. *[SHE walks to the door.]*
- PATCHEM Is Madam all right now?
- QUEEN Oh yes. *[SHE nods and there is a tremendous squeaking noise. SHE screams and holds her head. PATCHEM staggers back into the shelves and shoes fall on top of him. Blackout.]*

SCENE 5 OUTSIDE THE OGRE'S CASTLE

[As Scene 1. The OGRE is waiting to meet with GRIM.]

OGRE Grim. Where is that snivelling oaf? He should be back now with the money from the auction and the deeds to the Mill. And I wonder if he has secured the hand of the Princess for me! Such a pretty little thing she is. I hope she can cook! I'll put her to work the minute she gets here. *[GRIM enters left.]*

GRIM Ah, there you are master.

OGRE Have you done everything I asked?

GRIM I'm afraid there have been some minor irritations to your plans master.

OGRE What do you mean?

GRIM The Miller's son turned up and has claimed the Mill as his!

OGRE Oh he has, has he? Then I shall have to pay him a visit and put on some pressure! What about the Princess.

GRIM I told the King and Queen about your most generous offer and they said you could apply formally for her hand.

OGRE Apply? Me? Do they know who they are dealing with? Those puny pipsqueaks. I want that girl for my wife and I shall get her.

GRIM I have a plan master. Two of the locals who are known to me are now working at the palace. They could easily be bribed to kidnap the Princess and bring her here. That way no one will know where she is.

OGRE *[With an evil laugh.]* What a cunning idea. *[Giving him a money bag.]* Here, go and see to it straight away. Once she is here and locked up I can concentrate on dealing with this upstart Miller's son!

GRIM That shouldn't be a problem master. There's only him and a scraggy old cat.

OGRE If they show any resistance I'll grind them to a pulp and put them into a stew! *[HE roars with laughter and exits left.]*

GRIM That was a close shave! I must make sure my plan works, or else it will be me for the stew! Mmm!! *[WHEELER and DEALER enter right.]* Ah, just the people I want to see.

WHEELER Well we don't want to see you, thank you very much.

DEALER So we'll be on our way. *[THEY turn to go. GRIM shakes the moneybag. THEY stop and look at each other.]*

WHEELER It's not raining, is it?

DEALER Not unless it's pennies from heaven! *[THEY look at GRIM.]*

- GRIM I have a job for you. *[THEY cross to him.]* I want you to kidnap the Princess - *[THEY cross away. HE cracks his whip and THEY cross quickly back.]* and bring her back here to the Ogre's castle.
- WHEELER That's the bit I don't like!
- GRIM When the job is complete you will be paid . well paid!
- DEALER That's the bit I do like!
- GRIM There is to be a Royal picnic this afternoon by the woodland lake. That would be a good time to do it.
- WHEELER The Princess won't be harmed will she? We don't hold with any violence.
- GRIM When she is here she will get everything her heart desires!
- DEALER Oh that's nice. Cheer her up a bit!
- WHEELER But if that's the case, why doesn't she come of her own accord?
- GRIM *[Cracking his whip again.]* Don't ask questions! The sooner she is here, the sooner you'll get paid!
- DEALER Now you're sure this time. It's not going to be like that auction that never happened!
- GRIM *[Cracking whip.]* Silence! *[DEALER jumps into WHEELER'S arms.]* If you fail me this time it will be the end for both of you! Now get going. *[WHEELER and DEALER run off right.]* Getting them to do the dirty deed is a master stroke. Mmm. They will be blamed and no one will know it was all my idea! Mmm! *[HE laughs and exits left as the lights fade and the scene changes to*

SCENE 6 THE WOODLAND LAKE

[A woodland scene with trees and a large clump of bushes up left of centre. The bushes should be able to revolve or part to reveal COLIN as the MARQUIS OF CARABAS at the end of the act. The lake is on the backcloth. PUSS comes running on followed by COLIN.]

- COLIN Not so fast Puss, don't forget I've only got two legs! We've got to meet Patchem here. I hope he won't be late. The sooner I get to the Ogre's castle and put an end to him, the sooner I can get back to Melinda. *[PUSS rolls on his back laughing.]* Oh you can laugh, but I'm going to do it. I'm going to make something of myself so I'll be worthy of her

hand in marriage. *[HE starts to walk away but feels something in his boot.]* Ow, I think I've got a stone in my boot. *[HE sits down on the ground and takes his boots off.]* There it is! I think I'd cool my feet in the lake; there's a lot more walking to do! Look after my boots will you Puss? *[PUSS nods. COLIN crosses up behind the bushes and exits.]*

MAGICAL MUSIC

[Music comes in as PUSS moves to the boots and looks at them. HE sits down and tries to put them on. When he has half got them on there is a dramatic chord in the music, a black out and a flash. When the lights return PUSS IN BOOTS is standing on two legs.]

- PUSS Bless my whiskers! *[HE looks around.]* Who said that? *[Wide eyed.]* I did! I can talk! All my life I wanted to talk and now I can! *[Leaps about in delight.]* Soon I'd be able to read and write! Oh I'm the happiest cat in the world. *[Puzzled.]* But how did this happen? All I did was try on Colin's boots. The boots! They must be magic.
- PATCHEM *[Off.]* Colin.
- PUSS It's Patchem. I'd hide and give them both a surprise. *[HE hides behind a tree as PATCHEM enters. He carries a travelling bag.]*
- PATCHEM Colin, where are you. *[COLIN enters.]*
- COLIN Here I am. I've just been cooling my feet in the lake. *[Looks for his boots.]* That's funny. Where are my boots?
- PATCHEM Did you leave them here?
- COLIN Yes, Puss was looking after them.
- PATCHEM Perhaps you left them by the lake.
- COLIN No. They were here. *[THEY start to look around the stage. PUSS enters and follows them.]*
- PUSS *[To PATCHEM.]* What are you looking for?
- PATCHEM Colin's boots. You haven't seen them, have you Puss? *[COLIN and PATCHEM do a double take.]*
- COLIN/
PATCHEM Puss!!
- COLIN You can talk!
- PATCHEM And he's wearing your boots!
- COLIN Puss, what on earth has happened to you?
- PUSS Not Puss! Let me introduce myself. Mr Thomas Cat at your service. *[HE bows to them.]* It's the boots. They have some sort of magical power that enables me to talk!

