

CINDERELLA: Of course I'm happy to see you, but I'm here under orders.

BUTTONS: More errands?

CINDERELLA: I've been looking for all these things for Gorgonia and Monstoria, but I can't find them.

BUTTONS: Let me have a look, I may be able to help.

CINDERELLA hands the list to BUTTONS.

BUTTONS drops the list to full length and reads some items out.

Just a few things then. You wouldn't even get some of these things in Waitrose.

Juniper & Onion facepack
Farmers Cream
Vanilla Crisps
Salt and Vinegar Ice Cream
Seaweed Wrap?

INTRO MUSIC IN RAP STYLE - RAP THE FOLLOWING VERSE:

Do you know - do you know

Why sand on the beach is damp?

Do you? Do you?

It's because the sea weed.

CINDERELLA laughs - possibly alone

CINDERELLA: Buttons, you have really cheered me up.

BUTTONS: Good. That's what friends are for.

Song - duet BUTTONS and CINDERELLA

CINDERELLA: But, I still have to get all the things on this list.

BUTTONS: We need to find a way to get you out of there.

CINDERELLA: But it's my job and my home.

LUCINDA appears - spying on BUTTONS

BUTTONS and CINDERELLA react to audience 'behind you' etc. LUCINDA exits.

BUTTONS: Has she gone? Good. You will let me know if she comes back, won't you..?

(To Cinderella) We could go away together and seek our fortune.

CINDERELLA: Oh Buttons, you're so nice to me, but I have to stay and support my father.

FGM enters, she is disguised as a fish seller.

BUTTONS: Who's that?

CINDERELLA: I don't know, her perfume isn't very nice though.

FGM: Good day to you, would you like any fish today?

BUTTONS: What do you have on offer?

FGM: You could have this cheap.

BUTTONS: What is it?

FGM: A sick squid.

BUTTONS: No, I've only got a fiver. *(BEAT)* *(to Cinderella)* She's a bit of an old trout.

FGM: Watch what you call me or I'll batter you.

CINDERELLA: That's not a nice thing to say to my friend.

FGM: Forgive me Cinderella.

CINDERELLA: You know my name?

FGM: I heard someone carping on about you.

BUTTONS: Who was it - don't be coy, tell us.

FGM: I didn't catch the name. I have a problem with my herring.

CINDERELLA: You can't keep this information to yourself, it would be shellfish.

FGM: Don't worry Cinderella. Like all fish sellers I can foretell the future - I can sea into your sole.

CINDERELLA: My future? A Porpoise in life

FGM: Yes. You will soon marry and live in a great palace, with surf-ents of your own.

BUTTONS: But how, when? Could it be a Dauphin's palace or something to do with Whales?

FGM: I can tell you no more now, you should mull-et over. But soon your chance will come.

CINDERELLA: Oh Buttons, me living in a Palace.

BUTTONS: (*tinged with sadness*) Married to a rich prince.

CINDERELLA: You will come too, won't you Buttons?

BUTTONS: Yes, if you want me to.

CINDERELLA: How could I not have my best friend with me?

BUTTONS: You've made me happy too.

FGM: Then perhaps, before I go, you would like to sing my favourite song, to wish me well on my way.

BUTTONS sings a full scale to the word fish.

FGM: What are you doing?

BUTTONS: Practicing my fish scales.

FGM: I think you're out of Tuna

CINDERELLA: (*ignoring Buttons*) Of course we'll sing for you.

SING - THERE'S A PLACE FOR US - LAST CHORUS CHANGE TO 'THERE'S A P-A-LACE FOR US'.

FGM: Thank you Cinderella, you have made me happy too. But remember this, if ever you are in need, just sing this song and help will be with you. I have to be going now; I must get my skates on.

FGM exits

CINDERELLA: Farewell fishlady.

CINDERELLA and BUTTONS exit opposite direction.

Black-out.

ACT SCENE 1

PALACE - The PRINCE'S Chambers

The PRINCE sits in his room. He is forlorn. The KING paces around.

PRINCE: But father.

KING: We are concerned Arbuthnot. You need to find a young lady and settle down. Your mother - the Queen - longs for the sound of tiny feet pattering within the palace once more.

PRINCE: If she hadn't booked the pied piper, there'd be hundreds by now.

KING: I mean children, not rats.

PRINCE: I do try father, but I cannot find anyone suitable.

KING: You're too fussy, that's your problem.

PRINCE: This is my life we're talking about.

KING: It's your responsibility to the kingdom and it's the law.

PRINCE: Law?

KING: Without a bride you cannot become King, you will remain a Prince for the rest of your life.

