

Act 1

Scene 1 – Woodland Glade

(Curtains open, full lighting. Bronwyn and village children on stage. Children are playing a quiet game and Bronwyn is sifting through a basket of washing with her backside to the audience.)

Bronwyn: (to audience) Ooh hello! I'm Bronwyn. I'm the Washer Woman at the Palace. I wash posh knickers which dry quicker than yours and mine. (she shows her underwear to the audience) Posh ones only need a gust through the gusset. Mine linger on the line for at least a week. 'Charity Annie' they call me. (she gives a twirl) I scour the aisles of every charity shop in [local town]. I fight off all the yummy mummies. I elbow them aside, especially if I get a sniff of sequins. I love a bit of bling, I do. 'Cordon Bling' I call this outfit. It makes me plumpious, lumptious and totally irresistible. (she peers at the audience) I was hoping for an X Factor audience tonight, but I'm used to disappointment. You're more Silent Witness. Aren't they kids? More Silent Witness? Is anybody out there....is anybody out there? Ooh, there is life. It sounds limp but it's better than nothing. ...

(Kids shout as someone wins a game they are playing.)

Bronwyn: Oh, do be quiet kids. I'm trying to talk to this nice audience. Well, they're the best we shall get tonight ...until the [local pub] turns out.

(Bronwyn folds some washing)

Bronwyn: My life's very hard. I've got money worries, you see. How much did you pay to come and see me tonight? How much? That would have paid my rent for a year.

(Children jump and run around with a ball)

Bronwyn: (To kids) Kids – you are noisy. Sit over there and stay quiet...

(Kids respond)

Bronwyn: (to audience) Are your kids noisy? I said, are your kids noisy? Well I can't hear 'em. Are there any kids out there? Ooh, that's better. Now I know it was worth dressing up like some extra from Poldark.

Child 1: Dame Bronwyn. Bet you don't know the answer to this riddle. Why is the sea so angry? I know the answer. Nah nah nah nah nah.

Bronwyn: Well Miss Clever Clogs, let me think. Ha! I know. Because it has crabs all over its bottom.

Child 1: Aah - you spoilt my joke.

Bronwyn: Go and feed the alligator and make it snappy. I must say it's nice to see a dense crowd in tonight. Don't they look dense, kids?

Kids: Yeh.

Bronwyn: (to audience) I say, have you noticed I'm wearing my sheep dog bra? It herds 'em together and points 'em in the right direction.

Nic: (Nic calls off stage) Mother? Mother?

Nac: (Nac calls off stage) Where is she?

Bronwyn: (to audience) Just ignore them. I do. Do you know, I'll be thirty something shortly and you'll have noticed I've all the womanly charms a man could desire. (she parades the stage)

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Nic: (call off stage) Mother! ...She must have gone to (local town) for a bit of culture

Nac: (call off stage) A bit of that fishmonger's generosity, more like.

Bronwyn: (she folds and unfolds piles of washing from the basket.) I've been told I'm the smartest woman in [local town]. Aren't I kids? Aren't I the smartest woman in [local town]?

Child 2: (stepping forward) No! You look like bag lady.

(The kids poke fun at her clothes)

Bronwyn: You little varmints! I'm going to peg you to my washing line.

(Bronwyn chases the kids with a peg)

Bronwyn: Now that's enough. I'm all out of puff. Settle down. I said, settle down.

Nac: (call off stage) Mother? Mother?

Bronwyn: Ooh they do get on my nerves. Do your kids get on yer nerves? Thank goodness they haven't invented i-pads yet. If my two got stuck into *Fortnite*, I'd never get any work out of them. (she folds then unfolds the washing). I say, do you know how to tell a woman's age? No? Well I'll tell you. (she counts on her fingers and talks to audience) Well...take her natural bio-rhythms and multiply by her angle of dangle, observe the rule of thumb, accentuate the positive and divide the whole by the figure she admits to and then...make a wild guess.

Nic: (call off stage) Mother? She must be somewhere around.

(Enter Nic and Nac stage R)

Nic: Oh, there you are Mother. We've been looking everywhere for you.

Nac: I said she'd be sorting the washing.

Nic: What's for dinner? I'm starving.

Nac: Yes, we're starving.

Bronwyn: You two have been starving since I weaned you off alpaca milk at the age of five. **(to the audience)** Let me introduce you to my lovely twin boys. This is Nic ... and this is Nac. Identical, aren't they?

Nic: I'm not as ugly as 'im

Nac: Nobody could be as ugly as you.

(Nic and Nac push each other around.)

Bronwyn: Stop it. You're not in the playground now. **(to the audience)** But do you know, their teacher loved them when they were at school? They were the teacher's pets. She kept them in cages at the back of the classroom.

Nac: Aw Mother. Give it a rest.

Bronwyn: I'm only joking. I love 'em really. Twice the joy they were when they popped out. Quite a surprise I can tell you. Let me tell you about it. Fancy a bit of a singsong?

(SONG 1. Twenty Tiny Fingers, Twenty Tiny Toes: Alma Cogan)

(Bronwyn tries to hug her sons.)

Nic: Give over Mother. You're so embarrassing

Bronwyn: You're lucky to have a devoted mother like me. **(to audience)** Life's not been kind to me you know. Not since their scallywag father left. I've tried everything to make ends meet but just when I think I've managed it, some blighter goes and moves the ends.

Nic: The last time I saw Father he helped me Google something for my homework.

(Bronwyn shoves Nic hard)

Bronwyn: No he didn't.

Nic: Yes he did.

(Bronwyn shoves Nic again.)

Bronwyn: You stupid boy. Google hasn't been invented.

Nic: Oh no. That's right. The last time I saw father, he was off to market to get some milk.

Bronwyn: Ha! I remember...Do you know, one day he nearly died from drinking milk?

Nac: How come mother?

Bronwyn: The cow sat on him!

Nic: Did it finish him off? Is that why we haven't seen him for years?

Bronwyn: No. He's ... just ... how shall I put it? Not with us anymore.

Nic: Has he got another woman then Mother?

Nac: Sshh. You'll upset her.

Bronwyn: Who cares? Do you know, sometimes I get so miserable it's like he's come home again. He was a man who could bring joy to a room just by leaving it.

Nac: You must have loved him once, Mother.

Bronwyn: It's so long ago I can't remember. I took him for better or for worse, but he was ten times worse than I took him for.

Nic: Tell us about him Mother.

Bronwyn: Let me think. I do remember we'd only been married about a year when the patter of tiny feet came along.

Nac: Was it us on the way?

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Bronwyn: No, we had huge, fat mice. And *they* ate us out of house and home too.

Nic: Yuk, I hate mice.

Nac: Cheer up Mother. We'll always be here for you. Things aren't so bad.

(SONG 2. Nic & Nic & kids. Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life: Eric Idle)

Nic: There's no point in being glum Mum. You know what they say - it might never happen.

Bronwyn: You're right there. **(to audience)** Not a sniff of a man on the horizon. **(to Nic & Nac)** Do you know, the other night I was getting ready for bed when I saw a man peering through my window. Bold as brass he was. **(to audience)** I felt sure my luck was in.

Nac: **(fists up for a fight)** Let me at him. Let me at him. I'll give him what for.

Bronwyn: The next thing, he was banging on my door and I swear me pacemaker gave a flutter.

Nic: I'll crunch his conkers. I'll fight him with my bare hands. What did he say?

Bronwyn: He asked if I could close the curtains until I had some clothes on.

Nic: The cheek!

Nac: I don't get it Mother.

(Nic whispers in Nac's ear.)

Nac: Ooh! Well I never!

Bronwyn: Now boys, you're going to have to help your poor old Mum 'cos I'm sick with worry. I'm getting myself all of a doo-dah.

Nac: What's up mother?

Bronwyn: I owe money to the milkman, I owe money to the baker and heaven knows how much rent we owe to that wicked Chancellor. How I wish we were rich like them lot up at the Palace.

Nic: Yeh! I wish we were rich too.

(Kids start dancing around and making a noise)

Bronwyn: Life can be so unfair.

Nic: I'm sure life is going to get better though. Very soon.

