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Sleeping Beauty and the Geek

Based on the fairytale Sleeping Beauty

By Susan C. Hunter and Tom Shelton

NOTE: The dances indicated in the script are optional, but really do add a lot to the production. Choreographers are advised to choose classical music in the public domain. The melody for the song performed by Felicity and her sisters is available upon request.

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By Susan C. Hunter & Tom Shelton

THE BEAUTY AND THE COMPUTER GEEK

Cast of Characters

LILY	A maid in the kingdom of Dormene, a perfectionist
PETRA	Another maid, a bit of a gossip
BRINDL	Another maid, the dreamy one, sometimes forgetful
MISSETTE	Another maid, excitable
HAROLD THE HERALD	A very tiny trumpeter
KING NUGENT	The king of Dormene, a loving father
QUEEN GLORIANA	The beautiful and kindly queen of Dormene
FELICITY	Fairy Godmother to the Princess Crystalline
SERENDIPITY	A beauteous fairy
JOVETTE	A happy fairy
CELEBRINA	A healthy fairy
FORTUNATA	An evil and jealous fairy
ROOBEN	An absent- minded inventor, at odds with the modern world
JINX	A spunky kid sister to Charles
CLYDE	A faithful canine companion
CHARLES	A computer geek with hidden heroic tendencies
MOTHER'S VOICE	A typical modern mother
CRYSTALLINE	The lovely daughter of King Nugent and Queen Gloriana
CHITTER	A squirrel, rather brave
FANCY	A skunk
DIGGER	A raccoon
BUMBLE	A bear cub who is easily frightened
SOLOMON	A clever fox
SHADOW	A bashful fawn
MISS FIELDING	A mouse who is very lady-like
SPORT	A rabbit who is very fast
OLD HAROLD	Harold the Herald all grown up

BABY FAIRIES
6 COURTIERS
SPIDERS

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE The Royal Palace in Dormene
ACT ONE, SCENE TWO A basement in Staten Island, New York
ACT ONE, SCENE THREE The Forest of Dormene

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE Outside Fortunata's Castle
ACT TWO, SCENE TWO Royal Palace in Dormene
ACT TWO, SCENE THREE Another room in the Palace
ACT TWO, SCENE FOUR The basement in Staten Island

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE:

The throne room of the medieval kingdom of Dormene, decorated festively.

AT RISE:

*The room is filled with the bustle of preparing for the christening of the new princess, Crystalline. **SERVANTS** scurry back and forth in a flurry of motion. In the midst of this pandemonium, a tiny **HERALD** practices nervously on his trumpet. One maid, **BRINDL**, is arranging flowers frantically.)*

LILY

Hurry, hurry, everyone. It's nearly time. Everything must be perfect for the ceremony. Perfect! Have the thrones been polished?

PETRA

(Tying ribbons onto the cradle)

Oh, yes! Several times!

LILY

Has Cook frosted the cake?

MISSETTE

(Dusting the settee)

The loveliest shade of pink! And trimmed all about with sweet little rosebuds.

*(**BRINDL** drops a flower)*

LILY

Yes, yes! And the floors?

BRINDL

(Dusting off the floor where the flower fell and replacing the flower in the vase)

Scrubbed until they gleam.

*(A loud squawk comes from the **HERALD**'s trumpet.)*

LILY

Windows?

PETRA

Everything is ready, Lily.

LILY

That is easy enough for you to say. You are not in charge of the greatest social event of the season. No, of the decade. The century!

PETRA

No.

LILY

(Inspecting the settee and flicking a few tiny specks of dust away)

Well, I am! It is not every day that a royal princess is born in the Kingdom of Dormene.

BRINDL

They say she is a beautiful baby.

MISSETTE

They say she has her father's smile and her mother's blue, blue eyes.

PETRA

She'll have the best of everything, there's no doubt about it.

LILY

(Inspecting the flowers and rearranging one or two)

Beginning with this christening.

*(The **HERALD** squawks on his trumpet again.)*

What is that infernal honking?

HAROLD

(A tiny little fellow of 4 or 5)

That was me.

LILY

You? Who are you?

HAROLD

Harold.

LILY

Harold? Harold who?

HAROLD

Harold the herald.

LILY

What kind of herald are you? You cannot even blow that trumpet properly.

HAROLD

I know. That's why I'm practicing.

LILY

For what?

HAROLD

For the christening.

LILY

Oh no! You are not our usual herald.

HAROLD

That's my cousin. He's sick. Today you have me.

LILY

Impossible! This is the greatest day in the history of Dormene. We have to have the very best of everything!

HAROLD

Too bad. Today you have me. Take it or leave it.

(HE honks his trumpet enthusiastically.)

PETRA

Oh my goodness!

MISSETTE

Just wait until all the other kingdoms hear about this.

BRINDL

Give him a chance, Lily. It will be cute. A baby princess and her tiny herald.

MISSETTE

An investment in the future.

PETRA

Besides, what else can we do?

LILY

(After a moment's thought)

Oh, very well. But please practice.

(HAROLD honks his trumpet.)

LILY *(Continued)*

Somewhere else!

HAROLD

(As HE exits)

Sure!

LILY

Oh dear! What else can go wrong? Have we forgotten anything? The ceremonial carpet?

MISETTE

Cleaned, brushed, and rolled out in the grand entryway.

LILY

Cradle! The cradle! Where is it?

PETRA

Right here. See? I tied the ribbons on myself.

LILY

Were all the invitations sent out?

(Silence)

The invitations? Who sent the invitations?

BRINDL

I suppose I did.

LILY

(Apprehensively)

What do you mean by that?

BRINDL

Well, I was a little short, when it came right down to it.

LILY

Short? How short?

BRINDL

Well, as you may recall, Queen Gloriana sent you a list of guests.

LILY

(Feeling a headache coming on)

I remember.

BRINDL

Yes, and you were so kind as to entrust me with the duty of carrying out her Royal Highness' wishes.

LILY

Yes?

BRINDL

I set about my task with the greatest care. I counted the names on the list. I recounted them, I believe. Then I ordered the Royal Scribe to inscribe them. Oh, and they were lovely. All rimmed in gold, with the daintiest script.

LILY

Was there a problem?

BRINDL

I must have miscounted somehow.

LILY

Miscounted?

BRINDL

Yes. Somehow, in the end, I was one invitation short. Or one guest long. Or something.

PETRA

Oh my goodness!

MISSETTE

What did you do?

BRINDL

What could I do? It was much too late to order more invitations. Entirely too late.

LILY

So?

BRINDL

I crossed one names off the list.

PETRA

You didn't?

MISSETTE

Brindl!

BRINDL

But you needn't worry. She won't ever know. Probably.

LILY

(With murder in her voice)

Who is that?

BRINDL

There were twelve Nobles of the Realm on the list. Well, I couldn't invite some and leave one out.

MISETTE

(Nodding in agreement)

People would talk.

BRINDL

And there were the four good fairies, Felicity and her sisters. They've been so wonderful to Her Highness and the King. And Felicity is to be the Royal Godmother, so they couldn't be passed over.

PETRA

They had to come, surely.

BRINDL

And all the darling little fairies.

MISETTE

This is their very first party.

PETRA

How would one of them feel to be left out, poor thing?

BRINDL

And then there was Fortunata.

PETRA

The sorceress?

BRINDL

Yes, well, she has never taken any interest in any of the affairs of the kingdom. She just hides away in that dark murky castle of hers up on the Mountain of Mystery. She probably doesn't even know that a princess has been born.

MISETTE

They say she knows everything. Everything!

BRINDL

Well, how could she care whether she comes to the christening or not? She's never attended anything else here.

MISETTE

That's true.

BRINDL

So, I crossed her name off the list.

PETRA

It certainly seems sensible. Don't you think so, Lily?

MISETTE

*(After a moment when **LILY** has been silent)*

Lily? You don't think Fortunata will be offended, do you?

BRINDL

What else could I do? There weren't enough invitations.

LILY

(With a sigh)

Well, what is done is done. Let us hope no ill will come of it.

BRINDL

I'm so sorry, Lily. I promise that in the future I will count all guest lists three times. At least!

LILY

We may not have a future when King Nugent hears of this.

*(The **HERALD**'s honk is heard offstage.)*

MISETTE

The guests are arriving!

PETRA

Oh dear, oh dear!

LILY

And that herald has not improved his squawking one little bit! What else can go wrong? Hurry, ladies, to the kitchen. The table has not been set!

*(**THEY** exit, as **COURTIERS** enter joyously.)*

HAROLD

(Entering and announcing each person)

His Majesty King Nugent! Her Royal Highness Queen Gloriana! The Fairy Felicity, Royal Godmother with the Princess Crystalline, future queen of the Kingdom of Dormene.

*(**COURTIERS** bow.)*

KING

My friends. This is indeed a most joyous occasion. Queen Gloriana and I thank you for sharing it with us.

FIRST COURTIER

Your Majesties, the Nobles of the Realm have prepared a short dance in honor of the Princess Crystalline and her day of christening.

KING

We are delighted to see it.

(COURTIERS perform a minuet.)

QUEEN

Thank you, friends.

FELICITY

If it please Your Majesties, the little fairies have made gifts for the Princess.

QUEEN

Let them come forward.

BABY FAIRIES

Happy birthday, Princess!

(BABY FAIRIES dance with their gifts, laying them near the cradle.)

SERENDIPITY

And now, may I present my gift to the princess?

QUEEN

Dearest Serendipity, please do.

SERENDIPITY

To the Princess Crystalline, I give the gift of Beauty. Beauty of face and of thought. All who know her shall cherish her, even past her youth. For though the blossom may fade someday from her brow, the beauty that remains within her heart, shall set her aglow, making her beauty evergreen.

(SERENDIPITY dances to express her gift.)

KING

A wonderful present.

JOVETTE

I, too, Your Majesties, have a gift for the child.

QUEEN

Bring it forth, Jovette.

JOVETTE

I give the gift of Happiness. The joy of life shall sustain her always, even in times of trouble, filling her existence with meaning and light.

(JOVETTE dances.)

CELEBRINA

And I, Celebrina, give to the princess, the gift of Health. For without it, no life can be well-lived. Rosy shall be her cheek from this day forth, and steady her steps from first to last. And gentle shall be her love for those who are frail, with a ready heart to soothe the pain of those who suffer.

(CELEBRINA dances.)

MISSETTE

(Sneaking a peek at the festivities as other SERVANTS follow)

Oh, isn't she the sweetest thing?

PETRA

Dear little Princess!

LILY

What are you doing? We have work to do.

MISSETTE

Oh, Lily, let us watch. Just for a moment.

PETRA

Please!

LILY

Well. . . perhaps just this once. But then back to work.

BRINDL

Thank you, Lily!

MISSETTE

Move over, Petra. I can't see!

FELICITY

(Stepping forward)

And I, also, have a gift for my dear little goddaughter.

(There is a sudden crash of thunder as FORTUNATA, the evil sorceress appears.)

KING

Fortunata!

QUEEN

How good of you to join us.

FORTUNATA

(In a rage)

Good indeed! Did you believe you could hide her from me?

QUEEN

Why, what do you mean? We have hidden nothing.

LILY

(Stepping forward)

Your highness, there has been a mistake.

BRINDL

An oversight! You see. . .

FORTUNATA

Oversight or not, it has distressed me greatly to be excluded from today's most joyous proceedings. I was so looking forward to coming.

(SHE moves to cradle.)

Such a dear child. And surrounded by such loving protectors – the Nobles of the Realm, so strong and true. The little elflets – they are cute. . . when they're young. And, of course the "good" fairies. A fine gathering indeed.

