

PUSS IN BOOTS

By

LEONARD H. CADDY

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NODA Pantomimes

58-60 Lincoln Road, Peterborough, Cambs. PE1 2RZ

Tel: (00 + 44) (0) 1733 865790 – E-mail: info@noda.org.uk – www.noda.org.uk

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NODA PANTOMIMES
58-60 LINCOLN ROAD
PETERBOROUGH PE1 2RZ
Telephone: 01733 865790
Fax: 01733 319506
Email: info@noda.org.uk
www.noda.org.uk

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oooooooooooooooooooo
-o-o SCENES o-o-
oooooooooooooooooooo

THE VILLAGE GREEN

A Street in the Village.

THE KING IN HIS CASTLE

An Ante Room at the Castle

BY A POOL IN THE FOREST

INTERVAL

THE COTTAGE

The Village Street again

THE HALL OF THE OGRE'S CASTLE

Waiting for the Wedding

THE WEDDING - WALKDOWN



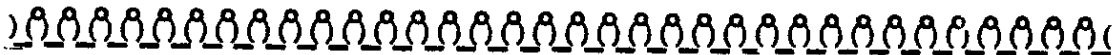
INTRODUCTORY NOTES:-

This script has been especially written to be suitable for both large-scale musical production with chorus, dancers, and juveniles; and for less musical groups where comedy and character are the salient features. Simply leave out some of the 'business' or musical to suit your company, several are marked 'Optional' which will give you a start, but this process can be carried further; it would be quite impossible to write a pantomime script that was ideal for all companies. Opportunity has been given for the inclusion of 'local references' but topical comments should also be added if possible as these too add to the impact of the show. (Being topical they cannot be written in advance unfortunately.) It is always advisable to keep the musical items short, say 2 mins. max., and leave the audience wanting more. Pace and slickness are essential for a successful pantomime.

Puss is traditionally played by a girl, in tights, furry leotard and attractive cat head-dress; the change at the end of scene 1. should be as slick and complete as possible. (Discarding baggy trousers, held together with poppers, or 'velcro', and face mask is the usual way.) This and the magic changes in scene 8. should be made as impressive as possible as they are really the main points of the story.

The directions (L. R. etc.) throughout are given as a workable basis but may of course have to be altered to suit your particular venue, it is however traditional to have the Good Fairy on the Right and the Baddie on the Left. (That is stage right and stage left.)

Good luck and have fun,
L.H.C.



SCENE ONETHE VILLAGE GREEN

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

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

FAIRY AURORA hurries on R.

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

OGRE HARDCAST enters L.

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

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

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

OGRE H. We shall see.

FAIRY A. Indeed we shall.

OGRE H. My powers you little know.

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

OGRE HARDCAST turns.

FAIRY A. We'll start the show.

OGRE HARDCAST exits L. FAIRY AURORA exits R.

MUSIC NO 1. CHORUS. Song and Maypole Dance.

TOWN CRIER Oyez! Oyez!

GIRL Get on with it.

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

ALL Oh no.

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

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

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

GIRL We thought you were the Queen of the May.

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

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

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

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

TOWN CRIER Eh? Oh yes. Oyez!

HERMIONE I won't be in the way?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HERMIONE (Urgently) Don't do that!

TOWN CRIER (Genuinely) Why not?

HERMIONE You might drop a clanger.

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

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

TOWN CRIER You are Maisy.

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

TOWN CRIER I am Maisy.

MAISY And should you or should you not announce me?

HERMIONE He should Maisy.

MAISY What is this? (Hermione)

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

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

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

MAISY Why have you burst into our celebration like this?

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

MAISY What happened?

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

ALL Oh! The pity of it all.

HERMIONE But there is worse to come.

ALL. Worse?

HERMIONE Yes. The two eldest sons threw us out.

ALL. No!

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

TOWN CRIER Like a load of rubbish.

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

CHORUS (Drawing back) Eaugh!!

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

MAISY Where?

HERMIONE (Local village or district.)

MAISY But isn't remote.

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

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

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

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

MAISY Where is he?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RALPH (Flirting with Maisy) A very beautiful village.

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

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

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

HERMIONE You could be happy wherever there are pretty girls.

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

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

HERMIONE Well make up your mind. (Centre)

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

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

They are standing either side of her.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ALL We are!

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

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

RALPH What was that?

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

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

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

MAISY It meas the King is coming here.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

KING That's better.

The Royal Party now come centre.

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

CHANCELLOR The name is 'Oliphant' Madam

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

CHANCELLOR This is King Oliphant.

HERMIONE And you are the Elephant.

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

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

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

KING Where did this woman come from?

TOWN CRIER (As before) Sire.

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

CHANCELLOR It will be a pleasure your Majesty.

TOWN CRIER That means it's bad news.

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

ALL We know.

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

There is uproar

HERMIONE What did you say?

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

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

MAISY It's not fair we have already paid.

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

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

CHANCELLOR And that means you! (Hermione)

HERMIONE Why me?

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

HERMIONE But I didn't pay last time.

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

HERMIONE I think I'll go back to

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

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

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

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

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

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

HERMIONE You would.

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

KING (Equally overdramatically) I do.

VILLAGERS It can't be -

KING It is.