Bronwyn: Ah well. I can dream. Oh those confounded kids. Off you go. You're making my ears bleed. Go and find somewhere else to play. Shoo. Shoo.

(Exit children Stage L/R)

Nac: Don't be too sad Mother. I'll get a job. I'm bound to be good for something.

Bronwyn: You're good for something all right. Things will start looking up when we know what.

Nic: Yeh! You're right Mother...

Nac: I've tried my best. I'm working on the ABC of Money. Shall I tell you how that works Mother? **(He finds A B C D cards *under* the washing basket. See production notes.)**

Bronwyn: **(to audience)** This better be good! **(she searches *in* her washing basket and finds the W card which she hides behind her back.)**

Nac: I've asked for money, that's the A, **(holds up the A card to the audience)**

Nac: I've begged for money, that's the B, **(holds up the B card to the audience)**

Nac: I've cried for money, that's the C. **(holds up the C card to the audience.)**

Nac: And I've dreamed of money. I haven't got any further yet. **(holds up the D card to the audience)**

Bronwyn: But have you ever tried W for working? **(she waves the W card in Nac's face.)**

Nic: No – he just told you Mother. He's only got to D for dream.

Bronwyn: Well I wish he'd skip a few letters and try the W before we starve to death.

Nac: I'm doing my best, you know.

Bronwyn: I know you are you scrunchy little piglet! **(she pinches his cheek affectionately)** Things wouldn't be such a worry if it wasn't for that skinflint old Chancellor - Sir Ivor Rippingly-Wyndom.

Nac: I loathe him.

Nic: Don't even mention him. I'd put him through the Palace mangle if I had my way.

Bronwyn: **(to audience)** Have you met him yet? He's in charge of all the rents and taxes in the Kingdom...No? You don't know when you're well off. He's so grasping he'd prise the wrinkles off Dot Cotton's face to thicken his soup.

Nac: Yeh. He's a piece of putrified...pernicious... camel's poo. He's, he's ...a glorified, gobslapping... gremlin.

(SFX Drum roll. Enter Chancellor Stage L)

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Nac: He's a toe rag of the highest order, he's... he's...

Nic: He's right behind you!

(Audience participation, 'he's behind you'.)

Nac: **(to audience)** What did you say?

Bronwyn: **(swiftly to the audience)** La, la, la. Allow me to introduce our most illustrious Chancellor, Sir Ivor Rippingly-Wyndom.

Ivor: **(to the audience)** What an ugly looking load of layabouts. Don't think you're going to enjoy yourself tonight. I'm here to make sure you don't.

(SFX. wind noise)

Bronwyn: Charming as ever. Bit of a windy bottom today, Chancellor?

Ivor: How rude of you to mention my little... inadequacy Dame Bronwyn. **(to audience)** And don't think I'm taken in by your silly, smiling faces. You won't be smiling for long if I have anything to do with it, you lot of lazy, loafing *poor people*.

Bronwyn: **(to audience)** Be careful. He's lost so much money playing bingo that he wants *our* money to pay his debts. He thinks we don't know what he's been up to. He's a career gambler if ever I saw one. Careful. He'll put a tax on booing.

Ivor: Ha! What a good idea Dame Bronwyn... meanwhile I *have* doubled everybody's tax for this week. And it's triple tax next week.

(SFX wind noise. The kids laugh loudly)

Ivor: How do you like that?

(Booing from cast and audience)

Nac: Not very much Chancellor Windy-Bottom.

Bronwyn: **(Bronwyn puts her hands over her ears)** La la la. Nobody's listening.

Ivor: *And* I've increased the ticket price for this ludicrous show.

Bronwyn: La la la. Nobody's listening.

Ivor: **(to audience)** What makes you think you can sit there and boo and laugh at my expense?

Bronwyn: Because it's cheaper than going to the *[local cinema]*.

Nic: And twice as funny.

Ivor: Well... how funny is this? **(to audience)** You *all* owe me money. And I shall send one of my minions to collect it before the night is out, make no mistake.

Nac: **(to audience)** He'll be lucky. Tell him, he'll be lucky.

Ivor: **(rubs his hands with glee)** But I always get my own way and I can't wait to get my hands on all your lovely money.

(SONG 3. Ivor. Money Money Money: Abba. Children dance around and make faces behind Ivor.)

Bronwyn: Let's change the subject, shall we? .What brings you to the woods today your highest, most miserly eminence?

Ivor: I'm calling on you snivelling cottage dwellers. To give you an ultimatum.

Bronwyn: **(to audience)** So much for changing the subject. An ultimatum is about the only thing he's ever given anybody - apart from his wind.

Ivor: Everyone owes me rent Dame Bronwyn. And that includes you *and* that miserable Shoemaker. Is he at home?

Bronwyn: I've not seen him.

Nac: Shall I knock on his door and see if he's out.

Ivor: Step aside you blithering turnip. I'd have to go a long way to find a bigger turnip-head than you. Probably about the third row of the audience, I should think.

Nac: Thank you kindly your worshipness.

Ivor: Stand back. *I* shall knock on his door. **(he knocks on the cottage door)** Come out my man and face up to your debts.

(Rufus and Leonora appear, one head at each window)

Rufus: Good day Chancellor. Can I offer you a cup of water?

Ivor: Water. Water. It's money I want, and I shan't move from this spot until you pay what you owe.

Bronwyn: **(to audience)** He's in for a long wait. Rufus hasn't got two bitcoins to rub on his bunions. Did I say bitcoins? That should have been goats.... No, no, I mean groats.

Ivor: Get out here both of you and bring that useless daughter with you.

(Rufus, Leonora and Madeleine appear through the cottage door and curtsy/bow to the Chancellor.)

Nac: **(tugging at Ivor's sleeve)** Madeleine isn't useless your Holiness most Royal. I know a couple of things she'd be really good at.

(Nic whispers in Nac's ear and Nac whispers back.)

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Nic: Ooh! Well I never!

Rufus: Kind Chancellor, can't you give us more time to pay our rent? We only have enough leather to make one more pair of shoes. Please show some mercy.

Ivor: Mercy!

(SFX wind noise)

Ivor: Mercy! Do you think I'm made of money? Showing mercy won't keep the Kingdom's coffers full.

Bronwyn: Nor your pockets! Got a bit of interest to pay on your debts, have you?

Ivor: How dare you mention debts to me. I'll have you know I'm whiter than white. And I *will* collect the rents before the week is out. Or I shall throw you onto the streets.

Rufus: But the King and Queen were such kind and generous people when they were alive. God rest their royal bones.

Ivor: Kind! Don't expect me to be kind. I'm only kind to myself.

Rufus: We need more time to pay.

Ivor: You've run out of time to pay

(Song 3. Refrain - Ivor)

Rufus: The prince would give us more time to pay.

Ivor: The Prince couldn't calculate the country's finances, even if the *calculator* had been invented. All Prince Theodore thinks about is hunting with his Dalmatians... and having a good time.

Rufus: But he'll be king next year. When he comes of age.

Ivor: And until then, I'm in charge. You'll do well to remember that.

Madeleine: We're doing our best. I'm trying to find a job and my parents work very hard.

Ivor: Then they'll have to work harder. I'll be back – make no mistake. And next time I shan't be so lenient.

Bronwyn: Hey – loosen up a bit – give us a kiss! **(she tries to cuddle up to Ivor)**

(SFX. wind noise)

Ivor: I'll have you know Madam, I have scruples.

Bronwyn: **(to audience)** And I'll bet that's not all he's got. **(to Chancellor)** Don't let scruples stop you – I've had the injection.

Ivor: Bah. Women!

(Exit Stage L. Cast waft the air)

Madeleine: Whew! That was a close call. What are we going to do?

Bronwyn: Don't worry about that aggravated old ogre. He's probably got thistles down his trousers.

Leonora: Happen you're right Dame Bronwyn.

Bronwyn: **(to Nic and Nac)** Give me a hand, dears. I've got to hang the washing out before we get a shower. Put up this washing line for me. I'm just going to get a few more pegs.