FELICITY

What do you want here?

FORTUNATA

My intentions are no different than yours, dear Felicity. I too have a gift for the little Princess.

QUEEN

Certainly. We shall set another place at the table.

FORTUNATA

No need. I really can't stay. The cobwebs need sweeping in the castle, the mushrooms must be harvested. So much evil business to tend to. No, I shan't be here long.

FELICITY

Your Majesties, accept no gifts from the likes of her.

FORTUNATA

Oh, but I insist. Now, let me see. Beauty, joy, health. All of these gifts have already been given. Thoughtful, gentle, harmless gifts, are they not? It seems a bit of variety would liven things up. Yes, yes. A gift. A nightmare of a gift. What shall it be? Ah, I have it! I give the Princess the gift of Death!

KING

(As *FORTUNATA* laughs evilly)

What?

QUEEN

No! No!

SECOND COURTIER

Protect the Princess!

THIRD COURTIER

My life for hers!

KING

Seize her! She must not touch the Princess!

FOURTH COURTIER

Yes, yes! Seize her!

FORTUNATA

Stay back! The Princess shall indeed grow in beauty, health, and joy. She will be loved by all who know her. But her life, alas, will be tragically short. For before the sun sets on her sixteenth birthday, she will prick her finger on a spinning wheel and die.

QUEEN

No!

KING

I command that every spinning wheel in the kingdom of Dormene be burned. A death sentence will be pronounced on anyone found with a spindle of any sort.

FORTUNATA

Try as you may, the spell cannot be broken. Princess Crystalline's fate is sealed. Ah, but I see I have overstayed my welcome. Please, don't let me put a damper on the festivities. Eat, drink, and be merry. For tomorrow, who knows?

(With an evil laugh, FORTUNATA disappears.)

QUEEN

Oh, what can we do? How can we stop her?

KING

Follow her! Bring her back!

FIFTH COURTIER

(After a chaotic search)

Your Majesty, the sorceress Fortunata has vanished!

KING

Search the palace!

SIXTH COURTIER

Yes, Your Majesty. Follow me!

(The COURTIERS exit.)

QUEEN

Is there no hope?

SERENDIPITY

Fortunata is a powerful sorceress.

CELEBRINA

Once her spell has been cast, it cannot be completely broken.

JOVETTE

Only she herself can end it.

FELICITY

Wait, Your Majesties! Perhaps I can help.

QUEEN

Tell us quickly how!

FELICITY

Perhaps we can trick Fortunata into letting the spell pass unfulfilled.

KING

We will do anything you say.

FELICITY

Let it be known throughout the land that the Princess has died.

QUEEN

No! Never!

FELICITY

I will take Crystalline to the forest and raise her as a peasant, away from contact with anyone or anything that might harm her. No one will know who she is, not even the Princess herself.

QUEEN

But my daughter. When can I see her? How will I know she is safe?

FELICITY

I'll send word of her through my sisters.

QUEEN

Surely I can visit her.

FELICITY

No. Any hint that Crystalline is still alive will endanger her. Fortunata must believe the story. It is the only way she may possibly release the power of the spell.

KING

What if she discovers our plan?

FELICITY

Your Majesty, I have not yet given my gift. Although the spell cannot be broken, perhaps it can be altered.

QUEEN

Anything.

FELICITY

If this evil curse must come to pass, let her not die at the prick of the spinning wheel, but only sleep, sleep for a thousand years, until the kiss of love shall awaken her to a new world.

QUEEN

A thousand years!

KING

We must do whatever is necessary to save our little daughter. Come, my dear. Let us prepare the Princess for her departure.

(THEY exit sadly.)

FELICITY

(To her SISTERS)

Fortunata's magic is strong. Perhaps stronger than even we know. We must call on all powers of goodness to surround the Princess and protect her.

(SHE produces a glowing orb. The OTHERS also produce orbs as the song continues.)

CELEBRINA

Power of goodness gather here.

JOVETTE

Protect our Princess Crystalline.

SERENDIPITY

Shelter her from evil.

FELICITY

Powers of goodness we call on you, wherever you may be. Help us.

CELEBRINA

Help us.

ALL

Help us.

FELICITY

From the meadows
From the skies
Gentle spirits
Arise.
Near us now a cloak of doom
Has wrapped us in its gloom.

JOVETTE

Elfin soul and fairy sprite
Hear us as we call.

CELEBRINA

Gather force against the mighty
Evil that would rule us all.

ALL

Help us, hear us
Send your power
Under bridge and over tower
Through the world may goodness flower

SERENDIPITY

Hear us as we call.

ALL

Help us, hear us
Send your power
Through craggy ridge and leafy bower

FELICITY

Give light to this our darkest hour

ALL

That love shall conquer all.

(All lights have dimmed, leaving only the glow of the magic orbs.)

END OF ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO:

A basement in Staten Island, New York. It is extremely cluttered with every kind of junk and paraphernalia hat one would find stashed away in a typical family's home. There is also a lot of scientific equipment and assorted "mad scientist" contraptions. The space is obviously used as an inventor's workshop. At center there is a workbench, with a complicated device on it with many knobs, dials, and levers on it.

AT RISE:

ROOBEN PEASELY is discovered dozing at the workbench. His sleep is troubled and he fidgets and moans. The stage is lit with a dim, eerie light, emanating from somewhere within the pile of rubbish in the corner. After a beat, we hear the voice of **FELICITY**, from a distance.

FELICITY

(Voice only)

Help us, hear us
Send your power
Through winter snow and summer shower
The evil near us to devour
And goodness to recall.

ROOBEN

(Still asleep)

Wha. . . ! Yes! I hear you! I'm over here! Over here!

(His eyes open with a start.)

Where am I?

*(The lights become brighter to reveal **JINX COGG** and her dog, **CLYDE**. **JINX** holds a book of fairytales.)*

JINX

Rooben, don't interrupt.

ROOBEN

Didn't you hear that?

JINX

What?

?

ROOBEN

It was a voice, calling me. You didn't hear it, Jinx?

JINX

It was probably the story I've been reading to you. Who'd be calling you down here in the basement? There's only Clyde and me. And Clyde's a dog. You're not gonna tell me he's started talking, are you?

ROOBEN

(As HE starts tinkering with the machine, consulting some sort of blueprint.)

I guess you're right, Jinx. But it seemed so real.

JINX

Come on now, listen. This is the good part. "Suddenly the evil sorceress, Fortunata, threw back her head, and from somewhere deep within her, she emitted a chilling, hideous laugh. Then, just as mysteriously as she had appeared, she was gone, vanished into the shadows from whence she had come." Oh, Rooben, she's just so awful!

ROOBEN

Who is, Jinx?

JINX

Oh, Rooben! The wicked Fortunata. You know, in the book?

ROOBEN

(Underneath the machine with a wrench, adjusting things)

Book?

JINX

Sleeping Beauty!

ROOBEN

Oh, yes.

JINX

Poor Princess Crystalline. Do you think you can stop the powers of evil, Rooben? What if everything good in the world went up against everything bad. Who do you think would win?

ROOBEN

(Bumping his head as HE stands up)

Well, I'd put my money on the forces of good, Jinx. Ouch! Otherwise, why even try?

(CHARLES COGG, JINX's older brother, calls from upstairs.)

CHARLES

Jennifer!

JINX

(To ROOBEN)

Shhh.

CHARLES

Rooben! Is Jennifer down there with you?

JINX

(Attempting to imitate ROOBEN's voice)

No!

CHARLES

(Appearing at the door)

Jennifer. Mother says you've got to feed Clyde, then go to bed now.

(CLYDE perks up and whines in anticipation.)

ROOBEN

(Aside to JINX)

Trouble! The Jinx is still up.

JINX

I'm not sleepy. And Clyde can wait for his dinner until I finish this story. Can't you, Clyde?

(CLYDE groans in disappointment.)

CHARLES

Jennifer, please. I don't have time for your nonsense. I'm in the middle of developing a very important new program and I must return to my laptop A.S.A.P. in order to be asleep by midnight. Chess Club tournament eliminations are tomorrow and I, for one, need a full seven and a half hours. It has been scientifically proven that peak performance is achieved by no less than. . .

JINX

But I can't sleep. I don't care how scientific it is, if I'm not tired, I shouldn't have to go to bed.

CHARLES

You're never tired. More like hyperactive.

ROOBEN

Charles, there are far worse things in the world than a younger sister with an overabundance of spunk and imagination. I'd give money, if I had any, for her energy.

JINX

Oh, Rooben, you can have my energy for free.

ROOBEN

Thanks, Jinx.

CHARLES

You're both impossible. Oh, um, speaking of money, Rooben. Mother asked me to remind you about the rent. It was due three days ago.

ROOBEN

(Evasively)

Where's my brain? I completely forgot! Now, wherein the name of goodness did I put my checkbook? You don't suppose I left it on the Staten Island Ferry again, do you?

JINX

Let's ask the Ouija Board where it is, like we did when you lost your keys. That was cool!

CHARLES

It didn't locate his keys at all.

JINX

No, but I found out that I would someday be known for my great beauty.

ROOBEN

(Searching on the work bench.)

It must be here somewhere.

CHARLES

It's no good looking, Rooben. Mother won't take a check this time, since the last five bounced. I have advised her to accept nothing but cash from now on.

ROOBEN

Oh dear me. Where in the world am I going to find a month's worth of rent in cash?

JINX

(Jumping up and beginning a search)

Clyde and me'll look for you, Rooben. I bet you got some junk here that would sell for millions on E-Bay. Come on, Clyde.

(CLYDE follows her around the room, growling with displeasure.)

CHARLES

Never mind that. Foreseeing this problem in advance, Mother is willing to strike a little deal with you.

(HE pulls out a list.)

If you will: One, fix the lawnmower; Two, stop the leak in the washing machine; Three. . .

ROOBEN

Stop! I can't! I won't! I'm an inventor, not a handyman!

CHARLES

You could do it if you tried, Rooben.

ROOBEN

There are some things beyond our power, Charles. And for me, that is one of them. Besides, I'm in the midst of important work here. I need time to think, to dream. I'm on the verge of perhaps the greatest fusion of facts and imagination in the history of. . .

CHARLES

(With unveiled scorn)

A time machine? Really, Rooben. That idea's as old as the 20th century and twice as creaky. Thanks to the great strides of modern technology, we know that such idiotic concepts are. . .are voodoo nonsense. Fairytale notions!

JINX

(Who is still searching through the piles with CLYDE)

You find anything, Clyde?

ROOBEN

No! It can work! It's all here, carefully constructed and researched. There's just one missing element. A power source. The thing to make it go. All our so-called modern kinds of power just won't do, because where I'm going, to the past and future, they won't have the same kinds of connections. I need a new source, something pure, self-contained, universal!

CHARLES

Batteries not included, hmmm?

JINX

(To CLYDE who is whining over a shoebox)

Whatcha got there, boy?

ROOBEN

You laugh, Charles. But I'm on to something. I feel it here.

(HE taps his heart.)

Not just here.

(HE taps his head.)

Feelings are something you know very little about, Charles.

CHARLES

(Slightly offended)

I'm sure I don't know what you mean.

JINX

(Holding up a glass orb similar to the one used by FELICITY as CLYDE howls in apprehension)

Hey! What's this thing? Quiet, Clyde.

ROOBEN

(Taking it and examining it)

Hmmmm. What do you know. I haven't seen this strange old thing in years.

JINX

Where'd you get it? What's it do? What is it, anyway?