VILLAGERS He hasn't -

KING He has.

VILLAGERS Oh horrors.

KING Worse. It's the Ogre.

VILLAGERS No!

KING Yes.

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

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

HERMIONE What was all that about?

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

Another burst of sobs from the villagers.

HERMIONE Is that bad?

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

HERMIONE You are enjoying this aren't you?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHANCELLOR Always has been.

KING Now then let's get back to the castle. (To Hermione) Dont' forget - pay up!

HERMIONE Can't. No work - no money.

KING Can you scrub?

HERMIONE I beg your pardon.

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

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

KING I'll pay you fourpence a week.

HERMIONE (Quickly) When can I start?

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

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

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

HERMIONE Yes you have - she just said it.

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

CHANCELLOR There are only four hundred and twenty seven rooms.

HERMIONE Oh that's all. - Eh!!

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

KING Trip! Get into your place.

TRIP Right ho mate.

CHANCELLOR He is the King.

TRIP Right ho king mate.

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

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

HERMIONE So that was his Majesty.

RALPH And that was his Majesty's daughter?

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

RALPH But she is so pretty Mother.

MAISY (Piqued) You said I was pretty.

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

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

TOWN CRIER Same as we always do.

HERMIONE What is that?

TOWN CRIER Blooming well put up with it.

TOWN CRIER and CHORUS gradually exit U.S.

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

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

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

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

HERMIONE (To Maisy) Who is he?

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

TRIP I'm a footman.

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

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

MAISY (Same local reference)

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

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

TRIP That's good.

MAISY With his Mother.

TRIP That's not.

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

RALPH (Trying to keep the peace.) Mother.

HERMIONE Like a jelly and chopsticks!

RALPH Ignore her.

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

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

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

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

TRIP She noticed you alright.

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

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

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

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

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

HERMIONE And I just think I am wonderful.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MAISY If only there was someone to help us.

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

They have gone.

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

Fairy Aurora is here on hand,
To help you from now on.

Yes, I can help, but understand

That - (Looks round) Oh no, where've they gone?

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

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

(Back to formal Fairyness) The boy called Ralph has noble heart,
In love and keen to please.

He is a power for good I feel,
I'll help - I'll give him these!

She waves her wand and casts a spell and:-

EITHER some small ATTENDANTS enter with the Magic Boots.
OR part of the scenery opens or moves (with flash) and the
boots are seen. They are placed U.C.

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

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

PUSS enters U.L.

FAIRY AURORA covers the boots with a light cover of some sort, PUSS watches with typical feline interest. FAIRY AURORA gives one last look to the Boots and exits R. PUSS watches her go and then investigates the stage, (At this point Puss is just a very ordinary clumsy and not very intelligent cat) . This could be developed into a CAT ROUTINE as he plays with a balloon or chases his tail. Then he finds the covered boots, investigates and finally uncovers them. Their power impresses him, he treats them in awe. He takes one under each arm, their magic takes effect, he stands erect then prances round the stage, though still bent-kneed and catlike. He comes centre and stops; puts the boots down and steps into them. (This should be enhanced by drum roll and lighting effect.) By discarding baggy leggings and standing erect PUSS now stands there a handsome, elegant creature.

MUSIC NO 4. PUSS then CHORUS (Optional)
Puss starts solo with a song about freedom or happiness then Chorus enter and join in to bring the scene to a close.

CURTAIN SCENE ONE

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

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

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

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

RALPH You must be masterful.

TRIP Masterful. (He looks anything but masterful.)

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

TRIP is carefully trying to remember all this.

RALPH Then tell her how pretty she is.

TRIP Suppose she is ugly?

RALPH You don't go out with ugly girls.

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

RALPH Why?

TRIP Well, a pretty girl might leave you.

RALPH So might an ugly one.

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

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

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

RALPH Did you see her?

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

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

TRIP That is a bit confusing isn't it?

RALPH Walk up to me masterfully.

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

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

TRIP Rheumatic?

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

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

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

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

TRIP I can't.

RALPH Yes, just remember what I have said.

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

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

TRIP The faint blush.

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

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

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

RALPH Pretty little thing.

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

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

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

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

TRIP (About himself) What a mess.

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

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

RALPH is impressed and even MAISY begins to show an interest

TRIP Such irresistible ears.

MAISY turns to him, surprised and pleased.

RALPH Go on.

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

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

RALPH Hello Daisy.

MAISY Maisy.

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

MAISY Why?

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

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

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

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

MAISY No Ralph. What does he look like?

PUSS Absolutely splendid.

RALPH He's a bit ordinary really

MAISY I thought you said he was splendid.

RALPH No I didn't

PUSS Yes you did.

MAISY (To Trip) No he didn't

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

PUSS Yes you have, he is splendid.

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

MAISY What did you say you had for then?

TRIP I didn't

PUSS Yes you did.

MAISY I said you did.

PUSS So did I.

TRIP (To Ralph) Did you?

RALPH No.

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

MAISY One.

RALPH Two.

PUSS Three.

TRIP Four. That's alright then - FOUR!

MAISY You are silly, you can't count properly.

TRIP Can.

MAISY Don't mess about this time. One.

PUSS Two.

RALPH Three.