(Exit Bronwyn. Stage L)

Rufus: Yes. We've got things to do, too. Bye for now.

(Exit Rufus, Madeleine and Leonora into cottage. Washing line sequence. Nic and Nac try to hang the washing line. See production notes.)

Nic: I'll tell you what. If we cut it in half, I can tie one end to this tree, and you can tie one end to that tree.

Nac: Perfect. You are so clever Nic. I've got scissors in my bag.

(Nac cuts the washing line in half and gives half to his brother. Nic ties half to one tree and Nac ties his half to the other tree. They discover the ends don't meet. They try to lengthen it with a shirt from the washing basket. Enter Bronwyn Stage L. She notices the washing line has been cut in half.)

Bronwyn: Where did I get such bird-brain sons? You *both* take after your no-good father. Why did you cut my washing line in half?

Nic: The line wasn't long enough Mother.

Bronwyn: So you thought you'd stretch it a bit with a pair of scissors?

Nac: That's right Mother.

Bronwyn: Not a brain cell between you. **(she makes them stretch out their arms and joins up the line. She hangs washing on them.)**

Nic: **(Together)** Aw Mother!

Nac: **(Together)** Aw Mother!

Bronwyn: And you can stay there until the washing is dry.

Leonora: **(through open cottage window)** Are you sure you want to do that Dame Bronwyn?

Bronwyn: Might as well make use of them. They're not much good for anything else.

(SFX. Sound of hunting horn. Madeleine enters stage from cottage)

Madeleine: I can hear the hunting horn. It must be the Prince. The Prince is coming!

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(Enter from the audience - Theo, Garfield and dogs with village boys and girls behind. SFX Hunting horn. The dogs run around the audience.)

Theo: **(Standing in the audience)** Here hounds. Come here. They are so disobedient. Come here at once. Garfield – get the hounds back before they lick someone to death.

(Theo greets the audience, shakes a few hands and then enters the stage from steps stage R)

Bronwyn: Good Day your Highness. **(Curtsey)** Tis a treat indeed to see your manliness in the woods. How is the hunting this fine day?

Theo: Well enough Dame Bronwyn. Well enough.

(To Nic and Nac who are still covered in washing.)

Theo: Is this some kind of new game you're playing?

Nic: We were just....

Nac: Not exactly ..

Bronwyn: No Sire. They're just helping their old Mum out, aren't you boys?

Theo: Hmm. Strange goings on if you ask me.

(Dogs return to the stage except Boris who sits on someone's lap in the audience and begs and pants.)

Garfield: Shall I fetch Boris, Sire?

Theo: Put him on a lead until he can behave. He's such a bad dog.

(Garfield exits stage steps to find Boris)

Madeleine: I can see him! Look, he's sitting on **(local person's lap.)**

(Garfield brings Boris on stage on a lead)

Kids: Ooh. He's so sweet. I love him. Isn't he cute?

Bronwyn: Why don't I take this naughty doggie off your hands for a while? **(she takes Boris from Garfield.)** He's surely no good to you Sir. Perhaps I can teach him some obedience.

Theo: Whatever.

(Rufus and Leonora enter from cottage)

Rufus: Good Day to you Sire. I'm sorry to bother you when you are out and about with the hunt, but could I have a word with Your Highness? Something is very amiss in the village.

Leonora: Yes Sire, we desperately need your help.

Theo: Garfield, take the hounds to the kennels and I will join you shortly.

Garfield: Yes Sire.

(Exit R Garfield, the kids and the dogs. Boris stays with Bronwyn on a lead.)

Theo: Now, what is so urgent that it must be dealt with today?

Rufus: It's the rents, Sire.

(Boris jumps up on Bronwyn)

Bronwyn: **(to Boris)** Sit down you little rebel. You never do as you're told, do you? **(to Prince Theo)** We've no money to pay our rent and the Chancellor is going to evict us. We'll all be destitute, Sire.

Theo: Surely not. I've known you for as long as I can remember. How have things reached such a sorry state?

Madeleine: It's the Chancellor, Your Royal Highness.**(curtsey)** We think he's gambling Sire. Or drinking at the **[local pub]**. He's losing tons of money. He keeps increasing our rents and no one can pay. We shall soon be living on bread and water.

Theo: I'm sorry to hear that. Sorry indeed. I hold you all in very high regard. Perhaps I should speak to him on your behalf? Gambling did you say? Drinking? Hmm.

Madeleine: It would be very kind if you could help us Sire. **(Boris sniffs around her skirt)** Stop it Boris. You need training in manners.

Theo: Wretched dog! **(to Rufus)** If I wasn't afraid of being sued under the 'Me Too' law Rufus, I'd tell you that your daughter has grown into an exceptionally pretty young woman. She is a credit to you.

Rufus: Thank you kindly, Sire. **(low bow)**

Theo: Leave the rent crisis with me and I'll see what I can do. Good Day to you all. **(to Madeleine)** And particularly to you Mistress Madeleine.

All: Good Day Sire.

(All bow/curtsey)

Theo: **(to Nic and Nac)** Enjoy your game lads.

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Nac: Aw Mother. Let us down. My arms are aching.

(Exit Theo stage R)

Madeleine: Well! What do you make of that? Do you think he'll help us with the rents?

Bronwyn: We best hope so or we shall all be in the soup. The grizzly Chancellor will be back in a few days.

Rufus: **(to Madeleine)** Come my love. I must make the best of the little leather we have left.

(Exit Rufus, Leonora & Madeleine into cottage.)

Bronwyn: **(to audience)** Shall I release them? Shall I? We've had our bit of fun, haven't we?
(Bronwyn unties Nic and Nac)

Nic/Nac: Thanks Mother.

Bronwyn: Have a little stretch, boys. Get your muscles working. **(Nic and Nac stretch and mess around)**

Nic: Aw Mother. That was dead mean.

(Enter village children stage R who start playing with Boris.)

Bronwyn: Forget it Lads. Sillier things happen in...um...(local village)! Now we're going to have a little sing song with these lovely children. Are you ready for a song kids?

Kids; Yeh!

(SONG 4. Nic Nac Paddy Whack Give the Dog a Bone. See production notes)

Bronwyn: Right. Let's get started. **(to Nic)** You start us off. You say Nic.....**(to Nac)** then you say Nac.**(kids)** You'll say Paddy and, **(to audience)** you'll say whack. **(she**

rummages in her handbag for a bone) well... we'll see what happens shall we?
Come on kids, you know the song. Sing up!

Nic: That was fun. I like it when Nac gets all the whacking.

Nac: **(Rubbing his head)** Just you wait 'til next time. We'll see who gets the whacking then.

Bronwyn: Right kids – off you go. Back to your parents. I expect they've got a licence to keep you. **(to Nic and Nac)** Clear off you two. I'm sick of the sight of you. And take this naughty doggie with you.

(Exit children, Nic and Nac with Boris Stage L& R)

Bronwyn: That was fun wasn't it? I love a good sing- a -long. It cheers me up. It's the sort of thing I'd enjoy if we had some nasty virus that kept us home for months. Not that that will ever happen. Will it? Ah well, I'd better get this washing sorted out or I shall have no wages this week.

(Bronwyn bends over the washing basket with her rear to the audience. Enter Woodcutters with axes, making noise – Stage L and R)

Bronwyn: Hi up. Here's Robin Hood and his merry men.

Albert: Weem hardly Robin Hood, Dame Bronwyn. We don't rob no one and we certainly ain't got nothing to give to the poor.

Tat: No – weem just 'umble woodcutters. Trying to make an honest living.

Bronwyn: Wait 'til the chainsaw is invented, Tat. Your whole life will be revolutionised. Brmm brmmm.

Isaiah: Tis not much of a living without this brmm brmm you talk about Dame Bronwyn. Weem down to eating mushroom soup, weem so hungry. Feel like I've been on that five-two diet but without the five. And we can't pay our rents, neither.

Bronwyn: Well, if it's any consolation, we're all hungry and we haven't got the rent, either.

Tat: So what's to become of us all?

Bronwyn: We were having a chat just now. Rufus and me. We're all agreed that those rents are driving us to drink.