ROOBEN

It's an orb. A crystal orb.

CHARLES

Otherwise known as an old doorknob.

ROOBEN

You know, I think I've been lugging this thing around my whole life, ever since my godmother left me on the steps of the orphanage with nothing but a box full of stuff like this. I've started to throw it out a few times, but I could never quite bring myself to do it. I don't know why, really. Just a feeling that came over me.

CHARLES

Feelings! Ha!

(All three stand looking at the orb.)

JINX

It's cool!

CHARLES

It's corroded.

ROOBEN

It's fascinating, isn't it?

(ROOBEN places the orb on his Time Machine. It fits perfectly into a small indentation at the top.)

JINX

It fits perfect there. You should leave it.

ROOBEN

(Rolling up plans and putting them away)

You're probably right, Jinx. Maybe my machine is worth more as a display rack for ancient knickknacks than for travel through time.

CHARLES

(With rather maddening superiority)

You know what your problem is, Rooben? You've got to set your mind working on something more practical. Then you might get somewhere with your inventions.

MOTHER'S VOICE

Charles! Where is Jennifer? What's taking you so long?

CHARLES

We're coming, Mother! Great! Now, I'll be in trouble, too.

MOTHER'S VOICE

Has anyone fed the dog?

CLYDE

(Mournfully shaking his head)

Ahooooooooo!

MOTHER'S VOICE

Do I have to come down there and drag you both to bed myself?

ROOBEN

(Suddenly panicked)

Don't let her! I was supposed to have this place cleaned up a week ago!

JINX

She says it's a fire trap.

MOTHER'S VOICE

Mr. Peasley, I hope you're not keeping the children up.

ROOBEN

Not at all, Mrs. Cogg! They're on their way! Go on, kids.

JINX

Just let me finish my story.

CHARLES

Come on, Jennifer!

JINX

Oh, all right. Good night, Rooben. Can I leave my book down here?

ROOBEN

Sure, Jinx.

JINX

Thanks. You can read it if you want. Just don't tell me what happens. Come on, Clyde, time for your dinner.

(SHE places the book face down on top of the machine. The orb begins to glow, and gradually the machine begins to rattle, smoke, and hum.)

CLYDE

(Howling in terror)

Ahooooo! Ah ah ah ahooooo!

CHARLES

Let's go, Jennifer!

JINX

Okay, okay. Geez, Clyde, I said I'd feed you, didn't I? No need to . . .

(SHE notices the Time Machine)

Hey, what's happening?

ROOBEN

That's odd. It seems to have started up on its own.

CLYDE

(Increasingly frantic)

Ahooooooooo! Ahoooooo!

CHARLES

That's impossible.

ROOBEN

No, it's not. It's working! My machine is working!

(ROOBEN starts fiddling with dials and levers on the machine as the other two stand transfixed. Smoke pours from the top of it and there is a loud whirring sound. CLYDE is rushing madly around the room, howling.)

CHARLES

(Grabbing JINX by the arm)

It's going to blow! Run, Jennifer, run!

JINX

No, no, I want to see!

(SHE grabs on to ROOBEN to keep CHARLES from pulling her away. CLYDE howls, tugging at CHARLES' shirt tail. All four are connected to each other and therefore, indirectly to the machine as ROOBEN continues to turn dials. There is a blinding flash of light and a blast of smoke.)

ROOBEN

Hold on tight everyone! We're going! We're on our way!

JINX

Cooooo!!

CHARLES

Nooooo!!

CLYDE

Ahooooo! Ahooooo! Ahooooo!

(THEY vanish into the darkness.)

END OF ACT ONE, SCENE TWO

ACT ONE, SCENE THREE: *The Forest of Dormene, sixteen years after Scene One.*

AT RISE: *FELICITY's voice is heard.*

FELICITY (*Off*)

Beauty! Beauty! Come home, dear!

(BEAUTY, a lovely young girl of sixteen, enters playfully, looking for a place to hide.)

Beauty, you listen to your Aunt Felicity, now!

(BEAUTY hides behind a bush as a flock of BLUEBIRDS flutters in. SHE rushes to greet them, scattering them.)

BEAUTY

Oh, please, don't be afraid. I won't hurt you, truly.

(ONE BIRD moves tentatively forward.)

That's it. I didn't mean to frighten you. I was only playing.

(Several more BIRDS move toward her)

Won't you stay for a minute? We could be friends. What do you say?

(BEAUTY and the BIRDS join together in a short dance that is cut short by the entrance of FELICITY.)

FELICITY

(With relief)

Bless you, child, there you are. Shoo! Shoo!

(SHE shoos the BIRDS off.)

What in the world have you been doing? I shouted myself hoarse looking for you.

BEAUTY

I was just exploring, Auntie.

FELICITY

You had me worried to death.

BEAUTY

(SHE spins FELICITY around in a dizzy circle)

How could anyone be worried on a beautiful day like this? The sun is yellow as a dandelion, the sky is clear, and the breeze is sweet as a whisper. It's like everything is just waiting!

FELICITY

(Alarmed)

Waiting? For what?

BEAUTY

(Hugging FELICITY)

Oh, for the most wonderful thing to happen.

FELICITY

Yes, yes, well, things aren't always what they seem. You must not wander so far from the cottage. Not today.

BEAUTY

But why?

FELICITY

Never you mind. You just do as I say.

BEAUTY

Oh, Aunt Felicity! Can't we please have a picnic here in the woods today? It is my 16th birthday.

FELICITY

You must be patient, my dear. Come sundown I promise you the loveliest surprise.

BEAUTY

Oh, very well.

FELICITY

I do wish this day was over.

BEAUTY

You speak so strangely. What is worrying you, Auntie?

FELICITY

Nothing, my dear. Don't you fret yourself about me.

BEAUTY

I wonder how they feel today.

FELICITY

Who?

BEAUTY

King Nugent and Queen Gloriana. Do you think they remember today?

FELICITY

What do you mean? Why should they?

BEAUTY

Because, this is the day the princess Crystalline was born, poor thing.

FELICITY

Who's been telling you tales of her?

BEAUTY

People.

FELICITY

What people?

BEAUTY

From the village.

FELICITY

When have you seen them?

BEAUTY

Well, I haven't really seen them. The forest animals heard old Widow Yester say that today would have been her 16th birthday. Isn't that funny?

FELICITY

Why?

BEAUTY

That the Princess Crystalline should have been born on the very same day that I was.

FELICITY

Everyone shares their birthday with other people.

BEAUTY

I know. But it does seem very romantic, like an old fairytale.

FELICITY

The Princess Crystalline died many years ago.

BEAUTY

Yes, because of the dreadful curse.

FELICITY

Let's not think about that. . .

BEAUTY

I'm so glad I'm just an unimportant nobody with no one trying to put curses on me! There's too much I want to do! And see! I'm glad I'm not anything special.

FELICITY

Well, you're special to me, child.

(SHE hugs BEAUTY tightly)

You just wait until tonight. I promise you the biggest, grandest . . . well, you just wait and see.

BEAUTY

All right, Aunt Felicity, but it does seem a long time to wait.

FELICITY

An eternity, child.

(There is a loud cacophony of chattering sounds heard)

Oh dear! What is that?

BEAUTY

It sounds like my forest friends.

(ANIMALS enter, highly agitated)

CHITTER

(A squirrel)

There she is!

FANCY

(A skunk)

Tell her! Tell her!

DIGGER

(A raccoon)

It was terrible!

BUMBLE

(A bear cub)

Oh, Beauty! We're s-s-s-o-o-o s-s-s-scared!

(HE buries his face in BEAUTY's skirt.)

BEAUTY

What is it? What's wrong?

SHADOW

(A fawn)

It was very loud.

SOLOMON

(A fox)

I believe the common term for such cacophony is "thunder".

BUMBLE

Didn't you h-h-hear it?

FELICITY

How could there be thunder? The sky is clear and blue.

MISS FIELDING

(A mouse)

That's just it exactly. Thunder and no storm. Is it possible?

BUMBLE

Oh, I'm s-s-s-cared! I'm s-s-s-o-o-o s-s-s-cared!

FANCY

What could it be?

SOLOMON

One tries not to let it intimidate one, but it is a bit alarming in point of fact.

BEAUTY

Maybe it's just an echo.

SHADOW

Yes, yes!

CHITTER

I told you it was nothing to worry about.

DIGGER

(Not convinced)

An echo of what?

BEAUTY

Well, an echo of something that just happened in the past. It certainly couldn't be an echo of something from the future, now could it? Perhaps a woodcutter had just cut down a tree and you heard the echo of its fall.

SOLOMON

A reasonable assumption.

CHITTER

Maybe so.

SPORT

(A rabbit)

That's probably just what it was, come to think of it.

DIGGER

Then it's settled.

FANCY

Yes!

SHADOW

Thank goodness. My heart was pounding so.

MISS FIELDING

This has been most upsetting, I must say. Why, look at my tail! Straight as a pencil. I shall have to set it in loops for a week!

BUMBLE

(Emerging from behind BEAUTY's skirt)

At least we're s-s-s-afe.

(There is a loud thunder clap, setting the ANIMALS into a frightened frenzy once more. BUMBLE begins to cry.)

CHITTER

There it is again!

SPORT

Let's run!

FANCY

No, no! Hide! Hide now!

FELICITY

Wait! Let's not lose our heads over this. If it *is* anything unusual, the best thing is to go home and wait until it has passed. Running all over the forest won't do one little bit of good.

CHITTER

She's right.

FELICITY

Beauty, my dear, you don't want to spoil your lovely dress if a storm is coming. Run home quickly. I'll join you in a minute.

BEAUTY

But it isn't a storm, it's . . .

FELICITY

(Sharply)

Do as I say! There is no time to lose!

BEAUTY

Yes, Aunt.

(SHE exits.)

CHITTER

Let's go!

FELICITY

Wait, my friends.

DIGGER

What is it, Felicity?

FELICITY

I must share a secret with you. A very important secret.

SHADOW

You can trust us.

FELICITY

I know you are all friends to Beauty, and would do anything to keep her safe.

SPORT

Oh, yes!

FELICITY

This thunder that comes from nowhere frightens me.

BUMBLE

(A-tremble)

W-w-w-hy?

CHITTER

Is Beauty in danger?

FELICITY

I'm not sure. Beauty has a very powerful enemy, though she doesn't know it.

MISS FIELDING

Who could wish Beauty any harm?

FELICITY

There are many things Beauty doesn't know about herself. Secrets I have kept to myself since she was a baby.

DIGGER

Tell us.

FELICITY

I brought her here many years ago, but she isn't my daughter.

BUMBLE

Her p-p-parents are d-d-dead.

SPORT

You're her aunt.

FELICITY

The truth is, I'm her godmother. Her fairy godmother, though I haven't used any magic for sixteen years. In all that time, I have raised her, and tonight I must take her to her true parents, King Nugent and Queen Gloriana.

DIGGER

What? Do you mean . . .

FELICITY

Beauty is, in reality, the lost Princess Crystalline.

MISS FIELDING

No, no, the child died years ago. Everyone knows that.

FELICITY

It is what her parents wished the world to believe, for if Fortunata, the evil one, believed the princess was dead, she would not seek to fulfill her dreadful prophesy.

DIGGER

But what does the thunder have to do with it?

FELICITY

We must be watchful for any sign that Fortunata has discovered our secret. She has only until sundown tonight or the curse will lose its power. These last few hours could be the most dangerous of her life.

CHITTER

You can count on us to help.

SPORT

Sure, if I see that old Fortunata, I'll run right here to warn you. She won't even know what whooshed past her.