PUSS Four.

TRIP Five - five??!

RALPH Let's have a look.

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

MAISY It must have been you (Trip) messing about.

TRIP No it wasn't Maisy, honest.

MAISY You must think I'm silly.

PUSS Yes you are.

MAISY What did you say?

PUSS He thinks you are awful.

MAISY Awful?

TRIP No I didn't - I mean - I think you are - 'awful'? - awful - awfully nice.

MAISY scoffs and exits D.R.

TRIP Don't go off like that Maisy. I like you ever so much really.

MAISY (Returns briefly) If you are going to follow me for goodness sake keep up! (Goes again)

TRIP No I'm not following you Maisy, I'm - I'm - (He has gone D.R.)

RALPH Poor Trip, I don't think he will ever win the heart of Maisy. I wonder if I shall ever win the heart of the Princess. - I wonder if I shall ever see her again. I must find a way somehow.

PUSS You will.

RALPH Yes I know, but how. (Looks round) Who spoke then? Oh hello Puss, caught us up at last have you? You are hungry I suppose. (He doesn't pay much attention to his cat, he is more interested in trying to trace the voice he has heard. He looks about the stage.) There must be someone hiding somewhere. Can you see anyone?

PUSS No.

RALPH No, neither can I. You can't hear voices can you?

PUSS Only yours.

RALPH Oh, that's alri... (It dawns.) 'Puss! You're talking! Can you talk?

PUSS Very well.

RALPH Why haven't you told me you could talk before?

PUSS Because you have never asked me before. (He struts about the stage in his best manner.)

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

PUSS I am rather fine am I not?

RALPH Where did you get those boots from?

PUSS Found them.

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

PUSS Where are you going?

RALPH Only for a walk so that I can think.

PUSS A walk towards the castle no doubt.

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

RALPH exits R. PUSS watches him for a moment.

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

PUSS exits R.

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

EITHER - JUVENILES enter L. for Song and dance.

OR - TRIP & JUVENILES meet and do a number.

OR - Broken hearted solo from TRIP

OR - MAISY & TRIP return for a number.

CURTAIN SCENE TWO.

SCENE THREE

THE KING IN HIS CASTLE

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

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

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

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

KING Ah - 'end of part one'.

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

KING Thank you Trip.

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

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

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

CHANCELLOR Oh yes Sire, at great expense.

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

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

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

KING Don't keep saying that.

CHANCELLOR What?

KING Ogre.

ALL The Ogre.

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

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

ALL The Ogre

KING I shan't tell you again.

CHANCELLOR I bet you do.

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

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

CORAL It's nothing Daddy.

KING Oh come along, there must be some reason -

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

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

CHANCELLOR For goodness sake woman, what are you doing?

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

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

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

CHANCELLOR Madam, Desist!

HERMIONE Language.

KING May we get on?

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

CHANCELLOR Madam.

HERMIONE Yes.

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

HERMIONE I know when I'm not wanted.

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

HERMIONE I won't say another word.

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

HERMIONE Whoops, silly me.

TRIP picks it up and leads her U.S.

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

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

CHANCELLOR Your daughter Sire.

KING Oh yes. Coral my child.

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

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

CHANCELLOR Despite the Ogre.

ALL (As before) The Ogre.

KING Yes, despite - what he said.

CORAL It's nothing Daddy, really.

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

CORAL It won't

KING In love?

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

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

CORAL No one you know Daddy.

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

CHANCELLOR I hope not, he has no money.

KING Besides she would never understand what he said.

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

KING (To Coral) Who is it dear?

CORAL Well, he is not actually a Prince.

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

CHANCELLOR A Marquis? (CORAL shakes)

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

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

KING When did you see an 'ordinary' boy.

CORAL This morning.

KING You don't mean -

CHANCELLOR - Her - (Hermione)

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

CORAL (Firmly) Yes.

Shock and/or amazement from the whole company.

KING Impossible, quite impossible

CHANCELLOR Absolutely unthinkable.

KING Out of the question.

The CHORUS agree.

KING But Daddy.

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

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

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

TRIP (Crossing to Coral) Your highness.

CORAL Eh? Oh, hello Trip.

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

CORAL Thank you Trip.

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

CORAL 'Unrequited love'

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

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

TRIP You have the entertainment here at the Castle.

CORAL It's not the same Trip.

TRIP (Sitting beside her) That's true.

CORAL I'm glad I've got you as a friend.

TRIP Oh, thank you Miss.

CORAL looks into the distance and heaves a big sigh.
Then TRIP does the same.
Cue line into:-

MUSIC NO 5. DUET. CORAL & TRIP
Either a sad little song about 'unrequited love'.
Or a perky 'why be sad' type song.

After number HERALD enters and starts to blow a fanfare. There is a general entrance, CHORUS, CHANCELLOR, (who puts cork into the trumpet) KING. Nobody knows what is going on. TRIP and CORAL part.

KING What's going on? What is happening?

CHANCELLOR I don't know.

HERALD There is a visitor for the King.

There is a general bustle as the company get into position. KING on the throne, CHORUS lined up either side etc..

KING Who is it?

HERALD I don't know.