- PATCHEM Boots that make you talk! Blimey, that'll put *[Local shoe shop.]* out of business!
- PUSS And now I can talk I'm never going to stop. Think of all the things I've got to tell you. I'll start with everything that's happened to me since I was a kitten!
- COLIN Now listen Puss, if there's one thing I can't stand it's a nattering cat!
- PUSS Master, I've got my dearest wish and I'm going to see that you get yours! I'm going to arrange for you to marry the Princess!
- PATCHEM Oh yes. I suppose a little thing like marrying a Millers son to a Princess is mere kittens play to you!
- PUSS But first we have to rid the land of that wicked Ogre.
- COLIN Just one thing. What about my boots?
- PUSS Oh please don't take them back master!
- PATCHEM *[Taking another pair out of his bag.]* Here. I always carry a spare!
[COLIN puts them on.]
- PUSS When we get to the castle that Ogre's going to find out who put the cat in catastrophe!! *[ALL laugh.]*
- TRIO - COLIN, PATCHEM & PUSS
- [If a song is not required here the dialogue continues.]*
- PUSS The first thing is to make an impression on the King and Queen. You have to become a nobleman. A Baron or a Marquis . yes The Marquis of Carabas! *[PATCHEM roars with laughter. PUSS looks at him and HE stops.]* You Patchem must go into that field and pick some wild strawberries to present to the Queen from my master.
- PATCHEM Wild strawberries? I'm a cobbler not a fruit picker!
- PUSS They are the Queen's favourite and will make a good impression. Colin, you have got to have some rich clothes. Let me think. *[HE moves looking off stage left.]*
- COLIN It's no good Puss. This will never work.
- PATCHEM It's a wild cat scheme if you ask me!
- PUSS I have it. I'll contact a few of my feline friends who reside with the local nobility and get them to *purr-loin* some items of clothing fit for a Marquis.
- COLIN Can you do that?

PUSS Nothing simpler *[HE looks off.]* Look who's coming. That miserable manservant of the Ogre's. Colin, go and bathe in the lake. When he is in earshot Patchem and I will shout out - *[Loudly.] - "Murder!"*

PATCHEM *[Jumping out of his skin.]* Don't do that!

COLIN But what on earth for?

PUSS We don't want him seeing you like that. Our story is that while the exquisite Marquis of Carabas was bathing, robbers stole his sumptuous clothes. He is now waiting for his servants to return with replacements. Grim is sure to be impressed and want you to meet his master.

PATCHEM The Ogre!

PUSS Exactly!

COLIN It'll never work.

PUSS Of course it will. Trust me! Now quickly, into the lake. *[HE pushes COLIN up stage and off. HE then comes down and looks for GRIM.]* Here he comes. Shout, Patchem.

PATCHEM *[Weakly.]* Help! Murder! *[PUSS scratches him on the backside. HE yells.]* Help! Murder! I've been nobbled!

PUSS That's better. Now go and pick those strawberries.

PATCHEM I must be mad! *[HE exits right.]*

PUSS *[Shouting.]* Help! Help! *[GRIM enters left.]* Oh noble Sir, Please help!

GRIM What's this? A talking cat? Mmm!

PUSS Oh kind Sir, my master the Marquis of Carabas, whilst taking a bathe, has been robbed of all his beautiful clothes by a band of brigands.

GRIM The Marquis of Carabas. Who is he?

PUSS Why Sir, you must have heard of him. The most wealthy and powerful man in the Kingdom of Cordoba! Surely you have heard of him?

GRIM I don't recall. Has he other servants as unique as you?

PUSS An entire household!

GRIM I should welcome further acquaintance with you and your master.

PUSS I'm sure that can be arranged.

GRIM *[Aside. Very excited.]* A talking cat! Mmm! The Ogre must know of this. *[THEY bow to each other and GRIM exits left.]*

- PUSS *[Jumping for joy.]* That is the first part of my plan. Here comes the Royal party. Now to put the second part into action. *[HE hides behind the bushes. KING and QUEEN enter. The KING carries picnic baskets piled high.]*
- QUEEN Hello my people! *[Audience responds.]*
- KING This looks a good spot for a picnic.
- QUEEN Where are the others? Where can they have got to?
- KING *[Staggering with the baskets.]* What's the matter with you?
- QUEEN I've lost my picnickers!
- KING Well you shouldn't have taken them off! *[HE pulls a comical pair of knickers out of a basket. The QUEEN gasps and takes them off him.]*
- QUEEN You don't have to show everybody! *[SHE throws the knickers off stage.]*
- KING Come on, let's sit down.
- QUEEN Here's a good place. *[The KING puts the baskets down. The QUEEN sits down.]* Oh no! Too many trees . sure to be mosquitoes! Over here. *[The KING picks up the baskets and THEY move to the other side of the stage.]* Here, this is nice. *[THEY settle again.]* Oh no! It's a bit damp. *[THEY move up centre. The baskets are getting very wobbly.]* This is lovely. *[SHE sits down.]* Oh no! There's an awful wind blowing off the lake! I think we'd better move further on! *[The KING picks up the baskets and now staggers right and left around the stage as they look as if they are going to topple over. HE gets by the bush and PUSS jumps out.]*
- PUSS May I be of assistance? *[The KING jumps and the baskets go flying. PUSS bows low.]* Your Majesties.
- QUEEN *[Clinging on to the KING.]* Help! Save me! I'd never drink another drop! What is it? I've seen pink elephants, but never a talking cat!!
- KING Don't be silly dear, the cat didn't speak.
- PUSS I did. I'm the only talking cat in the realm!
- KING *[Looking at the QUEEN.]* That's what you think!
- PUSS My noble master the Marquis of Carabas, 11th Count of Cordoba and 17th Baron of Seville, asks me to presents his compliments and humbly begs you will accept this unworthy trifle.
- QUEEN/KING Ooooh! I like trifle!
- [PUSS claps his paws and PATCHEM enters with a large basket of strawberries.]*
- QUEEN Oh Bumble! Wild strawberries. My favourite!