SOLOMON

And I'll set my thoughts to pondering a suitable solution to this perplexing paradox.

MISS FIELDING

I shall be more than happy to help out in any way. However, if there is some little contribution I could make without having to grovel around in the dirt, I should appreciate it.

FANCY

Dirt doesn't bother me.

MISS FIELDING

(Tossing her head haughtily)

I know.

DIGGER

Whatever we have to do, we'll do it. We won't let anything hurt her. That's a promise.

(Stronger thunder, accompanied by lightning)

BUMBLE

S-s-s-she's coming!

FELICITY

I must go to the Princess. Oh do watch carefully. We mustn't fail our Beauty in her hour of need.

FANCY

We won't!

SOLOMON

Have no fear, dear lady. We shall be most vigilant.

FELICITY

Thank you. Farewell, my friends!

(SHE exits quickly. More thunder and lightning, growing wilder each time.)

SHADOW

Oh! Oh dear!

SPORT

The sky is opening!

CHITTER

Run! Run for your lives!

BUMBLE

(Alone onstage as OTHERS take cover)

Help! H-h-h-help!

FANCY

(Returning to save BUMBLE)

Follow me!

(The storm hits its peak, plunging the stage into complete blackness. Through the thunder we hear the howling of a frightened dog.)

CLYDE'S VOICE

(Coming closer)

Ahoo! Ahoo! Ahoo! Ah oh man! Oh man! Oh man!

(There is a loud clatter, a final clap of thunder, and the lights return to reveal ROOBEN, CHARLES, JINX, and CLYDE collapsed in a heap.)

JINX

(Amid the pile of bodies)

Wow! What was that?

CHARLES

(Disentangling himself awkwardly)

Where are we? Is everyone ambulatory?

CLYDE

(Standing on two feet for the first time)

Oh man!

ROOBEN

Incredible. Absolutely incredible.

CHARLES

(Alarmed)

What happened to our house? What are we doing in the middle of a forest?

ROOBEN

(Ecstatic)

It worked! By golly, it worked! We've been transported back in time.

JINX

Gosh, Rooben. You did it! That is so cool! But just where did you take us to?

ROOBEN

Well now, Jinx, I couldn't precisely give you an answer on that subject, since I hadn't actually completed my calibrations when we, you know, departed.

CHARLES

How about a rough estimate.

ROOBEN

Well. . . let's see. . . I. . .

CHARLES

You mean we're lost?

ROOBEN

Only if you want to look at it from a "glass-half-empty" point-of-view. Let's try to be a bit more optimistic here.

CHARLES

We're lost!

CLYDE

Oh man!

JINX

Wow! That's great! What an adventure!

ROOBEN

(Trying to convince himself)

Yes, yes, that's the spirit.

CHARLES

All right, Rooben. You've made your point. Time travel *is* possible. Congratulations! Bravo! Let's go back now. My schedule does not permit any dallying around in the past. The Junior Chess Club is counting on my sharp reflexes tomorrow.

ROOBEN

And I will get us back just as soon as I can.

CHARLES

What does that mean?

ROOBEN

It means that although I seem to have fathomed the complexities of getting us here, I shall have to contemplate a bit longer on how to get us back.

JINX

Can't you just reverse the thing?

ROOBEN

In theory, yes. It would be easy enough if I were there and you were here. I could simply put the machine into reverse and back you'd come. But with no one at home to run the controls, I'm not quite sure when we'll be getting back.

JINX

Maybe we could notify Mom.

CHARLES

How? Cell phone? Twitter? "Dear Mom, lost in time. Send help". I'd love to see her roaming charges for that one.

JINX

Golly! Just wait till I tell Tiffany Morris about this tomorrow. We will be back tomorrow, won't we, Rooben?

ROOBEN

Oh, we'll probably be back sometime, Jinx. I don't know about tomorrow, though.

CLYDE

Oh man, what is this? I'm hungry. Nobody bothered to feed me, you know. And now you're saying I've gotta wait till who knows when? Don't you ever ask if someone wants to go with you or not before dragging them off without dinner?

CHARLES

Now, Clyde, calm down. You'll get fed as soon as...Clyde?

JINX

(Shaking his paw)

Clyde, you're talking!

CLYDE

I am? I am!

(FOREST ANIMALS begin a moving forward for a sneak attack.)

ROOBEN

Astounding!

CHARLES

I suppose this is part of your Great Dream as well, Rooben.

ROOBEN

No, but it is an intriguing side effect. I wonder how I did it.

CHARLES

I don't care about that. All I want is to get home before midnight.

ROOBEN

Well, you have nothing to worry about as long as the Autoreturn device was working.

JINX

You mean it will bring us back on its own?

CHARLES

When?

ROOBEN

Well, I'm not sure. That's one of the bugs I hadn't quite worked out. But it will happen sometime before the machine self-destructs. I hope.

CHARLES

Self-destructs? Oh great!

CHITTER

(To OTHERS)

Now!

SPORT

(As ANIMALS attack)

Gotcha!

CHARLES

What's going o. . .?

JINX

Hey! Cut it out!

BUMBLE

S-s-s-stay where you are!

FANCY

Don't try to get away from us!

ROOBEN

Let go!

SOLOMON

You may as well surrender. You are under our power.

CHARLES

More talking animals?

MISS FIELDING

(Who has not participated for fear of making a mess of herself)

And why shouldn't we talk, I'd like to know?

CHARLES

Because it isn't natural. It isn't logical. Animals don't talk.

SHADOW

We do!

JINX

What kind of place is this, anyway?

DIGGER

As if you didn't know.

MISS FIELDING

This is the Kingdom of Dormene.

ROOBEN

Dormene? Where have I heard that name before?

CHARLES

Who cares?

JINX

(Realizing SHE has the book in her hand)

Dormene! You remember. That's the name of the place in my book, *Sleeping Beauty*.

CHITTER

(Dismayed)

She said Beauty's name!

SPORT

Just as I thought! Spies for the evil Fortunata!

FANCY

Sit on 'em!

(SHE wrestles CHARLES to the ground and sits on him.)

CHARLES

Unbelievable! I am being crushed to death by a talking skunk. What is this, Disneyland?

JINX

Just a minute, Charlie. They must think we're here to hurt the Princess Crystalline.

SPORT

Why else would you come falling out of the sky, today of all days?

ROOBEN

What day is it?

MISS FIELDING

It's her 16th birthday and no one is going to spoil it for her. No one!

JINX

It's the day the prophecy is to be fulfilled. Wow! What a coincidence! But how did we get here?

ROOBEN

You set the book on top of the machine, remember? It must have activated something, sent us here.

JINX

But why?

CHARLES

Who cares why? Get this skunk out of my face!

FANCY

(Pointing at her tail)

You better not get me mad!

MISS FIELDING

Oh, please don't make her mad. That could be most unpleasant for everyone!

ROOBEN

You don't suppose we're here for a reason, do you?

CHARLES

Ha! Ridiculous!

JINX

I know, let's look in the book. See what happens next.

BUMBLE

Oh n-n-n-no you d-d-d-don't!

CHITTER

Hand that thing over to us!

JINX

Why?

DIGGER

Just do as he says.

FANCY

Or you'll be sorry!

CHARLES

Do it, Jennifer!

JINX

(Handing the book to CHITTER)

Well, okay.

CHITTER

*(As **THEY** all gather around the book)*

Look! It's Beauty!

SHADOW

Yes!

BUMBLE

W-w-w-what's she d-d-d-doing there?

SOLOMON

(Pointing)

I know what that is. It is the spindle of a spinning wheel.

CHITTER

She's pricking her finger!

MISS FIELDING

She's fainting away!

FANCY

(Still sitting on CHARLES)

Is she dead?

SPORT

I've seen enough! These folks have cast some sort of spell on Beauty. They have put her in that magic book to hurt her.

CLYDE

Oh man, you got it all wrong. We got no bone to pick with you dudes, or your princess. We got here by accident.

MISS FIELDING

How could such a nice-looking animal be one of them.

CLYDE

Read my lips, Mousie, we're here by accident.

CHITTER

(Pointing at CHARLES)

How could you be when he's in the book, too?

JINX

Charlie? What would he be doing in a fairytale?

CHITTER

Look for yourself.

JINX

That's not Charlie. It's a picture of the handsome prince who came from a far-off land to save the Princess Crystalline.

ROOBEN

(Peering into the book)

Wait a minute! That *is* you, Charles.

CHARLES

Nonsense!

JINX

You're right, Rooben. Gosh, Charlie, you must be here to save the Princess.

CHARLES

Let me see that.

(To FANCY)

Do you mind?

FANCY

(Letting him up)

Oh, very well.

JINX

See?

MISS FIELDING

Him, save our Beauty?

JINX

(Giggling)

It is pretty funny!

CHARLES

I have no intention of going near that young woman. I'm in training, remember? Although, I must admit, she does look charming.

ROOBEN

Charles, I have a feeling that's exactly why we're here. I had the strangest dream down in the lab just before the machine activated. It was as if, well, as if someone were calling to me for help. I thought it was only a dream, but now I'm not so sure. Maybe it was destiny calling, Charles. Calling us here.

CHARLES

No I've heard everything. Really, Rooben, you *have* gone over the edge on this one. Destiny? Ha! More likely a touch of heartburn from Mother's fried chicken livers.

JINX

Then why does this picture of Prince Charming look like you, Charlie?

CHARLES

Coincidence! Nothing more!

ROOBEN

You've got to admit, it's an intriguing possibility, Charles.

JINX

Gee, maybe you and Crystalline will fall in love. Wouldn't that be great? Can I be your flower girl, Charlie? Can I?

CHARLES

You are talking nonsense, both of you. As if dreams could come true, or fairytales were real. It just doesn't happen that way. Now, if this princess does need saving, I will be happy to put my mind to a sensible solution, using good old twenty-first century common sense. That is the way to deal with problems, Rooben. Not with feelings, and intuition, and prince and princess love talk.

ROOBEN

Really, Charles, don't you have even an ounce of imagination or romance inside you anywhere?

CHARLES

None. And I am proud of it.

ROOBEN

Not everything in the world can be seen and touched, Charles. I hope, for your sake, that some day you learn it.

CHARLES

(Leaving)

Bah!

ROOBEN

Where are you going?

CHARLES

Somewhere to think. You two are obviously unwilling to figure out a way to get us home. The task, therefore, falls to me.

JINX

You better not wander off, Charlie.

CHARLES

Whatever I do, Jennifer, I shall not wander. I have my compass, my calculator, my Swiss army knife, and my superior intelligence to keep me on track. The rest of you should be so lucky.

CHITTER

Don't let him get away!

ROOBEN

He can't hurt you or the Princess.

SHADOW

But he's in the magic book.

ROOBEN

I doubt if he can help much either.

SPORT

We should find Felicity. She'd know what to do.

ROOBEN

Who is Felicity?

MISS FIELDING

She's a fairy.

DIGGER

With magical powers.

ROOBEN

A fairy, eh? I would like to meet her.

JINX

A fairy? A real fairy? Wowie Zowie!

ROOBEN

Where can we find this Felicity?

SPORT

We can take you to her cottage.

CHITTER

Follow us!

CLYDE

Hey! Hey! Hey! What about me? I still haven't been fed!

DIGGER

Felicity always has something delicious in her cupboard.

CLYDE

She does? Then what are we waiting for? It's chow time!

(ANIMALS exit with ROOBEN, JINX and CLYDE. After a moment, BEAUTY enters in agitation.)