Albert: You're not wrong. I'm well over me weekly units of moonshine and I've lost track of what I owe.

Humphrey: Good job we keeps ourselves cheerful with a bit of singing and dancing.

Bronwyn: Hey Boys. Good idea. Why don't you give us a little song?

Tat: Ah. Let's have a dance, shall us?

(SONG 5. Tune 'In Dublin's Fair City'. Country dance as they sing. Lyrics see production notes.)

Bronwyn: Well done boys. **(she sidles up to Tat)** I'm darned if you're not a fine-looking man Tat. You could do with a good woman... like me.

Tat: Hey Missus! Steady on.

Albert: 'er fancies you Tat.

Isaiah: And 'er's footloose and fancy free.

Humphrey: Ah. I heard 'er was loose.

Bronwyn: **(to audience)** They're a waste of space this lot. Not a pheromone between 'em. Oh, look at the time! I'd better get my skates on. I'm due at the Palace and I'll bet there's another pile of washing waiting for me. I haven't got this lot dry yet. Bye everybody.

(Bronwyn exits stage L)

Tat: We best get on with our chopping.

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(Exit singing, stage R "chopping chop, chopping, all the day long." Curtain. Front of tabs. Full lighting. Enter Theo, Garfield & dogs Stage L)

Theo: Did you notice the Shoemaker's daughter? The lovely Madeleine. She's grown into quite a beauty, don't you think?

Garfield: She certainly has Sire, but you shouldn't harbour designs on her. Greater things are expected when you choose a wife. A princess, at the very least.

Theo: And when was the last time one of those passed through the Kingdom?

Garfield: I see your point. I wish you luck then, Sire. With the pretty Shoemaker's daughter. Shall I gather the dogs?

Theo: Wait a while. **(to audience)** Do you know my dogs can do tricks? Children - I'll bet you've never heard doggies sing, have you?

Garfield: Let's get some children up here shall we Sire – they'd like to sing with the dogs, I'm sure. Any children about?

(Children invited from the audience. SONG 6. suggested words are either on stage or in programme. How Much Is That Doggie In The Window: Patti Page. Prince Theodore children and dogs. Dog tricks. Dogs give sweets to audience - see production notes. Reprise song 6)

Theo: Thank you children. **(gives children sweets)** Off you go – back to the family. We must be off. I promised the Shoemaker's wife I'd speak to the Chancellor about the rents.

Garfield: I don't suppose the pretty Madeleine would have anything to do with your kindness?

Theo: Certainly not. You know I have a fondness for *all* the villagers. Some more than others it must be said. Come dogs. Away.

(Reprise song 6 instrumental. Exit all stage L & R. Lights off. Tabs close.)

Scene 2 – The palace kitchen

(Full lighting. Tabs open. The Palace kitchen is hung with pans and pots and general kitchen paraphernalia. On a large kitchen table Bronwyn has a bowl of foam/bubbles in which she dips her hands. Alfie is busy making spaghetti. Boris is tied to a chair leg.)

Bronwyn: (to audience) Ooh Hello! You get everywhere don't you? (gives her outfit a twirl) Got this from (local town) High Street – Heart Foundation! Now, let me introduce you to my friend Alphonso. He de Italian chef with de best spaghetti this side of Rome. He can do anything with de spaghetti.

Alfie: You no tease Alfie. Soon my English be as good as my spaghetti.

Bronwyn: I love a bit of spaghetti, I do. (to audience) Look how he runs it through those long, suntanned, Mediterranean fingers. He's a real hunky Latinino - don't you think? Makes me go quite unnecessary.

Alfie: Why you go *unnecessary* when I around, Dame Bronwyn? I no understand.

Bronwyn: Oo! Just put that pasta down a minute and I'll show you Alfie.

Alfie: What? What you say?

(Enter Rose, Lily and Marigold stage R)

Rose: Teasing Alfie again Dame Bronwyn? One day he's going to beat you over the head with a frying pan.

Bronwyn: No, you're mistaken there my girl. Haven't you seen the twinkle in his eye? I reckon he loves a good buxom woman, especially one without a husband.

Alfie: (to audience) I no like buxomy ladies.

Bronwyn: (to audience) Not yet he doesn't – but he will!

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Lily: You are awful Dame Bronwyn

Bronwyn: (to audience) Let me introduce our three delectable Palace Maids. These young things have all the qualities I possessed when *I* was a young girl.

Marigold: I do hope not.

Bronwyn: This is Rose, Lily and Marigold - meet the nice people, girls. Say hello. (They curtsy to the audience and smile) Once upon a time *I* was all pink with dimples.

Rose: (to audience) Now she's all drink and pimples.

Alfie: I busy. I must get on. No can stand around talking.

Bronwyn: Not so fast my little Italian hula hoop. From what I've heard, you Latin types know how to kiss a lady. **(she puckers up)** I'm a lady worth kissing and no mistake!

(SONG 7. Bronwyn. Kiss Me Honey Honey Kiss Me: Shirley Bassey. She chases Alfie around the table.)

Lily: Stop it. Stop it. The Chancellor will hear you – then we'll all be in trouble.

Rose: Can't you see he's scared of you Dame Bronwyn?

Bronwyn: Scared of me. He's just playing hard to get. I know when a man is playing hard to get. **(she chases him again)**

Alfie: **(to audience)** I hit her with my spaghetti pan and then I hide in the larder if she chase me again.

Bronwyn: Chill, Alfie. Chill. Look, I've been trying out this new soap powder. **(reading the box)** It pampers everything it touches with its luxurious rich soapy bubbles. Come here Alfie. Let's give it a try.

Alfie: **(creeps closer, looking scared)** What you want? I no like rich soap bubbles.

Bronwyn: You lika my rich soap bubbles when I a finish with you Alfie! Come here you luscious pumpkin!

(Bronwyn unbuttons his chef's jacket, revealing a large comedy chest wig and covers him with bubbles. He splutters as they get in his face etc.)

Rose: **(Together)** Ooh Alfie! What a manly torso.

Lily: **(Together)** Ooh Alfie! What a manly torso.

Marigold: **(Together)** Ooh Alfie! What a manly torso.

Bronwyn: Here, let me give you a good rubbing down.

(Bronwyn slaps more bubbles onto Alfie, covering his upper half. She then tries to towel them off.)

Bronwyn: Umm, rich luxurious bubbles really do something for you, Alfie.

Marigold: **(looking through window)** Quick, I can see the Chancellor heading this way. Look busy.

Alfie: **(trying to button his jacket)** I lose my job. The Chancellor he send me back to Italy.

Rose: Stick with us. Just keep your mouth shut. Say nothing and let us do the talking.

(Enter Chancellor stage L)

Ivor: What's going on in here, you lazy lot?

(SFX. wind noise)

Ivor: Up to no good I'll be bound. Chef – just look at you man. Jacket undone – chest hair showing. Why have you got soap bubbles everywhere?

(Alfie says nothing)

Ivor: Answer me, you sloppy heap of pasta.

(Alfie says nothing)

Lily: No English Sir. He speaks no English.

Ivor: He spoke English last time I saw his ugly mug.

(SFX. wind noise)

Ivor: Has he had a brain transplant?

Marigold: No Your Gracefulness. He was just... just... looking for a flea. It was caught in his chest hair, I think. Dame Bronwyn was giving it a wash.

Ivor: A flea. In the Palace kitchen. Get him out. Fumigate him. Don't let him near my food until he's free from pests and pestilence.

Rose: Yes Sir. Certainly Sir.

(The maids usher Alfie off stage R)

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Ivor: Now, Dame Bronwyn. Get your hands out of that bowl of soap and listen to me, you crumpled old bag of wind. I want rent from you and from that idle Shoemaker. Go and get him here this minute.

Bronwyn: Right away, you scrumptious lump of Lordship. He'll surely be at home. I'm on my way to find him as we speak.

(Bronwyn exit Stage R.)

Ivor: **(To audience)** What are you lot booing at? I *love* to be hated. Your British Chancellor only takes 30p out of every pound you earn. Me – I take it all. I'll come down there in a minute and collect my ticket tax if you don't shut up. Oh - and you might like to know – I've closed the *[local pub]*. I've poured all the beer down the drain. So, no more pints for you lot. What do you think of that?