- PUSS He also requests that you allow him to offer himself as a prospective suitor for the hand of your beautiful daughter, the Princess Melinda.
- QUEEN *[Munching on some strawberries.]* A Marquis!
- PUSS A very rich one!
- QUEEN *[Aside to the KING.]* Oh Bumble, all our money trouble could be over. *[To PUSS.]* Of course he may call on the Princess any time. In fact we're having a banquet and grand ball tonight. He simply must attend. You both must!
- KING Does that mean we'll have to eat Kit-E-Kat? *[Or another brand of cat food.]*
- QUEEN Come along. We'll abandon the picnic and get back to the palace. *[KING piles up the baskets.]* There's so much to arrange. We're so looking forward to this evening. Come along Dumbell, don't dawdle! *[SHE pushes the KING and HE trips and falls into the wings. There is a loud crash. SHE looks back at PATCHEM holding the strawberries and grabs the whole basket off him, then follows the KING off.]*
- PUSS Oh Patchem, it's worked! My plan has worked!
- PATCHEM I'm still not clear what is going on!
- PUSS I've got an invitation to the ball tonight for my new master The Marquis of Carabas. And Grim is going to arrange an introduction to the Orge.
- PATCHEM Where is Colin?
- PUSS Awaiting his new outfit which I shall choose for him. *[PATCHEM exits.]*

MUSIC . CLOTHES FOR THE MARQUIS

[The music starts and a dance is performed. It shows PUSS asking his cat-friends to help get a new wardrobe for COLIN. A series of vignettes takes place showing the cats procuring various items of clothing from their masters. Each item is taken and paraded before PUSS who selects which should be suitable for COLIN. The items are then taken behind the bush. At the end GRIM enters down left as PUSS makes the announcement.]

- PUSS It is my great pleasure to introduce the most noble Marquis of Carabas.
- [The music builds again as the bushes revolve to reveal COLIN now resplendent as the MARQUIS OF CARABAS. ALL bow to him. HE looks across at GRIM who is down left and bows to him. GRIM also bows low as COLIN turns to PUSS with a big smile on his face. PATCHEM appears down right and gives them both the thumbs up.]*

The Curtain Falls

ACT TWO
SCENE 1 OUTSIDE THE OGRE'S CASTLE

[The scene is the same as Act 1 Scene 1. The musical introduction to Act 2 fades. A rumble of thunder is heard as the lights come up to reveal the OGRE. Audience reaction.]

- OGRE Oh shut up or I'll put a spell on you and make you watch . *[HE says a TV programme.]*- twenty-four hours a day!
- GRIM *[Entering down left.]* Master, I have good news.
- OGRE You've got the Princess?
- GRIM Not yet Master, I'm working on that. No, this is something quite unexpected.
- OGRE What?
- GRIM I have just met the fabulously wealthy Marquis of Carabas. Mmm!
- OGRE Marquis of Carabas?
- GRIM Yes. I helped him after he was set upon by brigands.
- OGRE What are you talking about? There is no Marquis of Carabas.
- GRIM Oh yes Master, he is here in the Kingdom accompanied by the most amazing talking cat!
- OGRE Talking cat? Have you taken leave of your senses?
- GRIM It's true Master. I saw him with my own eyes standing there wearing a fine pair of boots!
- OGRE *[Suddenly very wary.]* Boots? Wearing a pair of boots you say?
- GRIM Yes Master.
- OGRE *[Slowly. Rather shaken.]* Then the old wizard's prophecy was true!
- GRIM Wizard?
- OGRE Many years ago I encountered a Wizard who challenged my powers. I defeated him, but before he died he cursed me with a prophecy that one day I would meet an adversary in the form of a cat wearing boots. It seems that day has arrived!
- GRIM What now Master?
- OGRE Where is the cat?
- GRIM Gone with the Marquis to the ball at the palace.

- OGRE Then you must go there and discredit them both and above all get those boots off the cat.
- GRIM I'd go at once Master and arrange for the Princess to be abducted at the same time! *[HE exits down left.]*
- OGRE How fortunate that I have heard about this. Now I can keep one step ahead of them. Come snooping around here cat and your nine lives will be cut down with one almighty blow! *[HE laughs and exits as the scene changes to*

SCENE 2 THE PALACE BALLROOM

[A beautiful ballroom with two thrones up centre. A Grand Ball is in progress. The CHORUS is singing and dancing. WHEELER and DEALER are standing by the thrones as royal attendants.]

OPENING CHORUS/DANCE

[During the number the KING and QUEEN enter and participate. The QUEEN calls "Hello my people" to the audience. At the end they BOTH cross up to the thrones and sit.]

- WHEELER Pray silence for His Right Royal Regalness - King Bumble.
- DEALER And Her Right Royal Raver - Queen Bee.
- QUEEN Go on Bumble, tell everybody what tonight is all about.
- KING *[Standing up.]* Ladies and Gentlemen .
- QUEEN There's no need to say that. They know they're ladies and gentlemen.
- KING Yes, my love. We are gathered here this evening .
- QUEEN Of course we're gathered here this evening. Get on with it.
- KING *[Getting a little flustered.]* To witness the betrothal of our beloved daughter .
- QUEEN They know that! It's on the invitations!
- KING To the suitor with the most dosh! *[HE sits.]*
- QUEEN Is that all you're going to say? *[The KING stands again, opens his mouth, says nothing and sits down.]* Well said! *[ALL applaud.]*
- WHEELER *[Announcing.]* Her Highness .
- DEALER - the one and only!
- BOTH Princess Melinda. *[MELINDA enters and ALL bow to her as the QUEEN and KING cross down.]*

- QUEEN Oh Melinda, you look a picture! *[SHE bursts into tears.]* It's enough to break a mother's heart!
- KING Oh do dry up or your ermine will run! *[To MELINDA.]* Very nice dear, I'm sure you'd be a credit to any Prince.
- QUEEN Just make sure the Prince has got some credit first. Now when the suitors are presented, don't appear too eager.
- MELINDA Don't worry about that mother, I'm not!
- QUEEN But you mustn't be too off hand. Just a little . *[SHE gives the KING a 'come hither' look. HE grimaces.]*
- KING She's only got to look like that once to be an old maid in no time!
- WHEELER Your Travesties, the suitors for the hand of the Princess .
- DEALER - and anything else she'd like to throw in!
- WHEELER - are ready to be presented.
- KING Have you checked their bank balances?
- DEALER Yes your Majesty.
- MELINDA Oh I'm not interested in their money.
- QUEEN Of course not dear . but we are! *[KING, QUEEN and MELINDA cross up to the thrones.]*
- WHEELER His Excellency, the Prince of . *[Insert the name of a local town or area. A MAN from the CHORUS steps forward and bows to the thrones.]* His Excellency offers her Highness a platinum coronet studded with rubies, pearls and sapphires, together with fifty thousand ducats. *[KING and QUEEN look at MELINDA.]*
- QUEEN Very nice too. I'd heard they were rolling in it in . *[Town reference.]*
- KING Well Melinda?
- MELINDA No, I couldn't!
- KING Next please.
- DEALER His serene Highness the Duke of . *[Another town. Another MAN – one of considerable age - steps forward and bows.]* His serene Highness offers the Princess a diamond mine, strings of pearls and emeralds. A palace of gold with hanging gardens and crystal fountains, together with one hundred thousand ducats.
- QUEEN *[Looking at the aged Prince.]* I don't think you'd do better, dear!
- MELINDA No, no!