BEAUTY

Aunt Felicity? Auntie? Oh, I can't believe I'm lost. I've never been lost before. Never. Hello? Is anyone nearby? Chitter? Sport? Anyone?

CHARLES

(Entering with his compass)

Hello? Rooben? Jennifer?

BEAUTY

(Surprised)

Oh!

CHARLES

Oh, excuse me! I thought I heard someone. . . I beg your pardon, but have you been here long?

BEAUTY

No, I just got here.

CHARLES

Ah, good. I thought for a second there, this thing was on the blink.

(HE shakes the compass)

BEAUTY

What is that?

CHARLES

This? Oh, that's my compass. It shows you which direction to go if you're out in the forest alone. As Vice President of Survival Club, I am an expert at wilderness navigation.

BEAUTY

(Looking at the compass)

Is it magic? How lovely. Could you show me the way to my Aunt Felicity's cottage?

CHARLES

(A little nervous in the presence of a member of the opposite sex)

Sure. Now, which way does your aunt live from here? North? South? East? West?

BEAUTY

I don't know.

CHARLES

Well, you have to know which direction you want before you can use a compass.

BEAUTY

(Disappointed)

Well then, it's not much use is it?

CHARLES

On the contrary, with the correct data, it is an invaluable tool with which to navigate the forest.

(BEAUTY laughs.)

What's so funny?

BEAUTY

Do you always speak in such a manner?

CHARLES

(Taken aback)

Yes. What's wrong with it?

BEAUTY

Nothing. It's very amusing.

CHARLES

It is not! It's intellectual. And scientific. But it's not amusing.

(BEAUTY laughs again.)

Stop that.

BEAUTY

I'm sorry. Really. You see, I've never spoken to a man before. I always wondered what it would be like.

CHARLES

And?

BEAUTY

It's amusing.

CHARLES

That again.

BEAUTY

Are you a prince?

CHARLES

Me? Certainly not. What would make you ask that?

BEAUTY

Forgive me. I know I must sound foolish. But I've never seen garments like yours before. I thought perhaps, you were of royal blood. Such unusual pantaloons.

CHARLES

What, you mean my levis?

BEAUTY

And your tunic.

CHARLES

We call it a T-shirt.

BEAUTY

(Indicating his glasses)

And these?

CHARLES

(Removing them quickly)

Oh, my glasses? I don't really have to wear them all the time, you know. Just for reading or working at the computer.

BEAUTY

Computer?

CHARLES

You know, my laptop? No, I suppose you don't know. Well, it's like a keyboard and a calculator, and then if you have Internet access, then you can learn anything about anything . . .

(Realizes SHE doesn't have the slightest idea what HE is talking about)

Never mind. Well anyway, I wear contacts most of the time.

(HE removes his glasses nervously.)

BEAUTY

You're so wise, so experienced in the world.

CHARLES

(Flattered)

Am I? Well, I suppose I am, in a way.

BEAUTY

May I try them?

CHARLES

Sure, if you want to.

(HE hands them to her, accidentally touching her hand and blushing in embarrassment.)

BEAUTY

(Trying them on)

Oh! Everything looks so strange!

CHARLES

That's the prescription. They were made especially for my eyes.

BEAUTY

By some wizard? As a protection against evil?

CHARLES

Just helps me see better, that's all.

BEAUTY

(Putting the glasses back on his nose)

Well, they are handsome.

CHARLES

Are they?

BEAUTY

Oh, yes. Very.

CHARLES

(Under her spell)

Gee, thanks. You know, you look awfully familiar. Have we met? Ever been to New Jersey? Staten Island?

BEAUTY

No, I've never been anywhere but here.

CHARLES

I could have sworn I knew you from somewhere. Hey, don't think that's a line or anything. I really think so.

BEAUTY

I feel the same way.

(CHARLES begins taking his pulse.)

Is something wrong?

CHARLES

Oh no! No! It's just. . . my heart. . .it seems to be. . .racing. . .unexplainably.

BEAUTY

(Feeling her own pulse awkwardly)

Mine, too.

CHARLES

Must be the altitude. Or something.

(Changing the subject)

What did you say your name was?

BEAUTY

Beauty.

CHARLES

You certainly are.

BEAUTY

What?

CHARLES

(Hitting his forehead)

Beauty? You mean as in Sleeping Beauty? Of course! That's it! That's where I've seen you. In the book! You're really the Princess What's-her-name!

BEAUTY

(Laughing)

I'm not a princess. What a thought!

CHARLES

Yes, yes you are. A curse was put on you as a baby, so they sent you away to live with some old fairy until your 16th birthday. They told everyone you were dead. My sister read it all in her book.

BEAUTY

No, no, it can't be. I can't be the Princess Crystalline. It's not possible.

CHARLES

The facts are indisputable. You're supposed to prick your finger. . .

(BEAUTY bursts into tears.)

Gosh, what's wrong?

(SHE sobs. CHARLES puts his hand on her shoulder.)

Gee. Being a princess isn't so bad. I bet it's got its advantages, especially back here before most monarchs became more or less figureheads. Oh, please don't cry. What did I say?

BEAUTY

Don't you see? If I am the Princess Crystalline, then today is my 16th birthday and the evil curse of Fortunata must be fulfilled before the sun sets.

CHARLES

That's bad.

BEAUTY

Very, very bad.

CHARLES

Hey, maybe this curse is just a phony. You know, a sham.

BEAUTY

No, a spell once begun cannot be stopped.

CHARLES

Of course it can. You can always change the future if you try.

BEAUTY

It's destined. How can I fight against such power?

CHARLES

You don't believe in magic, do you?

BEAUTY

Of course I do. Doesn't everyone?

CHARLES

No! This is all just silly superstition. Like the idea of destiny. . .or ESP. . . or love at first sight. .

(HE pauses uncertainly as HE gazes into her eyes.)

Or any of that Dark Ages drivel.

BEAUTY

What do you believe in, then?

CHARLES

In facts. In things that can be seen. I believe in that rock there. Or that tree overhead. Not in some hocus pocus curse spoken 16 years ago by an old carnival gypsy woman.

BEAUTY

If only it were true.

CHARLES

Look. I'll prove you have nothing to worry about. Back where I come from we've learned not to lose our heads over threatening situations. We've learned to negotiate with each other to solve our disputes. Now, here's what I'll do. I'll go to this Fortunata's palace and reason with her. Kind of a summit meeting. We'll draw up some sort of bilateral peace treaty. Get it all settled out in the open. Once that's done, you won't have to worry about it anymore. I'll be back as soon as I'm finished.

BEAUTY

Don't leave me. I'm so afraid.

CHARLES

Fear is an irrational reaction to a given set of circumstances. It has no place in the scientific mind. It's a neurotic emotion like jealousy, and greed, and hysteria. . .

BEAUTY

And love?

CHARLES

Well, yes. . .love is a highly irrational reaction. Highly.

(Pause, as CHARLES finds himself gazing into her eyes again)

Yes. Well, I'll be going now. Maybe you'll be here when I get back?

BEAUTY

Would you like me to be?

CHARLES

Yes! That would be. . .it might be. . .

BEAUTY

I'll be here.

CHARLES

Gosh, that's great! I mean. . .well, 'bye. Oh, by the way, in case you're interested, my name is Charles. Charles Cogg.

BEAUTY

(Placing her hand in his)

Be careful, Charles Cogg. I put my faith in you.

CHARLES

Wow. Well, 'bye, Princess. Catch ya later, huh?

(HE tries to exit suavely, but trips over a rock on his way out.)

BEAUTY

(Dreamily)

Prince Charles of Cogg. Prince Charles of Cogg. Oh dear. I'm suddenly feeling very irrational indeed.

(FELICITY enters, followed by ROOBEN, JINX, CLYDE, and the ANIMALS.)

FELICITY

Beauty! Here you are. Thank goodness, I was afraid. . .

BEAUTY

I know all about it, Aunt.

FELICITY

What?

BEAUTY

I know who I am.

FELICITY

How?

BEAUTY

The most handsome young man, Prince Charles of Cogg, has told me everything.

JINX

Charlie spilled the beans? That figures.

ROOBEN

Where is he now?

BEAUTY

He's gone to negotiate with Fortunata. He'll explain everything to her and then they will sign a treaty.

JINX

You mean he's going to blab everything to her?

CLYDE

Oh, man!

SPORT

I'll run after him!

FELICITY

No, we must act quickly. It may already be too late. You must take the Princess to the palace. Protect her with your lives.

BUMBLE

I'm s-s-s-scared!

BEAUTY

I can't go. I promised Prince Charles that I would wait here for him.

JINX

Don't wait for Charlie anywhere. He may not be coming back.

FELICITY

Delay no longer. I will follow soon. Go!

BUMBLE

We w-w-w-will!

(ANIMALS exit with BEAUTY.)

JINX

(Under her breath)

Come on, Clyde.

CLYDE

Huh? Where are we going?

JINX

To Fortunata's palace.

CLYDE

No way, man. I'm not going there.

JINX

We've gotta help Charlie.

CLYDE

(Fearfully)

Why?

JINX

Well, he may be a pain, but he's my brother, you know. I have a feeling that this time he's bitten off more than his big mouth can chew.

CLYDE

Your mom'd kill me if I let you go by yourself. Oh man, I guess I better come along.

JINX

Atta boy, Clyde.

CLYDE

(Exiting with JINX)

Oh, man!

FELICITY

(Emerging from the shadows with her orb)

All alone. It's been sixteen years. I hope I can still remember how to do this.
From the meadows
From the skies
Gentle spirits
All arise.
Near us now the cloak of doom
Wraps us in its gloom.

ROOBEN

(Also emerging from the shadows)

Elfin soul and fairy sprite
Hear us as we call
Gather force against the mighty
Evil that would rule us all.

FELICITY

How do you know the words?

ROOBEN

I heard them in a dream, calling me across the centuries.

FELICITY

But you couldn't. Only those of elfin ancestry can hear the fairy incantation. Who were your parents?

ROOBEN

I never knew. I was left on the steps of an orphanage by a woman calling herself my godmother.

FELICITY

A changeling child. Then the peril must indeed be great if even the forces of the future have been called forth. Fortunata's power must be gathering strength so mighty that it will affect the course of the world if she is not stopped. Why else would you be here?

ROOBEN

(Producing his own orb)

It doesn't matter why. It matters only that I *am* here.

BOTH

(As all FAIRIES gather, dancing to the song)

Help us, hear us

Send your power

Through craggy ridge and leafy bower

Give light to this our darkest hour

That love may conquer all.

BLACKOUT**END OF ACT ONE**

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE:

Outside FORTUNATA's castle. There is a medieval wall and a door with a huge knocker. Perched on each side of the door are two SPIDERS, frozen like statues.

AT RISE:

CHARLES enters reading from a colorful travel guidebook.

CHARLES

(Reading)

“Take Evil Avenue – for what seems an eternity” – What kind of guidebook is this?

(HE reads again)

“Take Evil Avenue to Lucifer Lane.” All right, did that. “Take an immediate left onto Wicked Way.” Wicked Way. Wicked Way. Well, this must be it.

(Again reading)

“666 Wicked Way is the longtime residence of the evil Sorceress, Fortunata.” Okay, so where is the street number? What else does it say? “This castle is a fine example of modern 9th century architecture in the Plutonian style. It was built in 853 at a cost of . . .”

(Tosses the book aside)

Trivial nonsense! That dwarf could have just sold me a simple map instead of a lot of worthless prattle.

(HE sees the door.)

Ohh. Well, this has to be the place. And look at it. Such a cliché. Straight out of a fairytale.