(He blows his nose and simultaneously creates wind. SFX. wind noise)

Ivor: Where is that confounded Shoemaker? I'm going to put his daughter to work in the Palace kitchen and pay her no wages until the rent is paid. Good eh? And I'm going to cut off the water to their cottage. See how they like that!

(Enter Bronwyn and Rufus Stage R)

Bronwyn: **(out of breath)** Ooh me bronchitis. Ooh me chesticles. I'm too old for all this running.

Ivor: You're right there, you old has-been.

Rufus: You wanted me your Wisdomship? (**gasping and coughing**)

Ivor: Nobody *wants you*, old man - but I do want your rent money.

Rufus: Oh Sir – I only have this in the whole world. (**he holds up piece of leather**) This is just enough leather to make one last pair of shoes and after that we shall be destitute. Please have mercy, Sir.

Ivor: Well, when you have sold your *very last* pair of shoes you can give *all* the money to me can't you? And then I shall throw you and your family out into the street.

Rufus: Please Sir. Don't do that. (**he gets down on his knees**) What will become of us with no money and no house? How will I care for my wife and my beautiful Madeleine?

Bronwyn: (**to audience**) Windy-Bottom is a mean old man. (**she gets the audience chanting**)

Ivor: (**To audience**) You lot can shut up or I'll... I'll, put you all back into the EU. See how you like that. (**to the shoemaker**) That daughter of yours. She can come and work at the Palace and she'll receive no wages until your debt is paid.

(**SFX wind noise**)

Bronwyn: Whew. Everyone stand aside. No wages? No wages?

Rufus: Oh Sir. Please.

Ivor: I'll put her to work in the kitchen with that idiot chef from Italy. Then, if she works hard, I might, but only might, allow you another week or two in that hovel you call home.

Rufus: Thank you sir, thank you I'm sure. I know my daughter will try her best. Please be kind to her. She's a lovely girl.

Bronwyn: He doesn't know the meaning of the word kind. Go home Rufus and send Madeleine to me. I'll see she's OK.

Rufus: Thank you Dame Bronwyn. Thank you.

(**Rufus exits stage L**)

Ivor: And now that only leaves you Widow Twankee.

Bronwyn: (**to audience**) I think he's in the wrong pantomime.

Ivor: I want my rent.

Bronwyn: Take pity on a lonely woman, Sir. I'm bringing up my two lovely boys single handed.

Ivor: What's wrong with your other hand?

Bronwyn: It's busy keeping them out of mischief.

Ivor: Money Woman, now!

(Ivor chases Bronwyn around the table)

Bronwyn: I'll tell you what, I'll work on Sundays for nothing until my rent is paid. How will that do?

Ivan: You hardly work at all as it is.

Bronwyn: Begging your pardon Your Windyness-Bottom but I think you'll find I work very hard.

Ivan: Get my name right, woman. I am Sir Ivor Rippingly -Wyndom

Bronwyn: Sorry your Rippingness-Windomly. I will try to remember.

Ivor: You do that. As I said - you *don't* work very hard. How many hours a day do you work?

Bronwyn: Eight hours a day, Sir.

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Ivan: And that's a third of a day. So – there are 365 days in the year which means you only work 121 days. You don't work Sundays so that's another 52 days you don't work. Let's see, that makes only 69 days you do any work. Do you have any holiday?

Bronwyn: Er....um.....

Ivor: Oh yes. Three weeks a year. That's another 21 days you don't work which means you only work 48 days.

Bronwyn: But...no...but..

Ivor: That's just 7 weeks a year you work Dame Bronwyn so no wonder you can't pay my rent. You're a lazy, good for nothing layabout.

Bronwyn: Lord Ripping Windy Bottom - you need a good dose of soapy bubbles to soften you up – that's what you need. **(to the audience)** Shall I? Shall I?

(Bronwyn covers him in soap bubbles and he chases her off stage L. Curtain. Front of tabs. Full lighting. Enter Rufus and Leonora stage R)

Rufus: My dear. This is a very sad day for us. I've tried every way I know to buy more leather, but we just don't have enough money.

Leonora: I know, dear husband. You have done your best.

Rufus: It pains me that I cannot look after my family. Our daughter is to work for no wages at the palace. Such shame.

Leonora: You must not worry so much Rufus.

Rufus: A man is bound to worry when he has failed to provide for his family, my dear.

Leonora: But let's look on the bright side. I have a feeling that good luck is just around the corner.

Rufus: If only. I do love you for your optimism, Leonora.

Leonora: Trust me dear. Trust me.

Rufus: I will try to worry less. Let's get home and make some cocoa while we still have a little milk to spare.

Leonora: We will my love and I shall make the cocoa for you. I do believe there is a teaspoon of sugar left and you can have it as a treat.

Rufus: Has Madeleine gone to bed?

Leonora: She's already tucked up and fast asleep. The work at the Palace tires her out.

Rufus: I'd like to wipe the smile of that wicked Chancellor's face. What kind of man makes our beautiful daughter work for nothing eh? Why should we have to pay his bingo debts?

Leonora: He's a wicked, cruel and grasping man, one who has never known the love that we have Rufus. We should count our blessings.

Rufus: A little money to count would be good too. Perhaps we could have a few blessings *and* a little money. That would be perfect.

Leonora: Blessings are best, dear.

(SONG 8. You've Got A Friend In Me: Randy Newman. Rufus and Leonora)

Leonora: Just think Rufus. If we had lots of money, we could pay the rent and help all our friends, too.

Rufus: Now wouldn't that be a fine thing to do? Ah well, we can always dream.

Leonora: I seem to dream a lot these days Rufus.

Rufus: But we still have each other.

Leonora: And, tomorrow *is* another day.

Rufus: You're right. Let's go to bed dear.

(Curtain. Lights off)

Scene 3 - Shoemaker's workshop

(Over-sized set - see production notes. A low table is set with a piece of shoe leather, needles and thread. A few boxes and a shoemakers last can be added. Lights subdued. Elf music: Moonlight Wings by Fantasy & Dark. Elves appear from different locations and dance and sing. SONG 9 Elves. Do Your Ears Hang Low. The Countdown Singers. Elves jump upon the work bench and start sewing. Refrain Moonlight Wings. Shoes are made. Large cardboard shoes are left standing on the table. Lights down as Elves disappear. Curtain. Front of Tabs. Lighting subdued. SFX. loud snoring)

Leonora: (off stage) Rufus, Rufus. Wake up. I swear I heard something.

Rufus: (off stage) Ugh! What?

Leonora: (off stage) Wake up. I heard something. Light a candle.

(SFX. Squeak from floorboards)

Rufus: (off stage) What has got you so excited at this time of night my dear?

Leonora: (off stage) I heard a noise. It might be burglars.

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Rufus: (off stage) I'm trying to sleep. It's probably mice.

Leonora: (off stage) Wake up! Didn't you hear what I said? We may have burglars.

Rufus: (off stage) They're welcome to anything they can find in this house.

Leonora: Rufus. Get up!

Rufus: Can't a man have a decent night's sleep? Goodness knows I ask for little else in life.

Leonora: Ssh! Stop grumbling. Listen! Can you hear something?

(Enter Leonora with rolling pin and Rufus stage L)

Rufus: Let me go first. I may need to hit him.

(Leonora and Rufus tussle about who goes first.)

Leonora: No, no - I'm not afraid.

Rufus: (stays behind Leonora and speaks timidly.) I'm here dear. If you need me. Right behind you.

Leonora: It's gone very quiet. Can you hear anything now?

Rufus: I couldn't hear anything before.

Leonora: You're deaf as an old coot!

Rufus: Most people are deaf when they're asleep!

Leonora: (**beckons to Rufus**) Come on. Come on. Let's see who it is.
(**Curtains Open. Normal-sized set. See production notes. Lighting subdued. Rufus and Leonora creep up to the workbench, look around but find no one there.**)

Rufus: It's nobody – that's who it is. I'm going back to bed.