- KING Well that's two nos and no yesses! Next please!
- MELINDA I can't do it. It's not fair. All you think about is money and nothing for my happiness! *[SHE turns away.]*
- WHEELER The most Noble Marquis of Carabas. *[COLIN enters dressed as the Marquis. HE moves to the thrones and bows.]*
- QUEEN Oh it's him. The Market! Isn't he gorgeous? He sends me!
- KING Sends you where? *[HE giggles at his own joke.]*
- MELINDA *[Without turning.]* No more, please!
- KING *[To Melinda.]* I didn't think it was that bad! *[HE crosses down to COLIN.]* It's no good young man. Whatever you've brought we'll have to send back. Carriage paid! You must forget all about the Princess.
- COLIN I could never do that your Majesty.
- KING I'm afraid you've got to old chap. Can't annoy the Princess. Protocol and all that.
- COLIN I remember not long ago she said she wouldn't let protocol stand in the way of friendship.
- MELINDA *[Spinning around to face him.]* You! *[COLIN "shh's" HER]* I never thought I would see you again! *[SHE crosses to HIM and THEY embrace.]*
- KING Well don't your mother and I have anything to say about this?
- MELINDA Oh I'm so happy. Thank you for arranging this.
- QUEEN *[Slightly surprised.]* What did we do?
- KING Perhaps we ought to leave them alone to *clinch* the deal so to speak!
- MELINDA Daddy, please!
- COLIN You know that might not be such a bad idea. *[HE takes HER hand and THEY move away. The CHORUS drift off. The KING and QUEEN cross down stage.]*
- QUEEN *[Looking at the couple.]* Oh how it takes me back to my youth!
- KING Careful dear, those long journeys can be so tiring!
- QUEEN Do you remember the night you proposed?
- KING How could I forget!
- QUEEN There was a faraway look in your eyes as they started to water. *[Without realising it SHE is standing on his foot.]* They're doing it again.

KING *[Wincing with pain.]* That's because you're standing on my foot!

QUEEN What?

KING You're standing on my foot.

QUEEN Well you shouldn't have such big feet! *[THEY start to exit.]*

KING Yours are bigger than mine!

QUEEN I'd have you know I'm only a small thirteen! *[THEY are now off stage.]*

MELINDA The Marquis of Carabas? But how can that be?

COLIN The story is a long one and much too complicated to worry your head about it tonight. Now that we're together I never want us to part again.

DUET . COLIN AND MELINDA

[At the end of the number THEY exit as WHEELER and DEALER enter eating large portions of cake.]

WHEELER I say, this is the life. Board and lodgings and plenty of food. It beats all the other jobs we've had.

DEALER Too true. *[Eating.]* You know I think this cake has got brandy in it. *[GRIM appears down left.]*

GRIM Pst!

DEALER I've not eaten that much!

GRIM Miserable fools! What are you loafing about for? Where's the Princess? Do you want that money or don't you?

WHEELER We can't get near her. She's taken up with this Marquis of Caravans!

GRIM Marquis! He's an impostor and that cat of his must be silenced. We must get the boots off and then the trick will be exposed!

DEALER What trick?

GRIM Don't ask questions, just do it. Look, here he comes. Hide up there and when I have him off guard, grab him so I can get the boots off. *[WHEELER and DEALER hide behind the thrones. PUSS enters.]*

PUSS Why Mister Grim, what kept you? I thought you would have been here for the arrival of my master the Marquis.

GRIM Your master the impostor you mean.

PUSS I don't know what you are talking about.

GRIM *[In a rage.]* I've found out all about your tricks!

PUSS Tricks?

GRIM That Marquis is an impostor. And you, prancing about as though you're someone special!

PUSS Tut, tut! We are in a mood!

GRIM Cheeky young alley cat! You'd pay for this. *[WHEELER and DEALER have crept down behind PUSS. They have a length of rope with them.]* Grab him!

PUSS What are you doing? *[WHEELER and DEALER throw the rope around PUSS who struggles.]*

DEALER Gotcha! Owww, he kicked me!

GRIM Hold on to him while I get his boots off.

PUSS Master! Master! Help!

WHEELER He's bitten me! *[PUSS struggles free and runs up behind the thrones. HE trips over so only his boots are showing. WHEELER and DEALER run behind the thrones to tackle him. GRIM crosses up, pulls the boots off and tosses them up stage. The original PUSS is hidden behind the thrones and is now brought wriggling, down stage by WHEELER and DEALER.]*

GRIM *[Producing a sack.]* Put him in this. *[THEY pull the sack over PUSS.]* Not so talkative now are you? You flea-bitten alley cat. *[To the OTHERS.]* Bring him with you. *[They ALL exit left. PUSS meowing wildly.]*

PATCHEM *[Off.]* What's going on? *[HE enters right.]* What's all the row about? Puss, you'd have the neighbours complaining. Where are you? *[HE sees the boots.]* That's funny, his boots! He'd never leave them lying around. *[HE picks them up.]* What has been going on? *[To the audience.]* Do you know? *[The audience tells him what has been going on.]* Well thank you very much for telling me. They're all up to no good, so I better find the others quickly. *[HE exits right as GRIM enters left.]*

GRIM With all that struggling I forgot the boots! *[Sees they are not there.]* Where have they got to? I'm sure I left them there. *[There is a noise off stage as the COURT enters including KING, QUEEN, COLIN and MELINDA.]*

QUEEN *[Laughing.]* Oh Marquis, you have such a ready wit! I'm really going to enjoy having you as a son in law!

COLIN Your Majesty is too kind.

GRIM *[To the KING.]* Sire, you have been cheated!

KING *[Looking at the QUEEN.]* You're telling me!