PUSS sweeps in. His elegant manner and confidence cause much admiration. He carries a small velvet bag and wears a sash of office and a feathered hat.

PUSS It is I Sire. (Bows with a flourish)

KING And who are you? (Tries to copy the flourish)

PUSS I am the personal and confidential representative of the noble Marquis of Carabas. (He bows again to both the King and the Princess.) My master, the noble Marquis of Carabas, sends salutations and right royal felicitations to your Majesty. (Bows again)

KING (Impressed) Oh.

CHANCELLOR What does all that mean?

KING I haven't the slightest idea. But doesn't he say it beautifully? (To Puss) Any more?

PUSS My master, the Marquis of Carabas, wishes you to accept this token gift as a small indication of his respect and inestimable regard.

TRIP takes the bag and passes it to the King.

KING What is it?

PUSS Only a brace of fine plump partridges your majesty; a mere token of respect.

KING (Pleased) Partridges. Good. We haven't had partridges for a long time. Can't catch them you know.

PUSS (Aside) I had no difficulty. (To King.) My master -

KING The Marquis of Carabas.

PUSS The noble Marquis of Carabas, wishes me to say that your prestige is unsurpassed throughout the entire land. (He gives another flourishing bow.) As is the beauty of your daughter

(Similar bow to her.) My master the Marquis of Carabas,
(Aside to the Princess) the noble and most handsome Marquis
of Carabas - (To the court in general.) wishes to pay court
to the fair Princess and says that he loves her with all his
heart and will do so until his dying day.

This announcement causes impressed interest.

CORAL But I love another.
PUSS My master has loved many in the past, but now, and for ever
more, has thoughts only for you your highness.
KING (Coming down to her.) There you are my child, what more could
you wish? A handsome Prince -
CHANCELLOR He is only a Marquis.
KING Don't Quibble. (To Princess) A rich handsome - Marquis - who
will love you for ever. You must be the happiest girl in the
whole kingdom.
CORAL (Sadly) Yes Father.
KING You shall marry this rich young fellow and live happily ever
after. Princesses always do. (Aside to Chancellor) And the
money he will bring will come in very useful. (To Princess)
You will be very happy - we shall all be very happy. Everyone
shall be happy.

MUSIC NO 6. CONCERTED
A bright happy number with everyone joining in except
CORAL who sits sad and wistful.

CURTAIN SCENE THREE.

SCENE FOUR

AN ANTE ROOM AT THE CASTLE

A front-cloth or tabs to cover scene change.

PRINCESS CORAL enters, she sings a few bars of a
sad love song (No 7.) then stops. TRIP enters,
he realises that she is sad.

TRIP Is there anything I can do your highness?
CORAL Thank you Trip, no there is nothing.
TRIP I could go down to the village - and take a message for you.
CORAL I shall just try to forget him. I don't know what I was
thinking about, pretending that a Princess could be happy just
like anyone else.
TRIP Speaking as an 'anyone else', it isn't always that easy to be
happy.
CORAL And now this chap from Carabas has turned up Daddy won't even
listen to anything else.
TRIP I don't mind going down to the village if you want me to.
CORAL (Smiling kindly) Besides you might meet Maisey again.
TRIP Besides I might - no I don't mean that - well yes I do really,
but I'd go for you.
CORAL Yes I know you would. And I am grateful - but no.
TRIP You just want to be alone. (Understandingly)

CORAL I just want to be alone.

TRIP exits with understanding and self-consciousness.
CORAL, left alone sings:-

MUSIC NO 7. SOLO
A gentle sad song of love or absence.

After number TRIP returns. He coughs tactfully.

CORAL What is it Trip?

TRIP 'You Know Who' is here, and 'craves an audience'.

CORAL Who?

TRIP (Imitating Puss) The errand boy of the Lord high Duke of Charabanc is here and 'umbley craves han haudience. (He does his best to perform a flourishing bow.)

PUSS enters behind him.

PUSS No no, the hand further back and the toe pointed.

TRIP Thank you. (Tries to comply)

PUSS Like this. (Demonstrates)

TRIP Oh I see. (Tries to copy then realises who is showing him.) Oh. Yes - hello - must be going - good-bye - (He backs out punctuating his words with bows, which PUSS returns. He finally bumps into the proscenium and exits in confusion.)

CORAL He meant no harm.

PUSS He is as loyal to his Mistress as I am to my Master.

CORAL Why have you come back? I'd much rather be alone.

PUSS I thought you might like to know what my Master looks like. (CORAL does not answer.) He is tall and fair (as applicable) and most pleasant altogether; not your namby-pamby fop of Court. (He imitates such a person.) Or in any way old and crotchety. (More imitations.) But natural, young and handsome. (He adopts an attitude of Principal Boy.)

CORAL You have a picture of him?

PUSS Alas no. But on my way here through the village I asked my way of a group of young people, And there in their midst stood an exact image of my Master. Same elegant bearing, same smile, same eyes. Could have been the same man - though poor of course. (He gives her a sideways look. she is beginning to show an interest and smiles with interest.) I think they called him Ralph.

CORAL Ralph?

PUSS Yes, Ralph. In every way, that I could see on such a brief encounter of course, this young man was the exact double of my Master. (Rather pointedly) In fact my master could be Ralph, but with money and acceptable to your father.