(HE steps boldly forward and raises his hand as if to knock at the door.

1ST SPIDER comes to life and shoots out an imaginary web thread that “captures” CHARLES’ arm and freezes it in mid air.)

1ST SPIDER

No need to knock.

CHARLES

(Startled)

Hey! I thought you were a statue! Nice trick! You nearly scared me to death. If you could just release my arm so I could. . .

2ND SPIDER

(Coming to life and trapping his other arm)

There’s no need to knock because we already know you’re here.

1ST SPIDER

We’ve been watching you.

CHARLES

Ahhh! There are two of you! Let go of my arms at once.

2ND SPIDER

Such tender, juicy-looking arms.

CHARLES

Stringy. No meat on them, just skin and bones, really.

1ST SPIDER

Ohhh, you mustn't feel anxious. We're so very happy to see you.

2ND SPIDER

To welcome you.

1ST SPIDER

We love visitors.

2ND SPIDER

Especially dinner guests.

CHARLES

I have no intention of staying for dinner. I'm here on business. I wish to speak with the proprietress. Is she in?

2ND SPIDER

She may be.

1ST SPIDER

She may not.

2ND SPIDER

What do we know?

1ST SPIDER

We're just hangers-on!

(SPIDERS perform a dance of entrapment. At the end, CHARLES, his arms now glued to his sides, spins, as though he is being bound like a mummy by their threads. Suddenly, FORTUNATA appears at the door.)

2ND SPIDER

I've got him!

1ST SPIDER

No, I've got him!

2ND SPIDER

I got him first!

1ST SPIDER

But I saw him first!

FORTUNATA

Release him!

*(SPIDERS shriek with terror, then scurry, cringing, to their original positions.
CHARLES spins as if being unwound.)*

SPIDERS

Yes, mistress! We obey!

FORTUNATA

(Eying CHARLES with curiosity)

Well, well, well. A visitor. Not an everyday occurrence. Please forgive my greeters, young man. They have a tendency to be somewhat smothering in their eagerness to hospitable.

CHARLES

(Overly confident)

Nothing I couldn't handle, I assure you, madam. Well, to business. I assume I am speaking with Fortunata, the. . .uh. . . "evil sorceress", as they call you.

FORTUNATA

Do they?

CHARLES

Well, only in the most respectful way, I'm sure.

FORTUNATA

I am Fortunata.

CHARLES

Oh! Terrific! I could tell just by look. . .uh. . .A pleasure to make your acquaintance, madam.

FORTUNATA

And you are?

CHARLES

Oh! Forgive me. My name is Charles Cogg, and I am here to. . .

FORTUNATA

From which kingdom have you come?

CHARLES

Me? Oh, well, New Jersey originally. Now I live on Staten Island. Bur that really has no. . .

FORTUNATA

(Frowning)

Staten Island? I do not know that kingdom.

CHARLES

Oh sure you do. Part of New York City? Where the ferries go, you know?

FORTUNATA

Fairies? Are they good or bad?

CHARLES

I don't know. More like old and leaky.

FORTUNATA

And if you will forgive my inquisitiveness, Master Cogg, how did you find your way to me?

CHARLES

I am here on a mission of peace.

FORTUNATA

Really?

CHARLES

Well, it's rather a long story. You see, I'm originally from the 21st century. That is, I still am. At least I hope I am. Will be. Again.

(JINX and CLYDE enter unnoticed.)

FORTUNATA

A visitor from the future. How very intriguing.

JINX

(Aside to CLYDE)

There he is. And that must be Fortunata. Oh Clyde, we may be too late!

CHARLES

You see, the 21st century, luckily for those of us fortunate enough to live in it, is a time of science, and reason, and logic, and we have proved beyond all doubt, that all this enchantment stuff that you people are so hung up on is. . .er. . .was. . .er. . .is. . .just a load of superstitious hogwash!

JINX

He's gonna blow it!

CLYDE

Oh man, how did you get such an idiot for a brother?

FORTUNATA

Enchantment is all “hogwash”, you say?

CHARLES

Now, now, no offense. These are unenlightened times, to be sure. But isn't it time to come out into the open and confess that you, Madam Fortunata, “evil sorceress”, have been pulling the wool over everybody's eyes all these years? I know you don't have any power, you know you don't have any power. . .

FORTUNATA

(Stroking SPIDERS like dogs)

You think not?

CHARLES

Oh, come on. The fact is, you've whipped this whole kingdom into a frenzy just by being spooky and loud and melodramatic. I suppose all those curses you have put on them could come true, simply because they believe they will. We in the 21st century call it the power of suggestion.

FORTUNATA

How fascinating.

CHARLES

Why, thank you. You are taking this very well. Now, specifically about this situation – completely out of hand – concerning the Princess Crystalline.

JINX

(Aside)

No, no, no!

FORTUNATA

(Suddenly alert)

The Princess? The Princess is dead.

CHARLES

No, no, no, she's not! She is alive and well. Very well. But all upset over this silly spell thing.

FORTUNATA

(Angrily to SPIDERS)

So, I have been misinformed! The Princess lives.

CHARLES

I guarantee you I was chatting with her exactly. . .

(Looks at his watch, shakes it, realizes it isn't working)

Less than an hour ago. But the point is, everyone around here is convinced that she is going to prick her finger on a spinning wheel and die from it sometime today. Ridiculous mumbo jumbo hokum.

FORTUNATA

Today is her 16th birthday. The day the curse must be fulfilled.

CHARLES

Absurd.

FORTUNATA

I am very, very glad you came to see me today. I might have missed out on the celebration.

CHARLES

That's the spirit! You're really a very reasonable person. You've gotten some bad P.R. down in the village, but I think we can turn that around. Here's my idea. You should go down to the main castle there, or wherever, and declare a truce.

FORTUNATA

Make peace with my detractors.

CHARLES

Exactly! Make an announcement that all your various curses were really not meant to be taken seriously and that everyone should just go home and relax and forget about all of this superstitious baloney.

FORTUNATA

Ah!

CHARLES

Maybe you should throw in a nice blanket apology for all the unnecessary anxiety you've created over the years. Avoid any possibility of a nasty lawsuit. Then we'll formalize it later with a treaty. How does that sound?

FORTUNATA

Excellent. And very charming.

JINX

She sounds convinced.

CLYDE

What's up with that?

FORTUNATA

But first, Charles, I must apologize to the Princess personally. To salve the wounds of our long estrangement. But we've been so out of touch, I wouldn't know where to find her. Would you?

CLYDE

Oh man, she's jivin' him.

JINX

(Aside to herself)

Keep your mouth shut, Charlie.

CHARLES

I'm not sure I should tell you.

FORTUNATA

Don't you trust me? Why, Charles, I am a changed woman because of you.

CHARLES

Castle first. That's the deal.

FORTUNATA

(With the look of someone eating poison)

Please. . .Charles?

CHARLES

(Shaking his head)

Uh-uh. Sorry. No can do.

CLYDE

(Aside)

Atta boy, Chuck!

FORTUNATA

(Her tone changes abruptly. SHE moves slowly toward CHARLES, who backs away uncertainly.)

Tell me, Charles!

CHARLES

Hey, are you trying to get pushy with me? My lips are sealed on this. Absolutely.

FORTUNATA

(Placing her hand on his shoulder and hissing with impatience)

Where is she?

(SHE waves her hand hypnotically before his eyes.)

CHARLES

What is this? A spell? I told you I don't believe in that stuff. Ha, ha, ha. Wasted on Yours Truly, I'm afraid.

FORTUNATA

(Making a quick gesture. CHARLES is immediately under her spell.)

Tell me now.

CHARLES

Small meadow clearing in the Whispering Woods. From this point, 30 degrees North, by 43 degrees West.

(HE mechanically takes out his compass and checks it like a robot.)

As the crow flies.

FORTUNATA

Thank you, Charles. You have helped me more than you can possibly know.

(SHE laughs evilly, then turns to the SPIDERS.)

My pets. I am going visiting. I am through with him.

(SHE gestures to CHARLES who is frozen stiff as a zombie.)

Do with him as you please.

(SPIDERS hop about in delight as FORTUNATA exits.)

1ST SPIDER

Dinnertime!

2ND SPIDER

He's mine, you know.

1ST SPIDER

Oh no you don't. He's mine!

2ND SPIDER

You got the lost elf.

1ST SPIDER

You got the wandering minstrel.

2ND SPIDER

The minstrel was stringy. Not worth the trouble. And what about the Christmas carolers? You got all of them. You didn't even share one with me.

1ST SPIDER

That was years ago!

2ND SPIDER

It was Christmas Eve! Where was your holiday spirit?

1ST SPIDER

Well, this one's mine!

2ND SPIDER

I'm the one who nabbed him!

(THEY begin to tussle.)

JINX

Clyde, this is our chance! Let's grab him!

(THEY run to CHARLES who is still in a trance, and lead him off.)

CHARLES

Take Evil Avenue all the way to Ratskull Road. Make a right at the Enchanted Tar Pits.

JINX

Charlie, snap out of it. We're saving your life, you dumbhead. Lucky for you the Princess isn't where you left her. That ought to keep Fortunata off the track for awhile, at least.

2ND SPIDER

(As THEY wrestle)

I let you have the yodeling goatherd!

1ST SPIDER

You just couldn't catch him!

CLYDE

(THEY exit as SPIDERS roll on the ground, shouting and clawing.)

Come on. Let's get outta here!

BLACKOUT**END OF ACT TWO, SCENE ONE**

ACT TWO SCENE TWO*Throne Room of the Palace.***AT RISE:***LILY, MISETTE, PETRA, and BRINDL
bustle around excitedly.***LILY**

Hurry, ladies. It's nearly sundown.

MISETTE

And then, such a celebration!

PETRA

The first one in so many years.

MISETTE

Sad, sad, years.

BRINDL

Why the sudden celebration, Lily?

LILY

Well, it has been sixteen years since the tragedy.

MISETTE

Perhaps King Nugent has decided it is time to forget.

PETRA

We can never do that, Misette.

LILY

Ladies! It is not for us to question his majesty's motives. It is only for us to prepare for the party.

BRINDL

Everything must be perfect.

MISETTE

Have we remembered everything?

LILY

Are the flowers arranged?

MISETTE

Done.

The tapestries dusted?
LILY

Twice.
PETRA

Aren't you going to ask me?
BRINDL

About what?
LILY

The invitations!
BRINDL

Did you send them?
LILY

Of course, Lily. And this time I even sent one to Fortunata.
BRINDL

What?
PETRA

Oh Brindl, you didn't!
MISSETTE

Just joking.
BRINDL

(A honking trumpet sounds.)

What was that?
LILY

OLD HAROLD
(Now sixteen years older)
That was me. Harold. Remember?

LILY
How could we forget?
(HAROLD honks again.)
Don't tell me your cousin is still sick.

OLD HAROLD

Him? No, he got another job in the next kingdom. Business was pretty slow for heralds around here, you know.

LILY

Well, you could have brushed up on your trumpet for tonight's ceremony, I should think.

HAROLD

What do you mean? I've been practicing for this day for sixteen years.

PETRA

(Looking off)

Oh, here they come!

HAROLD

It's show time.

(HE honks wildly as COURTIERS enter excitedly)

King Nugent!

(KING NUGENT enters as EVERYONE bows.)

Queen Gloriana!

KING NUGENT

My friends. I have gathered you here today with some very good news. For sixteen years, our kingdom has been without our own dear Princess Crystalline. But today, we welcome her back again. For she is not dead, as you have all believed.