PRINCE: But...

KING: Quiet now, your mother approaches.

DANDINI enters.

Oh, it's you. Talk to him Dandini.

KING exits.

DANDINI: Prince Arbuthnot, why are you so sad?

PRINCE: Wouldn't you be, with a name like Arbuthnot; or Arty as the villagers call me?

DANDINI looks at prince.

It's not only that. My father's just been giving me one of those talks.

DANDINI: You mean, patter of tiny feet...

PRINCE: Yes.

DANDINI: Did you do the rat joke.

PRINCE: I wish I hadn't.

DANDINI: Perhaps you're not the marrying kind.

PRINCE: It appears I don't have that option. The law dictates.

DANDINI: Would a civil partnership count.

PRINCE: Not for me it wouldn't, but thanks for the offer. *(BEAT)* Oh I do long to meet my one true love. But where am I going to find her.

DANDINI: I've no idea, but all I know is... How about Princes Undercover, you could go to Brighton and...

PRINCE: I'll give Brighton a miss thanks; you're more likely to find queens than princesses there.

DANDINI: Maybe internet dating?

The PRINCE looks disdainfully at DANDINI.

PRINCE: After the last time when I ended up with 3 deliveries of dried fruit and none of them were dates. - I need to meet my people.

DANDINI: You could set up a competition and judge the entries yourself.

PRINCE: What sort of competition?

DANDINI: Let me think...

DANDINI becomes thoughtful, rushing to the PRINCE with each idea, then returning to his thoughtful pose.

You could... no that's been done.

What about a... No, it wouldn't work.

How about a fancy dress competition?

PRINCE: Possibly, but would it work?

DANDINI: Let's see.

MAN 1 enters carrying a GIRL piggyback.

What have you come as?

MAN 1: I'm a tortoise.

DANDINI: Who's she?

MAN 1: That's Mi-chelle.

MAN 1 and GIRL exit.

MAN 2 enters wearing lots of ties.

DANDINI: What have you come as, a tie rack?

MAN 2: Come as?

DANDINI: Fancy dress.

MAN 2: Oh no, these are just souvenirs of my last holiday. I went to Thailand.

MAN 2 exits

PRINCE: No, No. That wouldn't work.

DANDINI returns to thinking mode.

DANDINI: How about a fete on the village green?

PRINCE: Possibly, tell me more.

DANDINI: We could have stalls - like throwing hoops over boxes that are just too big, throwing balls at coconuts that are glued into stands, a big slide, swings - and a ducking stool for the Baroness.

PRINCE: Would anyone dare?

DANDINI: No, probably not; a fate worse than death.

PRINCE: Shame, I liked that idea.

DANDINI returns to thinking mode

DANDINI: How about a talent competition?

PRINCE: Who for?

DANDINI: People with no talent.

PRINCE: It's been done.

DANDINI: We could call it the Y factor.

PRINCE: Why?

DANDINI: Why not?

PRINCE: The Y-not factor?

DANDINI: What?

PRINCE: The Y-not what factor?

DANDINI: You could be (*Theatrically*) Arty Cowell

PRINCE: (*Theatrically*) [Add Name of (Local Town's)]¹ Got Talent..?

They look at each other enthusiastically, they look around at the audience and the enthusiasm slowly fades

DANDINI: Maybe that's not such a good idea after all.

DANDINI returns to thinking mode

DANDINI: I've got it.

PRINCE: Well don't give it to me.

DANDINI: A ball. A Ball.

PRINCE: Two balls?

DANDINI: No, just the one.

PRINCE: What, for throwing.

DANDINI: Yes.

PRINCE: At what?

DANDINI: What?

PRINCE: Yes, what?

DANDINI: Eh?

PRINCE: What am I going to throw the one ball at?

DANDINI: No, you can throw a ball here, at the Palace.

PRINCE: At the Palace? I might break something.

DANDINI: Not if we're careful.

PRINCE: I'd have to aim it just right.

DANDINI: Hit the correct target.

PRINCE: What target?

DANDINI: Your true-love.

PRINCE: Why would I want to hit my true-love with a ball?

DANDINI: You wouldn't, would you?

PRINCE: No.

DANDINI: Good.

PRINCE: But you just said...

DANDINI: With the correct marketing to all single ladies we can ensure she turns up.

PRINCE: Turns up to what?

DANDINI: The ball.

PRINCE: Oh I see. Your plan is for me to ask single ladies to come here with a ball and my true-love will be one of them.

DANDINI: *To a ball*

PRINCE: I said two, but you said one.

DANDINI: Prince Arbuthnot, what are you talking about?