CORAL smiles. the thought of someone as near to Ralph pleases her.

CORAL Your master -

PUSS The Marquis of Carabas.

CORAL Loves me you say?

PUSS Truly.

CORAL But how can he?
 PUSS He saw you only once but it was enough.
 CORAL You can love someone by seeing them only once. And he really looks like this poor boy.
 PUSS Exactly like him,
 CORAL When I meet him I shall be thinking of Ralph.
 PUSS Yes, I expect you will.
 CORAL But I shall never love him as I love Ralph.
 PUSS I think you will.

CORAL smiles and PUSS bows yet again, she exits thinking about the two men who look so much alike.

PUSS (Breathes sigh of relief) It's far more difficult to convince a woman in love than a Monarch in debt. All I have to do now is to convince everyone that my master is a Marquis and that is going to be most difficult of all I fear. (As he exits) I wonder why I picked such a strange name as Carabas. (Exits.)

CURTAIN SCENE FOUR.

SCENE FIVE.

BY A POOL IN THE FOREST.

A full-stage set of traditional Woodland scene. Wood wings, bush ground-rows and woodland back-cloth.

MUSIC NO 8. CONCERTED

A production number of the Royal Hunt. KING O. IPHANT, PRINCESS CORAL, TRIP, CHANCELLOR DULLBODY, HERALD, COURTIERS, HUNTSMEN (Dancers), ANIMALS (Juveniles). as suitable. (Use could be made of Hobby Horses or a Pantomime Horse.)

On conclusion of number they look about them in fear and the lights dim.

KING What's happening?
 CHANCELLOR I think 'he's' coming.
 KING You don't mean -
 CHANCELLOR I do.
 ALL The Ogre!!

Everybody seems to move in different directions at once. They exit (but not by the shortest route). Those who went D.R. return and disperse by other exits.

After a slight pause OGRE HARDCAST enters D.R. followed by SPRAT, who carries a large sack.

OGRE H. Come on lad, keep up.
 SPRAT This is heavy.
 OGRE H. Of course it is, it's full. Full of other people's valuables. (Laughs) Oooo, I am glad I woke up. I had almost forgotten what fun being evil can be.
 SPRAT It may be fun for you but it is hard work for me.
 OGRE H. You are not grumbling are you?

SPRAT Not so as you would notice.
 OGRE H. (sensing someone coming.) Hello, I think we are going to have company.
 SPRAT No one dares come near you.
 OGRE H. Only one person.

Enter FAIRY AURORA R.

OGRE H. And here she is. I thought you'd turn up sooner or later. Been finding it a bit of a job keeping up with us? (He chortles at his own joke.)

SPRAT joins in.

FAIRY A. There's no need to scoff. (To Sprat) Nor snigger young Sprat. Your rampage will not last for long. You stomp about everywhere, causing great pain, But right is more powerful than wrong!
 A resolute spirit will always resist
 The evil of people like you.
 I have given a lad with noblest of hearts,
 Some power to help him win through.

This last remark amuses the OGRE who bursts into almost uncontrollable laughter.

OGRE H. Do you hear that Sprat?
 SPRAT (Joining in the laughter) Shall I tell her or will you?
 OGRE H. I will.
 FAIRY A. (Suspicious) Tell me what?
 OGRE H. Some magic, you say?
 FAIRY A. I did.
 OGRE H. Some magic - boots - you say?

FAIRY AURORA's suspicion grows. PUSS enters D.L.

OGRE H. Those - magic boots - you say?
FAIRY AURORA is surprised and disappointed to see who is wearing the boots.

OGRE H. Fallen into the wrong hands have they? (Laughs.)
 SPRAT Into the wrong 'feet', governor.

They BOTH laugh. FAIRY AURORA goes to Puss.

FAIRY A. Who are you sir?
 PUSS I am called 'Puss'. And I am at your service. (Bows.)
 FAIRY Why are you wearing those boots?
 PUSS Because I am a very clever cat.
 OGRE H. All cat's are clever you know. And a little bit evil.
 SPRAT But they don't all wear the Fairy's magic boots.

FAIRY AURORA gives SPRAT a look that causes him to retreat up stage. PUSS has swaggered D.R., he is waiting for someone.

OGRE H. Interesting ain't it? A cat, of all creatures, in charge of your magic. He is bound to use them for his own purpose. Cats can be very selfish.

FAIRY A. Be still sir. My magic will always be a power for good. Though in this case it looks as if the effect will be a little delayed, Cats can be very independent at times.

OGRE H. We shall just have to wait and see. Come on Sprat, we have another day tomorrow. (To Fairy Aurora.) I must say those boots look remarkably fine on that cat - remarkably fine.

He exits U.L. chortling with evil humour. SPRAT follows

FAIRY A. Puss is loyal and grateful to his master. On these good qualities I will depend. This feline Maverick can avert disaster. (To Puss.) But do not delay too long my friend.

FAIRY AURORA exits R. TRIP enters U.L.

PUSS Ah, there you are.

TRIP tries to do a Puss type bow.

PUSS There's no need for that. You see, I am not really the emissary of a Marquis.

TRIP Oh, who are you the emissary for?