- GRIM *[To ALL.] That is not the Marquis of Carabas! [All gasp.] He's an impostor! A cheat!*
- QUEEN How dare you talk of my daughter's *finance* like that?
- GRIM Your daughter's fiancé is nothing but a commoner. A nobody!
- KING That's ridiculous! He's the richest man in these parts!
- QUEEN He's even got a talking cat!
- GRIM Talking cat indeed! Look at him now! *[WHEELER and DEALER bring on PUSS still in the sack. THEY take the sack off and PUSS runs to COLIN. WHEELER, DEALER and GRIM exit.]*
- COLIN Puss, Puss speak to me! *[PUSS just meows.]*
- QUEEN What is the meaning of this?
- KING Why doesn't anyone ever tell me anything?
- QUEEN This is preposterous. Call the guards!
- KING We haven't got any. They all quit!
- COLIN But let me explain.
- MELINDA Colin, I'll never leave you.
- QUEEN Have you lost your senses? Come away at once. *[MELINDA, in tears, crosses up stage to the thrones behind the COMPANY. During the next sequence GRIM enters up stage and indicates that WHEELER and DEALER kidnap MELINDA. THEY put the sack over her and carry her off without anyone seeing except PUSS who runs up to the thrones.]*
- QUEEN Marquis of Caramel!
- KING 11th Count of *Cordon bleu!*
- COLIN Oh Puss, how could you leave me? What happened?
- PATCHEM *[Entering with the boots.]* I think I may have the answer Colin.
- COLIN Patchem!
- PATCHEM Someone must have taken Puss's boots off him. That's why his power of speech has gone!
- COLIN Puss, is that right. *[[THEY cross up to PUSS who is frantically trying to tell them MELINDA has been kidnapped.]*
- QUEEN What's he trying to tell us?

- COLIN Put the boots on him and we'll find out. *[PATCHEM goes to put the boots back on PUSS. The lights black out and when they return PUSS IN BOOTS is standing there.]* Puss. Can you speak again?
- PUSS Master, quick! There is no time to lose. The Ogre's henchman has kidnapped the Princess!
- COLIN What?
- QUEEN Kidnapped Melinda? Oh no! My darling daughter! *[SHE starts to reel.]*
- KING Oh no. She's going off. *[HE catches her.]*
- PATCHEM She'll be taken to the Ogre's castle. Now we'll never get her back!
- COLIN Yes we will. Puss, you and I must go after them at once. I vowed to rid this land of that wicked Ogre and I intend to keep my promise.
- PATCHEM I'm coming with you.
- KING And me!
- QUEEN What's happening?
- KING Don't worry my love. We're just going off to fight the Ogre!
- QUEEN Ooooooh! *[SHE reels again.]*
- KING Oh lord, she's going off again.
- QUEEN *[Suddenly all right.]* No I'm not! I'm coming as well. I shall give that Ogre a piece of my mind!
- KING Are you sure you can spare it?
- COLIN Don't worry Melinda, you'll soon be free.

SONG . COLIN AND COMPANY

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

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SCENE 3 ON ROUTE TO THE CASTLE

(NB. If it is impossible to stage the filmed car sequence this scene can be omitted.)

[This scene opens on black tabs. GRIM enters down left.]

- GRIM Finally those two idiots have managed to do something right. My master will be pleased with the capture of Princess Melinda. And what a fitting bride she will make. Mmm. He's sure to reward me handsomely for completing the task. Now to get back to the castle before the others can catch up with us.

[WHEELER and DEALER run on from down right. GRIM sees they don't have the PRINCESS with them.]

What's this? Where is the Princess? What have you done with her?

WHEELER Don't get your tights in a twist! We've bundled her up and put her in the boot of our getaway car.

GRIM Are you sure she can't escape?

DEALER She's as snug as a bug . . . and she's in a rug!

GRIM Well get her back to the castle immediately. If anything goes wrong I wouldn't like to be in your shoes when the Ogre finds out.

WHEELER Don't worry. Nothing will go wrong.

DEALER Can we offer you a lift?

GRIM You've got to be joking. With your driving I'd be safer on public transport. *[HE exits.]*

WHEELER Charming!

DEALER Come on then. Let's get going.

[The tabs open part way to reveal a cut-out of the back end of a car. A screen for film projection is up stage of it. WHEELER and DEALER climb into the car and a film sequence follows. (See production notes.) At the end the lights black out and the scene changes to

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SCENE 4 THE SECRET ENTRANCE TO THE OGRE'S CASTLE

[The stone walls of the castle with a secret sliding section stage left. WHEELER and DEALER enter right dragging MELINDA who is bound with rope.]

MELINDA Let go of me!

WHEELER Don't struggle so much Princess, you'll hurt yourself.

MELINDA How dare you do this to me?

DEALER Sorry, but orders is orders!

MELINDA Whose orders? Not my parents! *[GRIM enters left.]*

WHEELER/ *[Pointing to GRIM.]* His!
DEALER

MELINDA You despicable creature! *[SHE calls.]* Help!

GRIM There's no one here to help you, my fine lady!

MELINDA Where are we?

GRIM At the castle of my master, the Ogre. No one has ever escaped from here!

MELINDA Colin will find me, I know he will.

GRIM He can try, but he'll never penetrate the castle walls.

MELINDA Why are you doing this?

GRIM My master is in the market for a bride and you are the lucky girl he has chosen! Mmm!

MELINDA Never! I'll not marry that fiend!

GRIM Take care of what you say or instead of a bride . *[HE leans into her.]*
 . you may be fried! *[HE laughs.]*

MELINDA Help! Someone please help!

GRIM *[To the OTHERS.]* I'll take her inside to meet her future husband! You may go; your work is finished here.

WHEELER Er . what about our fee?

GRIM Eh?

DEALER Our fee for doing your dirty work.

GRIM Oh yes! I've forgotten!

WHEELER We hadn't!

GRIM *[Giving them a money bag.]* Here you are. And remember you know nothing.

DEALER My mind's a blank!

WHEELER No comment! *[GRIM crosses to the left side of the stage, pulling MELINDA.]*

GRIM *[Chanting a spell.]* Castle wall open wide .
 Two to enter, deep inside.

[The castle wall slides open and GRIM pulls MELINDA off. The wall closes.]

WHEELER Did you see that? The wall just opened up.

DEALER It must be some sort of magic. I've heard the Ogre can work all kinds of spells!