PRINCE: In truth, I don't really know.

DANDINI: Let me start again.

PRINCE: Oh no.

DANDINI: My suggestion is that you hold a ball, a dance here for the people.

PRINCE: Why didn't you say that?

DANDINI: I thought I...

PRINCE: How do we ensure my true-love comes?

DANDINI: We invite her.

PRINCE: How?

DANDINI: With an invitation.

PRINCE: Where do we send it?

DANDINI: To her.

PRINCE: But I don't know who she is.

DANDINI: Oh, yes. Of course.

DANDINI returns to thinking mode.

I've got it.

PRINCE: Again? You really should see a doctor.

DANDINI: No. I have the answer.

PRINCE: 42?

DANDINI: You must hold a ball here and issue a proclamation that all single ladies must attend.

PRINCE: That's inspired. But will they all come?

DANDINI: That is up to you. If you demand it they will attend.

PRINCE: Only single ladies, isn't that a little obvious?

DANDINI: It'll be free to single ladies. We can call it a match ball.

PRINCE: I've seen those advertised, they're very expensive.

DANDINI: That's why this will be so popular, it'll be free to all single ladies.

PRINCE: I'm throw-in a free ball, won't there be an off side or a penalty?

DANDINI: They'll probably be escorted by their mothers.

PRINCE: What is the collective term for a group of prospective mothers-in-law?

DANDINI: A coven I suppose... And we can incorporate the talent competition as part of the evening.

PRINCE: Yes, that would be good.

DANDINI: Prince Arbuthnot, have I your agreement to organise this ball at the palace?

PRINCE: You have Dandini. Make the proclamation; post the notices, start the music and light the lights. You can hand-deliver all the invitations. I want every single lady in the land to be invited to attend my ball tomorrow night.

DANDINI: I'll see to it at once.

DANDINI exits.

PRINCE moves forward looking very pleased with himself.

Tabs close behind the prince

PRINCE sings

PRINCE exits one way and TOWN CRYER and his DEPUTY enter from the other, followed by some VILLAGERS.

TOWN CRYER is carrying a large scroll his DEPUTY carries a heavy hand bell, opening upwards. He takes out a small bell from the large one and rings it.

With this the TOWN CRYER bursts into tears. He unrolls a scroll and prepares to read it. Hanging from the scroll is a cardboard cutout of a seal with a crown on it's head.

VILLAGER 1: The Town Cryer has a royal announcement.

VILLAGER 3: How do you know it's a Royal announcement?

VILLAGER 1: Look at what is hanging from the scroll.

VILLAGER 2: It's a Royal Seal

Through his crying the TOWN CRYER announces to the gathering VILLAGERS.

TOWN CRYER: Hear ye (sob, sob) Hear (sob) ye.

The Town Cryer's DEPUTY steps forwards. He produces a tissue and dabs away the tears. He holds a tissue over the TOWN CRYER'S nose and allows him to blow his nose - loudly.

The TOWN CRYER continue to cry and try and make the announcement.

His majesty the Prenz has decreed.

VILLAGER 1: Who was that?

TOWN CRYER: The Prenz!

VILLAGER 2: I think he means The Prince.

TOWN CRYER: That's whit I zed..! His majesty the Prenz has decreed that all shingle...

VILLAGER 3: All shingle? But the beach is covered in it.

VILLAGER 2: He means single, I think?

TOWN CRYER nods.

TOWN CRYER: That all shingle ladies are hereby invited to a wall.

VILLAGER 2: That was Ball?

TOWN CRYER nods.

TOWN CRYER: And talent competition at the palace tomorrow evening.

The DEPUTY steps forwards with the tissues again...

Dandini will deliver invitations to all shingle ladies personally.

DEPUTY again rings the small bell and TOWN CRYER exits, still sobbing slightly. His deputy collects up any disgarded tissues and exits.

VILLAGER 2: We must tell everyone else about the Ball.

VILLAGER 1: And practice our party piece for the competition.

VILLAGER 4: It's going to be great fun. I wonder who'll win?

VILLAGER 5: I hope it'll be me.

VILLAGER 6: What's your talent?

VILLAGER 5: I can tap dance.

VILLAGER 3: I did that once, never again.

VILLAGER 4: Why not?

VILLAGER 3: I hurt my leg when I fell in the sink.

VILLAGER 4: I'm going to wear my new dress.

VILLAGER 1: So will I; if I can find it.

VILLAGER 2: How can you have lost a new dress?

VILLAGER 1: I haven't bought it yet.

The VILLAGERS exit chatting excitedly.