PUSS I'm not the emissary for anyone. I'm Ralph's cat.

TRIP But Ralph isn't a Marquis.

PUSS I know.

TRIP (Trying to work things out.) But why has Ralph got an emissary if he isn't a Marquis?

PUSS Ralph hasn't got an emissary.

TRIP And you're not him.

PUSS Look.

TRIP (Looking round) What at?

PUSS I didn't mean 'look'(there). I meant 'look' (I'm going to tell you something.)

TRIP I see. - I think.

PUSS (Explaining carefully) The Marquis of Carabas doesn't exist. I am not his emissary.

TRIP But you do exist?

PUSS Yes. I am Ralph's cat. Ralph loves the Princess, but he isn't allowed to because he is not rich enough, so I have pretended that he is the Marquis of Carabas.

TRIP Who is rich enough - even though he doesn't exist.

PUSS And that he loves the Princess and the King has said that it is acceptable and the Princess is beginning to think it might be a good idea although she still loves Ralph with her whole heart but she doesn't know he is really Ralph and neither does the King. And I want you to help me. Now do you see?

TRIP (Pause) No.

PUSS is about to start all over again.

TRIP But I'll help you. (Grins) Because it is for the Princess and I would do anything for her.

PUSS As I would do anything for my master.

TRIP Now, what do you want me to do?

PUSS I want you to get Ralph to take all his clothes off and go for a swim in the lake.

TRIP Right, and then what - WHAT DID YOU SAY? I can't do that. Besides it is not that sort of show.

PUSS If my plan is to succeed you must. Look out here they come. Off you go.

TRIP (As he goes off) 'Ah, there you are Ralph.' 'Hello Trip.' 'Will you do something for me?' 'Of course I will Trip! What?' 'Just take all your clothes off and go and jump in the lake.' (To Puss, just before he goes) This just isn't going to work you know.

PUSS Hurry up here comes the King.

TRIP exits U.L. as the KING and THE ROYAL HUNT enter D.R.

KING Come along everybody - this way. Tally-ho, tally-ho. Which way did the little rascal go? Ha ha. (He gallops round until he comes up to an unsmiling CHANCELLOR DULLBODY.) Oh, for goodness sake Dullbody enjoy yourself, this is the royal hunt.

CHANCELLOR (Flatly) Don't like hunts Sire.

KING Well look as if you do.

CHANCELLOR (With a dull grin) I thought I was Sire.

KING With you it is very difficult to tell. Tally-ho, tally-ho. (Sees Puss.) Hello, come to join in the hunt young sir?

PUSS Alas no Sire. My young master, the Marquis of Carabas.

KING The noble Marquis of Carabas.

PUSS Was on his way to join you, he paused on his journey, and, to freshen up, took a bathe in the lake yonder.

KING Don't blame him at all. Deuced hot work all this riding about, tally-ho, tally-ho.

PUSS But Sire, he was robbed.

KING Robbed?

PUSS Robbed.

CHANCELLOR Don't know what the world is coming to. Wasn't like this in the old days.

PUSS While he was bathing someone took all his clothes.

KING Poor chap. And it gets very chilly round the lake side in the evenings.

PUSS I wondered if your Majesty would be so gracious as to lend my young master -

KING The Marquis of Carabas.

PUSS The noble Marquis of Carabas, a suit of clothes so that he may pay his respects to you daughter as he intended.

KING Of course he can have some fresh clothes. He can hardly call on the girl without any clothes on can he? Trip! Where is the lad?

CHANCELLOR He doesn't seem to be here Sire.

KING Oh well, you (Chancellor) will have to go. Nip back to the castle and bring back something suitable for a Marquis. Go on with you.

CHANCELLOR sets off R.

KING And hurry.

CHANCELLOR I thought I was Sire.

KING With you it is very hard to tell.

CHANCELLOR exits R.

KING (To Puss.) You can tell your Master not to worry, there is a fine suit of clothes one it's way; 's best.
(Local tailor)

PUSS (Aside) I thought he said a fine suit of clothes.

HERMIONE (Off, very loud) Yorricks! Yorricks, tally-ho!

KING What on earth was that?

HERMIONE (Enters wearing the most outrageous hunting costume possible)
It was me going 'Yorricks! Yorricks, tally-ho!'

KING Why?

HERMIONE I just felt like it.

KING What do you look like.

TRIP (Entering L.) An accident waiting to happen?

HERMIONE (As if he had paid her a compliment.) Thank you. (Realises)

PUSS Ah, there you are Trip. How did you get on?

KING Ah, there you are Trip. Where have you been?

TRIP (Between the two - and confused) (To King) I got on alright, I mean, (To Puss) I haven't been far away governor - I mean -

PUSS Did you manage to - you know.

TRIP (To Puss) Yes, and no.

KING Why weren't you here when I wanted you?

PUSS What do you mean - 'yes and no'?

TRIP (To King) I mean - sorry wrong one. (To Puss) I mean 'yes' I did get him to go into the lake, and 'no' I didn't get him to take his clothes off.

PUSS How did you manage that?

TRIP (To King) And I wasn't here because I was somewhere else
(To Puss) How did I manage what?

KING Where were you?

TRIP (To Puss) Where was I? (To King) Over there. (To Puss) How did I manage what?