Leonora: No. Wait. Look Rufus. Someone has made these shoes in the night. They've made them from your leather. (**she waves some shoes in the air.**)

Rufus: What are you talking about? Have you been dreaming again?

Leonora: Look. Look. They are perfect. There is not one bad stitch.

Rufus: (**Rufus inspects the shoes**) You're right my dear. These are truly exquisite. All my work has been done for me. But the question is...who has done it?

Leonora: (**Leonora inspects the shoes**) They are so fine we shall surely get twice the usual price for them.

Rufus: But who made the? Where have they gone? How can we thank them?

Leonora: I'm sure a fine lady will want to buy these. They are perfect and so fashionable.

Rufus: This is truly a miracle. How has this happened?

Leonora: Who knows? Let's just thank our lucky stars. I think these delightful shoes will sell with ease. What say you?

Rufus: Indeed. We shall ask a very fine price for them and we shall be able to buy enough leather to make two pairs of shoes tomorrow.

Leonora: Rufus. I do believe we could be on the road to recovery.

Rufus: Don't be too hasty. One swallow doesn't make a summer my dear, but we have been truly blessed.

Leonora: Soon the sun will be up. There's no point in going back to bed.

(**SONG 10. Rufus and Leonora. The Sun Has Got His Hat On**)

Rufus: Let's get dressed and get to market.

Leonora: Yes. Let us not delay any further. (**To audience**) See you after the interval boys and girls.

(**Rufus and Leonora exit. Curtain. Lights off. Interval.**)

Act 2

Scene 1 - The woodland glade

(Lighting full. Tabs open. Albert, Isaiah, Humphrey, Tat, Alfie, Rose, Lily, Marigold and village children are all selling/buying market goods. Food, ribbons, flowers etc. The children are playing chase.)

- Lily:** Have you heard? There's been some magic afoot.
- Rose:** Magic! What are you talking about? This isn't La La Land. Even tho' some around here are a bit odd.
- Tat:** I 'erd as the Shoemaker 'as 'ad some visitors. Every night they comes to visit. Little people. Little people what can make shoes.
- Isaiah:** I 'eard that too.
- Marigold:** Get on! You'll be telling us next the moon's made of cheese and hangs on a string.
- Rose:** I must say I thought Rufus had a bit of a spring in his step when I saw him last.
- Albert:** He'll have more than a spring in his step if what I 'erd is right. I 'erd as he's making so much money that in two weeks' time he's going to pay everybody's rent.
- Lily:** Only if these Little People keep paying him a visit.
- Alfie:** What you say? What? Alfie no understand.

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- Humphrey:** Ah. I 'erd that too. I 'erd that them shoes is so fancy that the gentry is paying 'im handsome. Money to spare they say.

(Enter Bronwyn and Boris stage R)

- Bronwyn:** Money to spare did you say? Who's got money to spare? Is he tall and handsome? Let me at him!

- Alfie:** As long as she no get at me!

(Boris sits up and begs for bone.)

- Albert:** Naw, Dame Bronwyn! It's Rufus. They say the Little People is making him rich. They've been visiting him for over a month now. And he's going to pay our rents for us.
- Bronwyn:** Ooh goodie, goodie!
- Alfie:** What you say? What?
- Albert:** It's only rumour mind you.

(Enter Lady stage L)

Lady: **(to Albert)** My man. I'm looking for the shoemaker. The one who sold exquisite shoes to my neighbour. They are the best shoes I have ever seen. Where can I find him?

Albert **(nudges Tat)** Told you!

(Boris sniffs around the lady's skirt.)

Lady: Get away. Get away you mongrel. **(she beats him with a parasol)** Get this dangerous dog off me or I shall, I shall have him turned into dog food.

Tat: Wouldn't mind trying a bit of dog food meself.

Lady: The Shoemaker. Where can he be found?

Tat: Well your ladyship, happen I might know.

Lady: Then take me to him, right away.

Isaiah: No need to go lookin'. He's coming through the copse. See?

(The cast look where she points. Enter Rufus and Madeleine stage R)

Lady: Would you be Rufus the Master Shoemaker? The finest shoemaker in all the land?

Rufus: **(stroking a hand across his head)** I've heard it said - just lately your ladyship. What can I do for you this fine morning?

Lady: I want to order a pair of boots and a pair of your finest shoes for each one of my family. That will be my husband, Sir Walter, my six sons and two daughters.

Rufus: Yes, My Lady. Consider it done.

Madeleine: **(clapping her hands with glee)** Oh Father!

Lady: Can you accommodate such an order before the grouse season gets under way?

Rufus: I surely can, Madam.

Tat: Told you!

Lady: Then call on me tomorrow if you please. At 3 o'clock. Here is my card. Don't use the mobile number because they haven't invented the mobile phone yet. The cost of your work is of no consequence. Sir Walter will pay whatever you require. Good Day to you all.

(Exit Stage L)

Tat: So Rufus. Them rumours is true then?

Rufus: Well Tat, I don't know about rumours, but what I *can* tell you is this – fortune has smiled on us.

Alfie: Someone play four tunes with smiling? I no understand.

Lily: Ssh Alfie.

Rufus: I am selling such fine shoes and in such quantity that I am on my way to becoming a rich man.

Rose: But how has it happened Rufus? It was only a few weeks ago the Chancellor threatened to throw you onto the street.

Rufus: You're right. But a miracle has happened. **(he looks about furtively)** We are having visits every night from a mysterious person or persons.

Tat: Who be 'em then?

Rufus: Who knows? But they sew my leather into the most exquisite shoes.

Albert: Tell us more.

Rufus: Well. At night I cut my leather as usual. When we get up in the morning – hey presto – the shoes are finished to the highest standard, but no one is to be seen.

Alfie: Who this pesto person?

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Marigold: Ssh Alfie.

Rufus: A mystery indeed. And every day I have enough money to buy twice the amount of leather I needed yesterday. Add it up for yourselves. We are well on our way to becoming rich.

Marigold: But who can be making them Rufus? Aren't you curious?

Rufus: I am *very* curious, and I shall investigate at the earliest opportunity.

Bronwyn: Ooh! It could be a man. A handsome, muscle bound hunk. A man who needs a wife.

Rose: **(to Madeleine)** Talking about handsome men - from what I heard, the Prince took quite a shine to you when he met you last month.

Madeleine: Stop teasing. Prince Theodore would never be interested in me.

Lily: I shouldn't be too sure about that.

Marigold: Especially now you have fancy clothes and don't have to work at the Palace.

(SFX. Sound of hunting horn)

Isaiah: I do believe the young prince is coming this way.

(Enter Theo and Garfield Stage R)

Theo: Good Morning fine people. Any of your delicious pies for sale today?

Rose: Try my apple pie, Sire. I vow you'll not have tasted anything better.

(Rose hands a pie to Theo who takes a bite and licks his lips.)

Theo: Umm..... warm and crumbly. So delicious. I would die for a wife who bakes pies like this!

Tat: Madeleine do bake pies. **(He pushed Madeleine forward)**

Madeleine: Please... Don't embarrass me.

Theo: There is nothing to be embarrassed about. You're like a breath of fresh air with your pretty face and lovely smile.

Lily: **(she nudges Madeleine)** See, I told you he likes you.

Theo: And, while I think of it, Good People - I'm dealing with the matter of your rents. I've instructed the Chancellor to hold a meeting at the Palace. Two villagers will be invited to put your case. I shall ensure your grievances are heard.

All: Hurray!

Isaiah: I'll go to the meeting! Let me go and tell Lord Hoity Toity what's what.

Humphrey: No. Let me go 'an tell the sorry tale.

Tat: I think tis best if it twer me as went.

Marigold: I think it should be Dame Bronwyn. After all, she does work at the Palace.

Rose: And she should take Madeleine with her. What say you all?

All: Yes. Yes.

Bronwyn: No problem. We'll go. We'll sort him out, won't we Madeleine?

Madeleine: We'll certainly do our best for everyone.

Theo: And I promise I will do my very best for you all, too.

All: Hurray!