WHEELER *[Looking in the bag.]* Well he's worked another one. Look! *[HE takes out two lottery tickets and a note.]* Two lottery tickets!

DEALER What does the note say?

WHEELER %t could be you!+ That dirty double crosser!

DEALER *[Crossing left to where the wall opened.]* Give us our money you big cheat!

WHEELER *[Crossing to him.]* It's no good. We'd never get in. *[PUSS enters from the right, crosses to them and listens.]*

DEALER You never know, we might win!

PUSS *[Looking at the ticket in WHEELER'S hand.]* Not with last week's ticket, you won't!

WHEELER *[Jumping.]* Ha! You!

DEALER *[Backing away.]* Oh no! How did you find us?

PUSS It's not just dogs who are good trackers you know!

COLIN *[Off.]* Puss, where are you?

PUSS Here, master. *[COLIN enters right.]* Look who I have found!

COLIN You two scoundrels! What have you done with the Princess?

WHEELER Nothing!

DEALER It was that two timing, double dealing Grim!

COLIN What do you mean?

WHEELER He tricked us into helping him.

DEALER Told us the Ogre would do something terrible if we didn't.

WHEELER Then diddled us out of what he owed us!

COLIN Where has he taken her?

DEALER *[Pointing to the wall.]* In there!

COLIN Where?

WHEELER The castle! He's taken her to the Ogre.

PATCHEM *[Off.]* Colin. Puss!

COLIN Over here Patchem. This way. *[PATCHEM enters right - out of breath.]*

PATCHEM Why do Ogres have to build their castles on the top of a hill? It weakens the heart, hardens the arteries and the bus fares are crippling!

COLIN Patchem, it's no time for joking. The Princess is in the Ogre's clutches!

PATCHEM How do we get in?

WHEELER It's through that wall!

COLIN What are you talking about?

DEALER That wall opened up and he took her inside!

COLIN You had better be telling me the truth.

WHEELER We are. It was some sort of trick!

PUSS *[Looking at the wall.]* It's solid stone, master. There's no way anyone can get through that.

DEALER But they did! It was a trick. Honest!

PATCHEM It is the sort of thing the Ogre would do. A wall with no doors keeps out unwelcome visitors!

COLIN You could be right. But you must have seen how he opened it. Puss is there a lever or catch anywhere?

PUSS Nothing at all. *[The QUEEN enters.]*

QUEEN *[Exhausted.]* Hello my people. *[Audience responds.]* Are we there yet? My feet are killing me.

PATCHEM This is the Ogre's castle.

COLIN But I'm afraid, your Majesty, it's impregnable.

[The KING enters and hears this.]

KING *[Looking at the QUEEN. Aghast.]* What?? She can't be!

QUEEN Bumble, be quiet!

COLIN *[Indicating WHEELER and DEALER.]* These two know something about all this.

QUEEN Our footmen! What are they doing here?

PATCHEM They're in on the kidnap!

WHEELER *[Falling to his knees.]* Oh please your Majesty. We were forced to do it!

DEALER *[Also on his knees.]* Please don't clap us in irons!

QUEEN I'd do more than that. I'd cut off your privileges!

COLIN They tell us Grim and Melinda went through that wall!

KING You mean it opened up and they walked through?

WHEELER Yes!

QUEEN How?

WHEELER Grim did mutter a verse of some sort.

PATCHEM A verse?

DEALER Yes. It was all about opening wide!

QUEEN Sounds like the dentist!

KING *[Opening his mouth wide.] Ah! [The QUEEN looks at him and closes his mouth.]*

COLIN *[To DEALER.]* Can you remember it?

DEALER *[Standing and putting his hand to his forehead.]* Just a minute. I think I'm getting it! It's coming . it's coming. *[Takes his hand away.]* It's gone! *[ALL sigh.]*

WHEELER Oh you're useless! Let me think. I have a good memory for poetry! Wait a minute . yes that's it. *[HE recites – trying to imitate GRIM'S voice.]*
 Castle walls open wide,
 Two to enter deep inside.

[ALL look at the wall. Nothing happens.]

KING You must have got it wrong!

WHEELER No, that's what he said. I'm sure of it. Castle walls open wide, two to enter deep inside.

QUEEN Well it's no good, it won't work for us!

PUSS If you'd permit me your Majesty.

COLIN What is it Puss?

PUSS *[To WHEELER.]* Two to enter+, I think you said?

WHEELER Yes.

PUSS But we are seven!

COLIN Of course!

QUEEN It must relate to the number of people outside!

KING What a priceless pussy you are! *[The QUEEN preens.]*

PATCHEM All together now.

- ALL Castle walls open wide,
Seven to enter deep inside.
- [The wall opens.]*
- COLIN We've done it!
- QUEEN Patchem, you lead the way!
- PATCHEM Me?
- QUEEN You're not frightened are you?
- PATCHEM No! But I don't know the way!
- KING Just follow your nose.
- PATCHEM But my nose isn't moving!
- PUSS If your Majesties will permit . Colin and I will go first.
- QUEEN By all means. Go ahead. *[COLIN and PUSS exit.]* All right the rest of you. *[SHE starts to sound like a Sergeant Major.]* Attention! About face. Quick march. *[There now follows a short marching routine with everyone bumping into each other. At the end all exit through the wall opening except DEALER who is going the other way. HE realises his mistake as the wall starts to close.]*
- DEALER Hey! Wait for me! *[HE dashes to the wall and exits as it closes. The lights blackout and the scene changes to]*

SCENE 5 THE KEEP IN THE OGRE'S CASTLE

[The scene is fairly bare. The back wall contains a sliding panel that is used for the SKELETON to go in and out of, also for cast members to be drawn in to.]

GHOUL'S DANCE

[Various creatures such as ghouls, zombies, skeletons and ghosts perform a sequence – perhaps in UV. The dance should be quite comic – perhaps with some of the zombies bumping into one another and limbs dropping off. Towards the end of the dance a SKELETON enters with a tray of tea. All the CREATURES react as though it is a tea break. GRIM enters left with MELINDA and calls.]