PUSS How did you manage to get him into the lake without taking his-clothes off?

TRIP Easy - I pushed him in.

KING What happened?

TRIP He got wet.

PUSS Anything else.

TRIP He got cross. (To King) Next question. Your turn.

KING Who are you talking about?

TRIP (To Puss) Can I tell him?

PUSS (Passes Trip to King, in his most superior manner.) What the lad is trying to say, in his naturalistic rural manner, is that he chanced upon my master bathing in the lake and in his attempt to assist him out caused him to fall back in. (To Trip) didn't you?

TRIP Did I?

HERMIONE (Now on Trip's other side) Well did you?

TRIP I don't know.

PUSS gives Trip a sly nudge or kick.

TRIP Yes, that's what I did.

KING So my daughter is going to meet the Marquis of Carabas -

OTHERS The noble Marquis of Carabas.

KING The noble Marquis of Carabas at last. Won't she be surprised.

PUSS (Knowingly) She will indeed.

TRIP She will indeed.

HERMIONE Life is full of little surprises. (Or cue line into:-)

MUSIC NO 9. COMEDY QUARTET

A light hearted number which could include the business of:- RALPH appears behind ground- row as if just getting out of the lake, TRIP sees him and realises that he cannot be seen in his poor clothes so nips round and with a 'sorry Ralph' gives him a push; with an anguished look RALPH disappears, there is a splash (handful of rice), TRIP rejoins the number. This business is repeated with PUSS, HERMIONE and even the KING doing the pushing.

After the number CHANCELLOR DULLBODY enters with a bundle of clothes, he is very much out of breath. He tries to speak - unsuccessfully.

KING Don't stand there like a demented dachshund. (Takes clothes and passes them to Puss,) Please offer these to your master the Marquis. They are not his usual standard but will no doubt suffice for the while.

PUSS They are not what he is used to it is true - but I am sure they will do nicely (With a bow he exits U.L.)

KING (Turning to Chancellor.) You took a long time.

CHANCELLOR It's a long way back to the castle.

KING I suppose I should have sent two people.

CHANCELLOR Why?

KING Then it would have only taken half as long.

CHANCELLOR Why didn't I think of that?

KING Now then where is everybody? They should all be here when the Marquis arrives, must put on a bit of a show for him. He has come all this way to meet the Princess.

CHANCELLOR Wouldn't be a bad idea if the Princess was here.

KING Where has the child got to. Trip, nip off and find the Princess. (He notices Hermione) Oh dear, what are we going to do with her.

TRIP (About to Exit R.) Why don't you -

HERMIONE Watch it!

TRIP exits.

CHANCELLOR We could pretend she is not here.

KING Good idea. (They completely ignore her.) Now then Dullbody, find out where all my courtiers have got to.

CHANCELLOR (R.) Perhaps they have gone into(local cafe) for a quick cuppa

KING Go and see if you can find them. I'll go and see if they have gone into the (local Pub). (Goes L.)

CHANCELLOR (Coming back) I'll come with you.

KING You go to the (cafe) I'll go to the(Pub)! I'm King.

They exit D.R. & D.L. HERMIONE is left on her own.

Optional SOLO SPOT for Dame. Song or routine.

HERMIONE looks both ways and decides to exit D.L. After a moments pause PUSS enters U.L.

PUSS Don't worry young Master, trust me.

RALPH (Off.) These clothes are magnificent. Puss, you have gone too far this time.

PUSS You want to see your Princess again don't you?

RALPH (Off.) Of course I do.

PUSS Then trust me. Wait there 'til I announce you. And remember you are the Marquis of Carabas.

RALPH Where did you get these clothes? Did you steal them?

PUSS No they were given to me.

RALPH (Off.) Who by?

PUSS (D.R.) You would never believe me if I told you. (Exits.)

After a moment RALPH enters U.L. he is dressed in splendid court clothes. He sees the stage is empty and looks for Puss. PRINCESS CORAL enters U.R. she is wistful and wonders where everybody is. They do not see each other at first, then RALPH turns round thinking it is Puss who is there.

RALPH I must know what you are up to - oh - (realises who it is) Oh.

CORAL (Surprised and delighted) It's you. How marvellous that we should meet again. It's as if it were arranged.

RALPH (With a nervous laugh) Yes, isn't it.

CORAL Who are you - really?

RALPH (Remembering who he should be, bows.) At your service my lady. The Marquis of - where was it he said.

CORAL (Prompting) Carabas?

RALPH Carabas. Yes that's it. Carabas. The Marquis of Carabas swears his undying love. (On one knee.) How did you know I was the Marquis of Carabas?

CORAL (Smiling) Rise sir. (He does,) Who are you? Marquis pretending to be a poor boy? Or a poor boy pretending to be a Marquis? (Before he can decide which way to answer) It doesn't matter which is true - I'd love you just as much which ever you are.

RALPH I have loved you for my whole life.

CORAL But we only met yesterday.

RALPH My life only really started yesterday.

They smile together and into:-

MUSIC NO 10 DUET

CORAL (Moving away from Ralph) I always did like this part of the forest, but now it is the most beautiful place in the whole world.