QUEEN

She has been hidden for her own safety. Even the king and I have been kept from seeing her.

KING NUGENT

But at sundown, we will celebrate the end of the wicked curse that has hovered over our kingdom these many years. And our own princess will be returned to her rightful home.

(COURTIERS cheer as ANIMALS rush in, accompanied by BEAUTY.)

CHITTER

Quick! Bolt the doors! Pull up the drawbridge!

QUEEN

Who are these intruders?

KING NUGENT

Guards!

SPORT

Wait, Your Majesty! We are friends of the Princess Crystalline!

SOLOMON

We're here to protect her from Fortunata!

QUEEN

Where is she?

BEAUTY

Here I am, Mother!

QUEEN

(Rushing to embrace her)

Crystalline!

MISS FIELDING

We are most dismayed! Fortunata may be on her way!

BUMBLE

D-d-d-don't worry. We are here to s-s-s-save her!

SPORT

Or die trying!

KING NUGENT

But where is Felicity?

FELICITY

(Entering with ROOBEN and other FAIRIES)

Here, Your Majesty. My friends, our only hope of salvation for Crystalline is to surround her with love.

CELEBRINA

We must all take hands and place the princess inside the circle.

SERENDIPITY

We fairies will weave a strong sleeping spell.

JOVETTE

The powers of evil cannot penetrate this circle of love and we shall all sleep until sundown when the curse will be lifted.

KING NUGENT

I cannot sleep when my daughter is in danger!

FELICITY

Please, Your Majesty. It is the only hope we have. Please, everyone, join hands.

(ALL join hands as FAIRIES perform a dance with orbs and streamers. At the end of the dance, COURTIERS, SERVANTS, ANIMALS, and the ROYAL FAMILY are asleep. One-by-one, the FAIRIES fall under their own spell.)

ROOBEN

(Yawning)

Will it work, do you think?

FELICITY

It is a strong spell. Only love can penetrate this ring of sleep.

ROOBEN

(Sinking to the ground)

I hope you're right.

FELICITY

(As ROOBEN begins to snore lightly)

So do I.

(FELICITY yawns and stretches, finally nodding off herself. After a moment, FORTUNATA enters.)

FORTUNATA

Greetings, my friends. It has been an eternity since last we met. Am I late? I took a slight detour to the Whispering Woods. But no matter. We have all waited sixteen years for this moment and may I say, I would not have missed it for all the wide wide world. What? Asleep? Well, never mind. I shall fetch what I came for and depart quietly. No need for you to rouse yourselves on my account. Ah, there she is, lovely child. Come, Princess. Your final gift awaits you.

(FORTUNATA moves toward BEAUTY, but stops suddenly as if coming up against a wall.)

What's this? Ah, of course. A spell protects her as she sleeps. Well, I shall soon remedy that.

(SHE sweeps her arms as if casting a spell.)

Princess, arise. Come with me.

(Nothing happens.)

My spell has no power? This wall must be built of goodness and hope and . . .

(SHE shudders.)

Love. How to break it down.

(Suddenly, JINX, CLYDE, and CHARLES, still in a stupor, enter. FORTUNATA shrinks into the shadows.)

JINX

I hope we're not too late. Oh Charlie, how could you give that wicked old witch such great directions and then lead us in circles for an hour and a half.

CHARLES

(In a trance)

Two steps north and swing your partner, dos-a-do. Rook to white king. Checkmate. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

CLYDE

(Sniffing at the sleeping figures)

Oh man, what's up here?

JINX

*(Inspecting a few sleeping **COURTIERS**)*

Wow! They're all asleep. I wonder why? Don't they know there's a whole lot of danger on its way? Maybe there's someone awake in the kitchen.

CLYDE

Kitchen? I'm for that!

JINX

Let's go see. Come on, Charlie.

CHARLES

I accept the title of Junior Chess King of the World with humility and a sense of accomplishment.

CLYDE

Come on, Chuck!

CHARLES

But I cannot forget all the little people who helped me along the way.

JINX

Just forget him, Clyde. He's no use at all. Leave him here.

CLYDE

*(As **THEY** exit)*

It's cool.

FORTUNATA

(Emerging)

A wall built of love may be penetrated by love. Hmmm.

(As if commanding him)

Charles!

CHARLES

(Snapping to attention)

I hear you, oh sorceress.

FORTUNATA

You love the Princess Crystalline, don't you?

CHARLES

Yes.

FORTUNATA

You would do anything to prove your love, wouldn't you?

CHARLES

Yes.

FORTUNATA

Bring the Princess Crystalline to me.

CHARLES

But. . .

FORTUNATA

(Sweeping her hands in front of his eyes)

Do as I say!

CHARLES

(Deeper under her spell)

Your wish is my command, oh sorceress.

(CHARLES moves easily through the line of sleeping people, coming at last to BEAUTY. HE kneels next to her, holding out his hand.)

Crystalline, awake.

BEAUTY

(Awakening)

Charles! You came back. You have saved me.

CHARLES

(Zombie-like)

Yes. Yes. Come with me.

(SHE takes his hand as HE leads her out of the circle.)

FORTUNATA

Well done, Charles.

(SHE passes her hand before BEAUTY's eyes, hypnotizing her.)

Follow me.

(SHE leads them away as JINX and CLYDE re-enter.)

JINX

Everyone's conked out in there, too. Hey Charlie, where're you going?

(There is no response from the retreating figures.)

Charlie? Princess? Hey, what's going on?

CLYDE

Check this out. That Fortunata chick is leading them off somewhere.

JINX

No! Oh no! Clyde, we gotta do something. Fast!

CLYDE

Why us? That old witch weirds me out.

JINX

Come on, Clyde. We're the only ones still conscious. It's up to us.

CLYDE

(Yawning)

Sure, sure. Just as soon as I get a little shut-eye.

JINX

No! Clyde! You gotta stay awake!

CLYDE

(Slipping away)

Night, night, Jinx.

(HE falls asleep as JINX shakes him roughly to no avail.)

JINX

Clyde! Clyde!

(Running to FELICITY)

Felicity! Wake up! Fortunata has the Princess! There's no time to lose!

FELICITY

(Groggily)

What? Is it sundown already?

JINX

(Running to ROOBEN and shaking him)

Rooben! Get up. This is an emergency, a 911!

FELICITY

(Now awake)

Where is Crystalline?

JINX

(Pointing)

Fortunata took her somewhere in there. Rooben! Rooben! Five alarm fire! Major catastrophe!

ROOBEN

(Waking slowly)

Who? Where?

FELICITY

Come with me, Rooben. The Princess is in danger.

ROOBEN

(Alert at last)

Lead the way!

JINX

In here!

FELICITY

*(As **THEY** exit)*

I don't understand it, Jinx. What kept you from falling under the sleeping spell along with everyone else?

JINX

Oh, that's easy. I'm never tired. Too hyper. Just ask Rooben.

*(**SHE** hauls **CLYDE** up and shakes him awake.)*

Come on, Clyde, up and at 'em.

CLYDE

*(As **THEY** all exit)*

Oh man!

END OF ACT TWO, SCENE TWO

BLACKOUT

ACT TWO, SCENE THREE: *Another room in the Palace. It is empty except for a spinning wheel.*

AT RISE: *After a moment, **FORTUNATA** enters leading **BEAUTY** and **CHARLES**.*

FORTUNATA

Just a few steps more, my dear. Hurry, the light is beginning to fail.

BEAUTY

(Like a sleepwalker)

Yes, yes.

FORTUNATA

How charming of you Charles, to help me out so nicely. I do hope we can work together again sometime.

CHARLES

Tally ho! Pip, pip! All aboard the Polar Express!

FORTUNATA

Step aside, Charles.

CHARLES

(With a jaunty salute)

Aye, aye, Cap'n!

FORTUNATA

*(To **BEAUTY**)*

This way, my dear.

CHARLES

(With a courtly bow)

Ladies first. Calling all princesses! Ha, ha, ha, ha!

BEAUTY

What is this?

FORTUNATA

It is a spinning wheel.

BEAUTY

Pretty.

CHARLES

(Struggling to come out of his trance)

Spinning. . .wheel? Must not. . .

FORTUNATA

Touch it.

CHARLES

(Still foggy)

Then. . .what?

FORTUNATA

Why, the Princess will prick her finger and die.

CHARLES

Die?

FORTUNATA

Yes. The curse will be fulfilled. And all because of you, Charles. I shudder to think what might have happened if you hadn't turned up at my castle.

CHARLES

No, no.

FORTUNATA

Why, everything might have turned out happily ever after.

CHARLES

Beauty. . .must. . .not. . .die.

FORTUNATA

But no one can stop it now. So be a dear lad and run along.

CHARLES

(Shaking off his spell with great difficulty)

Won't go. Must save Beauty.

BEAUTY

(As if from afar)

Prince Charles of Cogg?

CHARLES

Yes, Princess?

BEAUTY

He will save me.

CHARLES

Yes, yes I will! I won't let you kill her.

FORTUNATA

And how will you stop me? She is under my spell. Surely you don't think you can overpower me?

CHARLES

I will! I must!

FORTUNATA

(With a gesture from her, CHARLES twists around as if captured by an unseen force.)

I have become weary of this debate. Come here, Princess.

BEAUTY

Yes.

CHARLES

(Struggling)

No, Princess! Crystalline. . .Crys! Wake up! Don't listen to her! It's all psychological mind games. Phony baloney hoey.

(FORTUNATA gestures and CHARLES twists again.)

Ouch! You can take control!

BEAUTY

Must obey.

CHARLES

Listen to the voice of scientific reason!

FORTUNATA

(With another debilitating gesture)

Silence!

CHARLES

Umph!

FORTUNATA

The spindle. Touch the spindle. You cannot resist.

CHARLES

(Forcing himself to break free)

Crys!

BEAUTY

(Moving to the spinning wheel, holding her hand out toward the spindle)

The spindle.

FELICITY

(Entering with ROOBEN, CLYDE, and JINX)

Princess, wait!

(BEAUTY touches the spindle just as CHARLES tries to pull her free. With a moan, BEAUTY collapses into his arms. FORTUNATA laughs in triumph.)

CHARLES

No, Crys, no!

FELICITY

(Running to them, followed by the OTHERS)

Princess!

CHARLES

You can't die! I love you!

(Impulsively, CHARLES kisses BEAUTY. At that moment, lightning flashes, thunder roars, EVERYONE begins shaking, then THEY all vanish into blackness.)

END OF ACT TWO, SCNE THREE

BLACKOUT

ACT TWO, SCENE FOUR: *The Basement of the Cogg House on Staten Island*

AT RISE: *CHARLES and BEAUTY are locked in the same kiss. After a moment, BEAUTY opens her eyes.*

BEAUTY

(Reviving)

Charles! Oh, Charles

(SHE kisses him.)

CHARLES

Crys! You're alive!

BEAUTY

I knew you would save me.

CHARLES

I . . . I guess I did. Somehow.

BEAUTY

Where are we?

CHARLES

(Looking around joyfully)

Hey! We're back home. In the 21st century. I guess the time machine must have brought us back! This is our good old basement! There's the good old workbench, and all of Rooben's good old junk, and pretty soon I'll hear Mother's good old shriek calling me up to bed. Isn't it beautiful?

BEAUTY

Yes, but very strange.

CHARLES

Strange? Not at all. Ordinary, really. Nothing special. But right now, it looks beautiful! Hey, where's everyone else? Rooben? Jennifer? Clyde?