- GRIM All right. Tea break's over. Clear off and take your bits with you! *[The CREATURES exit collecting any limbs.]* Here we are master. Here is your bride to be! *[The OGRE enters.]*
- OGRE Thank you Grim. You have done well. Now leave us.
- GRIM Of course master. *[HE bows and exits.]*

- OGRE Welcome to my humble abode. I do hope you like my castle.
- MELINDA I hate it and I hate you.
- OGRE What spirit. I like that in a girl. You will make a splendid wife.
- MELINDA Never!
- OGRE What was that?
- MELINDA I will never marry you. I'd rather die!
- OGRE That can be arranged if you so wish!
- MELINDA You'd be sorry when Colin gets here.
- OGRE Oh I will, will I? And how do you think he will get inside? No one can penetrate the walls of the castle. It is a solid fortress.
- MELINDA I don't care. Colin will find a way!
- OGRE I'm afraid you're in for a long wait, my dear! In the meantime, why don't I show you to your quarters? I'm sure you are going to like them. They are in the North wing. Right next to the torture chamber. *[HE roars with laughter and drags her off right. PUSS enters left looking around and then signals off stage left that all is clear. COLIN enters.]*
- COLIN No sign of anyone yet, Puss?
- PUSS No master. I'd look down that passage. *[HE points off up stage.]*
- COLIN Right. I'd try this one. *[HE points down stage.]*
- PUSS We'd meet back here in a few minutes.
- COLIN Take care Puss, that Ogre and his henchman could be hiding anywhere. *[THEY exit in various directions. The QUEEN enters left looking around.]*
- QUEEN *[In a whisper.]* Hello my people! *[SHE moves to the right side of the stage as the KING enters left. THEY don't see each other as they continue looking about. PATCHEM also enters left and walks around. ALL THREE keep missing each other until, walking backwards, they all bump into each other centre. THEY all shriek and leap apart.]* Don't you dare creep up on this Royal personage!
- KING You crept up on me.
- PATCHEM Ssh! Don't make so much noise or the Ogre will know we're here!
- QUEEN I don't like this place. It's very creepy!
- KING The sooner we find Melinda and get out, the better!
- PATCHEM My thoughts exactly. But where could she be?

QUEEN Well let's all keep together and keep looking. *[THEY group down stage right and start to back towards centre. WHEELER and DEALER enter left and back towards centre. ALL five bump into each other with a scream.]* Oh you two! What do you think you are doing?

WHEELER Looking for you!

KING Well you should be looking for the Princess.

DEALER All these corridors are so dark. She could be anywhere.

PATCHEM Colin and Puss must have gone on ahead. I do hope they are all right.

QUEEN You know, I feel we're being watched the whole time. *[A panel opens and a SKELETON is standing there.]*

KING I know what you mean. *[There is a bloodcurdling laugh. ALL freeze.]*

WHEELER W-w-w-what was that?

DEALER Not . *[Famous person known for their laugh.]* . that's for sure!

QUEEN Let's have a look round. *[The panel closes as they all turn around to look. They then turn back to face front.]*

KING I can't see anyone.

PATCHEM *[To the audience.]* You'd tell us if you see anything, would you?
[Audience reaction.] Oh thank you.

DEALER You know when I'm afraid I always sing a little song! Shall we try it?

QUEEN Sing a little song? Who do you think we are – *[Name of local operatic society.]*

KING You know my dear it may help to calm our nerves.

PATCHEM I think the King is right your Majesty. And our friends out there will tell us if anything nasty appears, would you? *[Audience reaction.]*

QUEEN Oh all right then, let's give it a try.

NUMBER . QUEEN, KING, PATCHEM, WHEELER AND DEALER

[This should be a short chorus that is repeated four times. The line-up for the song from right to left is PATCHEM, KING, QUEEN, DEALER and WHEELER. The number starts and a SKELETON comes out of the panel and crosses down right. It scares off PATCHEM. The others ask the audience where he has gone and then sing the song again. During the second time the SKELETON scares off WHEELER. On the third time the KING is scared and is chased off in front of the QUEEN and DEALER.]

DEALER Here, I just saw a flash.

- QUEEN It's not Bumble up to his old tricks again, is it? *[SHE stops and looks around.]* Bumble! He's gone!
- DEALER Oh I'm really scared. Would it help if we sang the song again?
- QUEEN No, but it's in the script!
- [THEY sing the song a fourth time and this time the SKELETON scares off DEALER. The QUEEN looks around and sees SHE is all alone.]*
- QUEEN Oh dear! Where is everyone? *[Audience tells her.]* Oh no! Now what am I going to do? *[In a very quiet voice.]* Help! Somebody! *[SHE backs up to one of the panels.]* Is anyone there? *[The panel opens and the SKELETON crosses down to her. SHE turns to look at the SKELETON who screams at the sight of her and runs back through the panel. The QUEEN follows and the panel closes. COLIN enters right and moves across the stage. GRIM enters left.]*
- GRIM You! What do you think you are doing?
- COLIN I'm here to put a stop to your evil ways and rescue the Princess!
- GRIM *[Laughing.]* You young fool! You'd never get out of here alive.
- COLIN Oh? And who's going to stop me?
- GRIM I will. My master will be doubly pleased when he sees I've put an end to his rival! *[HE cracks his whip.]* Oh . Mmm! *[To the audience.]* Dominating the peasants in these trousers is no picnic! *[COLIN has found a sword on the wall. GRIM turns and see this.]* Oh . Mmm! *[HE calls off stage.]* Mother! *[A hand holding a sword appears from the wings. GRIM throws his whip off and takes the sword.]* Oh Mother . put some clothes on, we've got guests! *[GRIM and COLIN fight. During this the KING, PATCHEM, PUSS, WHEELER and DEALER enter and encourage the audience to shout for COLIN. COLIN finally wins. GRIM speaks to WHEELER and DEALER.]* You two. Help me.
- WHEELER Oh you want us to help you. Do you?
- DEALER And what's in it for us? Another out of date lottery ticket?
- GRIM It was a joke. I intended to pay you. Get me out of this and I'll give you double!
- KING What are we going to do with him? *[The panel opens and we see the QUEEN having tea with a SKELETON.]*
- QUEEN Oh that was lovely. Thank you so much for the tea! Just what I needed. *[SHE sees the others.]* Oh hello! Have you met my friend Skelly? *[SHE sees them with GRIM and crosses down.]* So, you've caught that kidnapper have you? Where is my daughter?
- GRIM You'd never find her. She's with the Ogre now.

QUEEN We'd soon see about that!

KING We were just wondering what to do with him.