She is D.R. RALPH has eased D.L.. PUSS and TRIP enter U.R. they come centre. They see the others.

P. & T. (To each other) Does he/she know. I don't know. Better find out.

PUSS comes to Ralph and TRIP to Princess Coral

TRIP Your highness, before you are presented to (He continues unheard.)

PUSS Young master, do not forget that you are now the Marquis.... (He continues.)

CORAL Don't worry Trip

RALPH But Puss, there is no need to worry

KING enters D.L.

KING (Loudly) Ah. There you are.

CHANCELLOR DULLBODY enters D.R. followed by general entrance of THE COURT

KING Come along everybody I want you to meet the Marquis.

HERALD comes C.

KING Do we have to.

CHANCELLOR He is a Marquis.

KING Oh, well. Just a Marquisworth.

HERALD blows another awful fanfare. Everyone covers their ears, but are caught by the last note again.

KING. Thank goodness he wasn't an Emperor. Come along child, come and be presented. (To Chancellor) You'd better do the announcing.

But before the introduction can take place

HERMIONE bustles in to C.

HERMIONE Ah, here you all are. I wondered where you had all got to. What's going on? Bingo?

CHANCELLOR Madam.

HERMIONE Yes?

CHANCELLOR Shut-up!! (He starts the introduction.)

HERMIONE (Seeing Ralph.) Well I never. Look at you. (Goes to him.) What are you doing dressed like that? You look like a dog's dinner.

TRIP saves the day by taking her arm and leading her to stage before she knows what is happening.

KING Blasted woman.

CHANCELLOR She knew him.

PUSS No no. Mistook him for that lad in the village. (Tries to be nonchalant)

CHANCELLOR She definitely said he looked like a dog's dinner.

TRIP (Leaves Hermione U.C. and comes down to help.) No, she said - said -

PUSS She said he looked a lot thinner.

CHANCELLOR Thinner than who?

KING Well, thinner than you to start with.

CORAL Daddy, there is no need to

KING Don't you worry child, I'm sure you will like him when you have got to know him.

CHANCELLOR tries to formally introduce them again but -

HERMIONE (Coming down C.) And another thing. (Turns to Puss) What are you doing here dressed like that?

TRIP (Stepping in front of Puss) That Madam is the Emissary of the Marquis of -

PUSS (Prompting) Carabas.

TRIP Carabas.

KING Quite right.

HERMIONE Marquis of fiddle-sticks. That's our old tom. That's Moggypuss.

CHANCELLOR Stupid woman.

KING That, Madam, is the Emissary of the Marquis of Carabas. (to Puss) Aren't you?

PUSS I am.

KING And that. (Ralph) is the Marquis of Carabas, aren't you?

RALPH Em, yes, yes.

KING And that (Coral) is my daughter the Princess; aren't you? Well of course you are. And she is going to marry the rich Marquis, (Aside) with any luck. (to Coral) Aren't you?

CORAL Of course I am Daddy, as soon as you like. (She and RALPH come together.)

KING That was easier than I thought.

CHANCELLOR (To Hermione) You will be saying next that the Marquis does not have lots and lots of lovely money.

HERMIONE I tell you he is so poor even the church mice won't talk to him. (To Ralph.) You wait 'til I get you home. (ALL laugh at this.) (To Puss.) And no saucer of milk for you tonight.

More derisive laughter.

KING Madam. 'Kindly leave the stage'.

Still muttering HERMIONE is bundled off by the CHORUS.

KING Now perhaps we can get on with the happy ending. We have an engagement to celebrate. To a Marquis!

CHANCELLOR With lots and lots of lovely money.

MUSIC NO 11. CONCERTED FINALE

A happy celebration to close the Act.

CURTAIN ACT ONE.

INTERVAL

ACT TWO.

SCENE SIX

THE COTTAGE

A full-stage set of poor cottage interior. The front door is U.L. there is a large oven U.R. (with operator concealed behind.) a window R. Table and chairs.

OR the setting could as for scene one with the cottage as an inset free standing.

MUSIC NO 12. OPENING. RALPH MAISY & CHORUS

A happy number to open the Act. Ralph is in his poor clothes again. Chorus as Villagers.

GIRL (To Ralph) Tell us what the Princess was really like.

MAISY (Petulantly) Yes, do tell us.

RALPH She was just as beautiful as I had thought and even more charming

MAISY (Ham dramatically) Does this mean that - everything is over between us? Ralph?

RALPH (Equally dramatically) In a word Maisy - (then quite naturally) Yes.

General laughter. TRIP enters U.L.

MAISY Sure?

RALPH Sure.

MAISY Ah well, (Crosses to Trip. Seductively.) Hello Trip dear.

TRIP Not now Maisy I've got some important news for Ralph. Some bad news for him - what did you say? (He swings round realising what she has said.)

RALPH Bad news? There can't possibly be bad news on such a happy day as this.

TRIP is standing between Ralph and Maisy and is torn between duty and desire.

TRIP (To Ralph) There can. (To Maisy) What did you say?

MAISY (As before) Hello Trip dear.

RALPH (To Maisy) Don't go away. (To Ralph.) Trouble. (Turns back to Maisy)

MAISY What sort of trouble?

RALPH Yes, what sort of trouble?