Bronwyn: I feel a little song coming on. Just to wish us well and lift our spirits. How about it everybody?

All: Yeh!

Bronwyn: After you Sire!

(SONG 11. All. Hold On Tight To Your Dreams. E.L.O.)

Theo: I must away. Come Garfield. Good Day to you all. **(to Madeleine)** I look forward to seeing you at the Palace – and very soon.

Madeleine: **(curtsey)** Thank you Sire.

(Exit Theo and Garfield Stage R)

Humphrey: Well, what do you make of that?

Albert: Sounds promising to me. Rufus – with a bit of luck and a fair wind we shan't need your money to get ourselves out of debt.

Rufus: **(to Madeleine)** Come my daughter. Your mother must make you some pretty clothes to wear to the Palace. You can't have an audience with the Prince unless you look your best.

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Rose: That's right. Prince Theodore may ask you out. On a date. You never can tell!

Madeleine: I've already told you – the Prince wouldn't be interested in me.

Rufus: Come along my dear. Time will tell. Only time will tell.

(Exit Rufus and Madeleine into cottage)

Lily: Well it's time we sold something don't you think? Who will buy? Who will buy?

(Curtain. Front of Tabs. Full Lighting. Enter Chancellor Stage L)

Ivor: **(to audience)** Shut up you snivelling layabouts. I'm on my way to collect the rents from all those snivelling POOR people.

(SFX. wind noise)

Ivor: All my gambling debts will be paid after they give me their lovely money today.

(Enter Nic and Nac Stage R)

Nic: Oh help. It's His Worshipfulness the Miserly Ripping-Bottom -Windy.

Nac: You mean Sir Ivor Rippingly-Wyndom.

Nic: I thought my version was best. Good Day your Winderly Lordship.

Ivor: Out of my way. I'm here to demand rent money from your Mother. I've waited long enough. My patience has run out.

Nac: Best run after it then.

Ivor: Bah! Where did your mother find you?

Nic: You shouldn't be doing this. There's a meeting today with Prince Theo. He's going to tell you to lay off us poor cottagers. He'll tell you what's what. You'll see.

Nac: And he knows you've been gambling.

Ivor: Gambling? Me? You want your bumps read. You're a bigger numbskull than I thought. *I* make the financial decisions around here and your mother owes me money.

Nic: I'd pay Mother's rent if I could - but I can't. I haven't any money. Have you got any money?

Ivor: I have money of my own. Yes. Why?

Nac: Will you lend it to us for a little while? How much have you got?

Ivor: I've got £70

Nic: Lend us it for a while.

Ivor: Do you think I'm a fool? I'll never get it back!

Nic: You will. I swear it. Any time you ask, you can have it back immediately - if not sooner. **(to audience)** Can't he?

Ivor: **(Reluctantly)** If you're quite sure I'll get it back.

Nac: You will. You will. **(to audience)** He will, won't he? **(Ivor hands over the money to Nic).**

Nic: Now I want you to take this £70 as part payment for Mother's rent. **(Nic hands the money back to Ivor)**

Ivor: You can't pay with that, it's my money.

Nac: Does it matter whose money we pay with?

Ivor: You can pay with anybody's money, so long as it isn't mine. **(he snatches the money back from Nic.)**

Nic: Well, if you're not happy with the transaction, I'll have the cash back. So that I can return it to you, as I promised. **(he snatches the money back)**

Ivor: Quite right too!

Nic: I'll just count it out to make sure it's all there.

Ivor: Very well. **(Nic counts money into Ivor's hand)** 1, 2, 3.

Nac: **(to Chancellor)** How many years have you been Chancellor?

Ivor: Five years.

Nic: Five eh? **(counts the money)** 6,7,8,9 **(to Chancellor)** How many dogs does Prince Theodore have?

Ivor: 15 when they were last counted.

Nic: 15. Well that's a lot of dogs. **(counts the money)** 16, 17, 18

Nac: **(to Chancellor)** How many staff do you have at the Palace?

Ivor: At least 32.

Nic: 32. Good heavens! 33, 34, 35, 36.

Nac: **(to Chancellor)** I hear you have a special birthday coming up. May I be so bold as to ask how old you will be?

Ivor: I shall be sixty-five. Not that it's any of your business.

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Nic: 65. Now... that's 66, 67, 68, 69, 70. There! All present and correct. Just like I said. **(He puts the remaining notes in his pocket.)**

Ivor: I should think so too.

(SFX. wind noise)

Ivor: Don't know why I even let you touch my money.

Nic: You shouldn't be collecting rents until after the meeting with Prince Theodore. **(to audience)** Should he?

Ivor: Bah! What do that lot know? Numbskulls. Every one of them.

Nac: **(to audience)** Did you hear what he called you? **(to Ivor)** You can't speak to these nice people like that.

Ivor: Oh yes I can.

Nic: Oh no you can't.

Ivor: Oh yes I can.

(Audience participation.)

Ivor: And just to be clear, I *shall* be after your mother. If she can't pay, you'll all be out on the streets.

(Ivor exits stage L)

Nac: Nice one! How much have we got?

Nic: Thirty-five quid. That'll help mother out. She'll think we've found a job.

Nac: Come on. Let's get home before she does and see if her washing's dry. **(Nic and Nac exit Stage R. Tabs Close. Lights off.)**

Scene 2 - Woodland glade

(Lighting full. Tabs open. Bronwyn, Rose, Lily and Marigold and Woodcutters are gathered. They are chattering and looking concerned.)

Lily: That meeting is taking for ever.

Rose: Surely, they can't be much longer?

Lily: How long can a meeting take?

Isaiah: Do you reckon Prince Theo can pull it off? Can he get our debts cancelled?

Tat: Well 'e's the only one what's got a chance. Nobody else can stand up to the miserable old Chancellor.

Humphrey: Yer right there, Tat. I'm going to check the time on a dandelion.

(Humphrey exits stage R)

Marigold: Shall we see if Rufus is in? **(knocks on cottage door)**

(Rufus and Leonora enter through cottage door)

Rufus: Hello Friends. You all look a bit glum.

Leonora I expect they're worried Rufus. About the meeting at the palace.

Marigold: Have you heard any news?

Rufus: No. I thought my Madeleine would be home by now.

(Enter Humphrey stage R)

Humphrey: It's five minutes past the hour of four. Darn it, I've got dandelion seeds in my hair.

(Humphrey brushes his head to get rid of the seeds.)

Rose; It's taking a very long time.

Lily; Doesn't sound like good news to me.

Rufus: Well, *we* have *very* good news for you all.

Leonora: We have.

Rufus: I've been doing some calculations. And if the Chancellor continues to demand the rent money, then Leonora and I can afford to pay everyone's debts.

All: Hurray.

(Bronwyn and Boris enter stage R)

Leonora: What's all this noise about. Have you some news? Is it good news?

Humphrey: It is. It's very good news. Rufus and Leonora have offered to pay all our rents.

Bronwyn: You're very kind and generous friends, and no mistake.

Rufus: Good fortune has come our way and we want to share it with you all.

Leonora: Where is Madeleine? Has the meeting finished?

Bronwyn: It has, but Prince Theo asked Madeleine to stay for a chat. What do you think of that?

Marigold: Ooh! He likes her. I think he really likes her.

Bronwyn: I shall wait for Madeleine to tell you how the meeting went.

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Albert: Let's 'ope the Prince 'as talked some sense into that wicked old Windy-Bottom.

Tat: And if 'e didn't, then I'll bet Widow Bronwyn did. **(to the audience)** I'm dead scared of 'er I am.

(Enter Nic and Nac Stage L)

Nic: **(to Bronwyn)** Hey – guess what Mother? We fleeced old skin flint Windy-Bottom out of thirty-five quid. We met him a couple of hours since. It's all for you Mother.

(Nic gives Bronwyn the money)

Bronwyn: At last! Well done boys. I knew I'd brought you up to be good at something.

Nac: Yeh! Old Farter was on his way to the meeting and he had a pocket full of money.

Nic: We conned him out of most of it, and he didn't even notice!

Lily: Well done you. You're cleverer than you look.