QUEEN *[With a big smile.]* Oh I think I know. *[To the SKELETON.]* Skelly? Do you think you could oblige? *[The SKELETON crosses down and drags GRIM up to the panel.]*

GRIM No! No! Save me please! Help!! *[The panel closes.]*

PATCHEM Well that's taken care of him. Now what about the Ogre and the Princess?

OGRE *[Off.]* Is someone asking for me?

QUEEN The Ogre! Oh Bumble we're all done for! *[The OGRE enters right with MELINDA.]*

COLIN Melinda!

MELINDA Colin!

OGRE So many visitors - and all uninvited.

QUEEN Bumble, do something!

KING *[Crossing to him.]* Let go of my daughter or else .

OGRE Or else what?

KING *[Backing off towards the QUEEN.]* Or else I won't be responsible for my wife's actions!

OGRE I've had enough of this. You are all going to be thrown into the dungeons to rot!

COLIN You'd have to fight me first.

OGRE You foolish boy. I'd make mincemeat out of you.

PUSS He's right master. I think you ought to leave the negotiations to me!

OGRE Ah, the talking cat I've heard so much about. Who gave you such magical powers?

PUSS No one gave them to me! Don't you know I'm the greatest magician in the whole of Cataland?

OGRE Nonsense. I am!

PUSS You? I've heard you are just a passable amateur!

OGRE Amateur! Me? Why you impudent moggie. I have more tricks up my sleeve than you'd ever learn.

PUSS Such as?

- OGRE I can turn myself into anything I please.
- PUSS What for instance?
- OGRE A great lion. The king of the beasts. Then I could tear you apart from limb to limb!
- PUSS A great lion? Go on then . prove it.
- OGRE Very well then. Prepare to be amazed. *[HE turns into a lion. This can be a chorus member in a lions costume or perhaps a shadow of a lion projected onto the upstage wall. ALL scream and run to one side.]*
- PUSS That's nothing. You're a great big Ogre. It's easy for you. On the other hand I bet you couldn't turn yourself into something small *[The OGRE changes back.]* . a mouse for instance.
- OGRE A mouse? Ha! Nothing simpler.
- PUSS You couldn't.
- OGRE Of course I could; but who wants to be a mouse?
- PUSS You're just saying that because you can't do it.
- OGRE You are a disbelieving cat, aren't you? Just stand back and watch.

[There is a great crash of thunder and a blackout during which the OGRE exits. The lights return and the QUEEN screams as a motorised mouse runs across the stage. (See production notes.)]
- QUEEN Oh look. A mouse! I can't stand mice. Somebody do something!
- PUSS Allow me your Majesty! *[HE pounces on the "mouse" and stands holding it by its tail.]* The Ogre is dead. I've killed the Ogre!
- COLIN Well done Puss. *[ALL cheer.]*
- MELINDA *[Rushing to COLIN.]* Oh Colin, is it really true?
- COLIN Yes. We're all free to return home.
- KING This is splendid work my boy. I don't know how we can repay you.
- COLIN Your Majesty, the only reward I ask for is your daughter's hand.
- KING What about the rest of her?
- QUEEN Now just a minute. This is all well and good, but what are you going to do for money? You're not exactly flushed are you? We can't have a pauper for a son in law.
- PUSS Your Majesties, the Ogre has a treasure house full of gold and jewels, which by right should now belong to my master.

- QUEEN *[Quickly embracing COLIN.]* Dear boy, welcome to the family!
- COLIN Everyone will get a share of the treasure. It's only what the Ogre has stolen from us over the years.
- WHEELER In that case our odd jobbing days are over.
- DEALER Yes, instead of wheeling and dealing we're going to be baking and kneading!
- COLIN What do you mean?
- WHEELER We're going to buy the mill.
- DEALER Yes, %Warburtons+[*Or well-known bread company.*] watch out!
- PATCHEM And I'll finally be able to get some new stock!
- PUSS With your new found wealth master, their Majesties can bestow a title on you. And what could be more fitting than the Marquis of Carabas!

[ALL cheer.]

REPRISE

[ALL sing a short reprise of an earlier song. At the end of the number the lights fade and the scene changes to

SCENE 6 ON THE WAY HOME

[A front cloth scene that can be a repeat of either the street or outside the Ogre's castle. The KING and QUEEN enter.]

- QUEEN *[To the audience.]* Hello my people. *[Audience reacts.]* Well Bumble, everything has ended satisfactory.
- KING Yes dear.
- QUEEN You know it's just crossed my mind.
- KING *[Aside.]* Not a long journey!
- QUEEN With the wedding of our beautiful daughter coming up we will need some entertainment. You know fireworks, street parties, bands. I know, I could sing them one of the songs I made famous when I was a girl! Now is that brilliant or what?
- KING What!
- QUEEN Eh?
- KING I mean what songs did you make famous?

- QUEEN Well there was . *[SHE lists some current popular songs with comic alterations to the titles.]* . or of course I could give them my latest single that hasn't been released yet.
- KING How long is its sentence?
- QUEEN I'm sure all my friends down there would like to hear it, wouldn't you?

[Audience reaction and into –

SONG SHEET

[Any suitable short song may be used. One written specially for this script is available from NODA Ltd. At the end of the sequence the lights fade to black out and the scene changes to ...

SCENE 7 THE WEDDING OF THE MARQUIS OF CARABAS

[As the scene opens the DANCERS are performing a celebratory dance. At a suitable moment the finale begins.]

FINALE

[The cast members take their call in the following order.]

CHORUS
DANCERS
OGRE
PUSS
GRIM
WHEELER & DEALER
PUSS IN BOOTS
PATCHEM
KING
QUEEN

- PATCHEM Three cheers for Princess Melinda and the Marquis of Carabas.

[ALL cheer as MELINDA and COLIN take their call.]

MELINDA & COLIN

- GRIM So finally our story's told,
OGRE And I find out I'm not so bold!

- WHEELER No more cons or tricks we'd play,
- DEALER But bake our bread the %Warburton+*[Or well-known bread company.]*
way!
- PATCHEM I'm back in my shop with shoes to mend,
- KING *[Indicating the QUEEN.]* Where her spending is driving me round the
bend!
- QUEEN Each one of you is my special mate,
- MELINDA So come along and celebrate
- COLIN As every one of us salutes
- PUSS The tale of Puss and his fabulous BOOTS!

FINALE CHORUS

*[All sing a final chorus and wave goodnight to the audience as the
curtain falls.]*

End of Act Two