ROOBEN

(Emerging from under the workbench and bumping his head)

We're here, we're here. Ouch! A little shaken, but all-in-all, just fine.

(FELICITY, JINX, and CLYDE also emerge, tousled and wide-eyed. CLYDE does not stand.)

BEAUTY

(Rushing to FELICITY)

Oh, Auntie!

FELICITY

My dearest child!

JINX

Wowie jowie!

FELICITY

Gracious me! What an experience!

CHARLES

Rooben! You're a genius!

ROOBEN

That auto-return button worked like a gem. And at a most fortuitous moment, too, by George!

JINX

It's great to be back, huh, Clyde?

CLYDE

Ahoo!

JINX

Clyde? What happened?

CLYDE

(Morunfully)

Ahoo!

ROOBEN

Now that he's back, he can't talk anymore. He's just a plain old ordinary dog again.

JINX

Not to me. You're always special to me, Clyde. Even if you can't understand a word I say.

(CLYDE whimpers.)

CHARLES

Back in the good old, rational, 21st century! I feel like a new man. I can't wait to show you around *my* world, Crys. We've got cars and computers and tv's and cellphones. You won't believe it. We can fly to Mars and dive to the bottom of the ocean. I can't wait to show you the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building and everything. You'll love it.

FELICITY

Oh dear. I feel a bit overwhelmed. Won't we be terribly. . .out of place?

CHARLES

Don't worry, I'll take care of you.

JINX

After he empties the trash. And makes his bed.

CHARLES

We just need to get you some new clothes and you'll both fit right in. You don't want to go back there. Why, here, you can be master of your own fate. No more magic, no more ridiculous curses. Here you only fall asleep because you're sleepy.

JINX

(Gloomily)

Or your mom says you have to.

CHARLES

Nothing to be afraid of. You're free.

(Suddenly FORTUNATA appears at the top of the basement stairs.)

FORTUNATA

Greetings, friends.

(OTHERS shrink back in horror.)

I trust I didn't startle you. Forgive me, Charles, I let myself in at your castle door. It seems I landed a bit short of my destination. My, my, my! What could be more amusing than running into old acquaintances when traveling far from home in a foreign land.

JINX

(As CLYDE growls menacingly)

How did you get here?

ROOBEN

The time machine must have brought her, too.

FORTUNATA

I am thrilled with the opportunity to actually see Staten Island, Charles. I am already quite taken with its beauty. And I had the most extraordinary journey. Mr. Peasley, I admire your work. I am inspired by the exciting potential of your device. We should talk.

ROOBEN

I'd destroy it before I'd let you near it.

FELICITY

Leave us in peace. Surely you can find no evil to do here.

FORTUNATA

On the contrary. I sense inspiration all around me. There are wonderfully diabolical things happening in this land of yours and I crave to be a part of them. I long to make my own. . .contribution.

(SHE holds up a copy of the New York Times.)

Oh, I hope you don't mind, Charles. I picked up this interesting journal as I came in. Someone must have simply thrown it in your entryway. Fascinating reading. But perhaps you can help me, Charles, with some of the words that are foreign to me. For example, what is this word "nuclear"?

CHARLES

Oh no you don't. You wouldn't fit into the 21st century for five minutes.

ROOBEN

No, Charles, you're wrong. She could do very well here, indeed. Horribly, terribly well.

JINX

We have to stop her!

FORTUNATA

(Suddenly vicious)

You tried that once, little girl. I have no intention of being thwarted twice! Now, let me see. As we seem to be here in a cellar, how would you all enjoy being *rats* for a few hundred years?

(SHE raises her arms as if to cast a spell.)

Starting with you, Charles.

CHARLES

Nooooo. . .

FORTUNATA

A rat is too impressive. You're really more of a mouse, aren't you Charles?

CHARLES

(Sinking to his knees)

Mercy! Mercy!

FORTUNATA

I'm afraid not, Charles. Mercy is one thing I have never put much faith in.

CHARLES

Ohhhhhhh. . .

Stop!

BEAUTY

Princess!

FELICITY

I command it!

BEAUTY

Command? Well, well. Our shy little princess has found some spirit. How very adorable.

FORTUNATA

You heard me!

BEAUTY

Challenge me, will you?

FORTUNATA

(SHE lunges for BEAUTY. THEY struggle, finally knocking against the time machine. BEAUTY escapes just as the machine activates. FORTUNATA vanishes amid thunder, lightning, and her blood-curdling screams.)

She's gone!

JINX

(As the lights come back on)

The machine whisked her off.

ROOBEN

Freaky!

JINX

You saved me, Crys.

CHARLES

And you saved me.

BEAUTY

You just took command.

CHARLES

I felt so strong. So sure of myself. So independent.

BEAUTY

You were!

CHARLES

ROOBEN

At least Fortunata is gone.

FELICITY

She must be back in Dormene. I shudder to think of the havoc she will wreak now.

JINX

(Looking at the machine)

Hey, look! She didn't go to Dormene!

ROOBEN

How do you know?

JINX

See? The newspaper was lying across the machine just like my book was. It's opened to this story on the dinosaurs.

FELICITY

Dinosaurs?

JINX

Yep. We sent her back five million years!

ROOBEN

Let her try to work her spells on a tyrannosaurus rex or two.

JINX

Jeesh! I'm starved! How 'bout a snack?

CLYDE

(Enthusiastically)

Ahoo! Ahoo!

JINX

Sure, Clyde! Double rations for you, old man.

CHARLES

Great! Say, Crys! How'd you like a grilled cheese on rye? Or a PB and J sandwich and cold glass of milk? Maybe something simpler to start off. How about some chips and salsa? Whatever, you'll have plenty of time to try everything.

(BEAUTY is silent.)

Crys? Is something wrong?

BEAUTY

Mr. Peasely? Does that machine of yours have enough strength left to send me home?

CHARLES

What?

ROOBEN

I'm sure it does, if that's what you want.

CHARLES

No!

BEAUTY

Charles, I apologize. I think the things you have described sound wondrous and exciting. And I especially think you're wondrous and exciting. But I must return to my kingdom.

CHARLES

Haven't you been listening to me? You're a billion times better off here. With me. Sure, it might be scary at first, but I'll protect you. I'll teach you all about the modern way of living. I promise I will never stop taking care of you.

BEAUTY

I believe you. But here I would be dependent on you for everything. I wouldn't be able to make my own way.

CHARLES

You wouldn't have to. I'd do it all for you. Gladly.

BEAUTY

But Charles, you've already taught me that I should choose my own destiny. Use my own power to overcome all the things that frighten me. I have learned just how strong I am.

CHARLES

Yes, but what do you have to go back there?

BEAUTY

Because Dormene is my home. It's my proper time. Here, I am, and always will be, hopelessly out of step. I could never catch up with all the things everyone else would take for granted. But back there, I can take what I've learned – from you, Charles – and make changes. Perhaps even make a difference. I belong there, Charles.

CHARLES

Then I'll go with you.

BEAUTY

Will you? Oh, Charles, I am so happy!

ROOBEN

Think about it, Charles. No electricity, no Internet connections. Not even so much as a Big Mac for dinner. Would you really be satisfied?

JINX

Besides the fact that Mom would kill you.

BEAUTY

You would be my prince. We would rule Dormene together.

CHARLES

I . . . I . . .

JINX

Charlie!

CHARLES

I'm sorry, Crys. It wouldn't work. I'd feel just as out of place there as you'd be here.

(To FELICITY)

I suppose you'll go, too?

FELICITY

Well, yes, I really think I should. But I . . .

(SHE looks at ROOBEN.)

ROOBEN

Yes, you should. And I should, too.

CHARLES

What?

JINX

Rooben!

ROOBEN

You know how frustrated I am here. How I couldn't pay the rent to save my life? How a toaster was a thing of mystery to me? That's because I was out of time and out of place. I discovered my elfin ancestry in Dormene. I belong there. And there's on more reason.

CHARLES

What?

ROOBEN

(Taking FELICITY's hand)

I belong wherever Felicity is.

FELICITY

Oh, Rooben!

JINX

(With sudden resolve)

I'm going, too!

CHARLES

No way! You've got a book report due on Wednesday.

JINX

I don't care.

ROOBEN

No, Jinx. You must stay with your family. You're a splendid, magical person, Jinx.

JINX

So...?

ROOBEN

This world awaits the wonderful things you will do for it.

JINX

(Giving in)

Oh, Rooben. I'm gonna miss you.

ROOBEN

Me, too.

CHARLES

(Unhappily)

All right then. Fine. I guess this is good-bye. What are you all standing around for? Have a nice trip.

BEAUTY

Charles, please don't be hurt.

CHARLES

I'm not! Why should I be hurt? Who knows, I may just make a better time machine of my own and come for a visit. Maybe I'll drop in on Spring Break, if I don't have Junior Chess Club.

ROOBEN

That's another thing. I'm taking my plans for the machine, and after we get to Dormene, I'm destroying them.

CHARLES

You can't do that! Rooben, this invention is important! It'll stand the world on its ear!

ROOBEN

The world is too fragile a place for that. You and I and Jinx and all of us – I think we should use our imaginations to make things stronger, better, safer, before we begin recklessly fooling around with something like this.

(HE touches the machine fondly.)

And I want you to destroy the machine once we're safely back. Promise me, Charles.

(CHARLES is silent.)

JINX

We promise, Rooben.

ROOBEN

It's time to go.

(CLYDE begins to whine and scratch at the machine.)

JINX

What is it, Clyde?

(CLYDE whines louder.)

You. . .you want to go, too?

(CLYDE barks happily.)

Oh gosh, Clyde. I don't know if I can bear it without you around.

(CLYDE puts his head in JINX's lap.)

You want to talk again, don't you boy?

(CLYDE nods excitedly.)

Okay, Clyde. Go on, then.

(SHE hugs him tightly.)

Now, get outta here. 'Bye, Rooben. I'll never forget you. That's for sure.

ROOBEN

The feeling's mutual, Jinx. So long. Good-bye, Charles.

(HE extends his hand. CHARLES shakes it without looking up.)

BEAUTY

You are a true prince, Charles. Whenever I hear thunder, I will look up in the sky and say, "There is Charles, the echo of the future." Good-bye.

(SHE kisses his cheek.)

CHARLES

(As SHE turns to go)

Crys, wait!

BEAUTY

Yes?

CHARLES

I've learned something from you, too.

BEAUTY

You have?

CHARLES

(Awkwardly)

I don't really know how to describe it, or even what it is. I'm afraid I'm rather stumped, actually. The thing is, I feel it more here

(HE taps his heart.)

Than here.

(HE taps his head.)

For once. I guess you'd call it. . .

BEAUTY

You don't have to say it. You only have to believe it. It's magic, but it's also real. Keep believing, Charles. Always believe.

(CHARLES nods. ROOBEN activates the machine as JINX puts the book over the orb. CHARLES hands ROOBEN the plans to the machine, and waves glumly. THEY are transported amid thunder and lightning. The lights come back on. CHARLES is staring at the space where THEY were. JINX moves to him and puts her hand on his shoulder.)

JINX

You did good, Charlie. Real good.

CHARLES

Thank you, Jennifer. Of course, I like to think it was simply a culmination of years of training in the art of rational thought processes and strategic calculations, heightened by my participation in both the Junior Chess Club and the Survival. . .

JINX

Come on, Charlie. I'll make you that grilled cheese you were talking about. We've earned it.

CHARLES

We have indeed, Jennifer. We have indeed.

(THEY exit up the stairs, turning out the lights. The machine glows eerily in the darkness.)

BLACKOUT

END OF PLAY