Nic: **(blushing)** Aw – thanks Miss Lily.

Nac: It was my idea!

Nic: It was me who thought of it.

(Nic and Nac push and shove each other.)

Lily: Then you are both clever.

Nac: See!

Rufus: **(looking worried)** I do wish Madeline would come back from the meeting.

Leonora: Patience my dear. The prince may have something important to discuss with our daughter.

Marigold: Let's take our mind off things with a song.

All: Yeh!

(SONG 12. She'll Be Coming Round The Mountain When She Comes)

Rufus: **(beckons everyone to gather round)** You must be very curious my dear friends.
About our good fortune.

(Everyone gathers around)

All: We are.

Rufus: Well. Leonora and I want to share our little secret. Don't we dear?

Leonora: We do dear.

Nac: I love a good secret, I do.

Rufus: We told you about our visitors - the mystery shoe-makers who come in the night.

All: Yeh.

Rufus: Well... we decided we must discover who was calling on us. We wanted to thank them, you see.

Leonora: So we stayed up late one night. We hid on the stairs.

Rose: What did you see? Tell us... what did you find?

Rufus: It was a shock, I can tell you.

Nic: Was it Hob Goblins?

Nac: Was it ghosts and ghoulies?

Humphrey: Was it the Little People?

Rufus: I believe it was indeed the Little People, Humphrey. Three little elves to be exact.

Nic: What do they look like? Are they green and scaly?

Tat: 'ave 'em got big ears?

Albert: 'ave 'em got big teeth.

Rufus: **(laughing)** Calm your curiosity friends.

Leonora: The poor little mites. They worked so hard for us and looked so poor. We decided we must give them something in return.

Rose: How kind you are.

Tat: But what can ye give to Little People? Them's magic int 'em?

Rufus: (laughing) They certainly are Tat.

Leonora: We thought and thought. And then I decided to make them all a suit of new clothes.

Bronwyn: I could look for something in the charity shop if you like.

Rufus: Not necessary Dame Bronwyn, Leonora and I have managed. And I have made them little red boots to keep their feet warm.

Leonora: And now we're going to introduce you to them. You can see for yourselves how smart they look in their new clothes.

Rufus: They certainly do.

Lily: Where are they then?

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Leonora: Can't you see them? Look harder.

(Everyone looks for the elves)

Lily: (to audience) Can you see them?

Rufus: Look under that bush. Take a careful look.

(The elves enter dressed in new clothes)

Albert: Well I'll be jiggered.

Rufus: Allow me to introduce the Little People who have saved us from financial ruin.

(Elves, joined by cast. Reprise Song 9. Do Your Ears Hang Low)

Nic: I've never seen anything like it. Ain't they sweet?

Nac: I'm darned if I wouldn't like to take them home.

Nic: Can't do that you dope. They're Little People.

Rufus: They're magic. They can disappear in a puff of smoke.

Tat: Ah. That's right. They don't live in this world. They only visits. For a little while. They comes to 'elp people

All: That's right!

(Puff of smoke – elves disappear.)

All: Ooh!

Rufus: What did I tell you? We won't see them again. They've gone back to Fairy Land.

Rufus: Ah well. We've had more than our share of good fortune. Now its time to make it on our own.

Marigold: Look. Look who's coming. It's Madeleine. Here she comes.

Lily: And I can see the prince. The prince is coming too.

(Enter Madeleine, Theo, Garfield, Alfie and the kids stage R)

Nac: It's the whole bloomin' lot of 'em! Tell us - what news?

(Everyone bows/curtsies to Prince Theo. The children sit and play a quiet game.)

Madeleine: It's good news. Lots of good news.

Bronwyn: Tell them Your Highness.

Theo: Good People. You have won the day. The Chancellor has agreed, (with a little persuasion,) to write off all your debts. And speaking of debts, I have agreed to pay the Chancellor's gambling debt. Just this once.

All: Hurray.

(Children clap)

Theo: And I'll roll back your rents to the amount you paid when my dear parents were alive. **(to audience)** It's not only Asda can do a bit of rolling back. **(to cast)** How does that suit you?

All: Hurray

Tat: So, Rufus, we shan't need your money after all.

Albert: No, but we shall never forget what a fine friend you are. Shall we?

All: No.

Nic: So where is the Chancellor now? Hiding in the dungeon?

Garfield: No. The Prince managed to talk some sense into him.

Theo: **(to audience)** I threatened to furlough him or even sack him next year when I become King...if he doesn't mend his ways.

Alfie: And I tell him he get no more spaghetti until he become much nicer man.

Theo: So you did Alfie. And he tells me he is a reformed character. No more playing bingo for him.

Humphrey: Best get him out yer then. Let's see for ourselves if he's changed. Hope he's changed his windy bottom.

Nac: I'll go get 'im. Let me at him. I won't be a minute.

Theo: You'll find him in the library, I think.

Nac: We'll find him, Sire. I'm going too. You can be sure we'll find him.

(Nic and Nac exit stage R)

Bronwyn: But there's more good news, isn't there Madeleine?

Madeleine: You tell Dame Bronwyn. I suddenly feel very shy.

Theo: I shall tell the other good news..**(he takes Madeleine's hand)** This beautiful lady has agreed that I can... call upon her. And I tell you - I shall be calling on her often. We are officially... what is the modern word...an item. What do you think of that!

Bronwyn: No dating agency for you then, Sir.

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All: Hurray.

(Children stand to sing. Reprise SONG 2. Always Look on the Bright Side of Life)

Bronwyn: Whew. I'm quite out of breath with all this singing. I shall be down to *[local chemist]* for some throat sweets in a minute. **(she twirls to show off her dress)** Help the Aged, High Street, *[local town]* very haute couture, don't you think?

Nic: Sometimes you're the most embarrassing mother, Mother.

(Enter Ivor, Nic and Nac stage R)

Nac: We found him! We found him! He's says he's sorry.

Bronwyn: Let's hear it from the horse's mouth. What have you got to say for yourself Sir Windy-Bottom?

Ivor: I.....I.....I'm sorry..... OK?

Rose: **(to audience)** He doesn't sound sorry. Does he?

Theo: No. That's not good enough. Say it and mean it.

Ivor: I...I'm truly sorry. Is that better?

All: No.

Ivor: **(to audience)** And you lot can shut up or I'll....I'll.....

Theo: You won't do anything to this lovely audience Ivor. You are a reformed person, remember?

Ivor: Bah!

(SFX. Wind noise)

Bronwyn: Maybe we could get you some charcoal biscuits for your wind Chancellor. But on second thoughts, what you need is a good woman to soothe your ruffled feathers. That's what you need.

(Bronwyn chases Ivor around the stage)

Ivor: I'll change. I'll change. Just spare me the attention of Dame Bronwyn.

Bronwyn: **(to audience)** See, I have my uses! **(to Boris)** Ooo you darling little doggie. Come here to Mummy. Give us a kiss.

Theo: I suppose you want to keep my dog, Dame Bronwyn

Bronwyn: Thanking you kindly your handsome princship. He's a real pal to me. **(she takes a bone/treats out of her handbag)** Beg for Mummy.

(Boris sit up and begs.)

Bronwyn: Looks like Old Wind Bag isn't the only reformed character around here

Theo: **(to audience)** Shall I let her keep him? Very well. You shall keep him. He will surely be less trouble to you than a man!

Bronwyn: You're a real gent your Handsomeness.

Theo: Enough. The time has come for us all to forget the past. Let's give Sir Ivor a chance to turn over a new leaf. What say you friends?

All: Yes!

Theo: And Ivor, you are on six months trial. After that I shall be King and your job as Chancellor will depend on your good behaviour. Do you understand?

Ivor: I suppose so.

Theo: Well said man. Now! Where is my lovely Madeleine?

Madeleine: **(Villager pushes her forward)** I'm here.

Theo: I want to tell the whole world how much I love you and that one day I hope you will be my wife.

Madeleine: I want to tell the whole world that when you ask Sire - I shall accept with pleasure.

All: Hurray

(SONG 12 reprise – All. She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain When She Comes. Curtain. Walkdown.)