

Characters

Hat Trix (M)	-	A conman
Tom Trix (M)	-	A conman.
Prince Extremely-Charming (F)	-	A traditional 'principal boy' female panto part.
Much Put-Upon (M)	-	An orphaned retainer to the prince.
Sidekick 100-1 (M/F)	-	x 2 persons A pantomime horse belonging to Prince
Witch Wickedly-Wicked (F)	-	A traditionally wickedly wicked witch.
Fairy Goody One-Shoe (F)	-	A traditional good fairy who speaks in rhyme.
Tourist 1 (M/F)	-	Few lines only.
Tourist 2 (M/F)	-	Few lines only.
Tourist 3 (M/F)	-	Few lines only.
Princess Gorgeous-Beauty (F)	-	Princess

Act 1

Scene 1 – Theme Park

(Normal lighting, dull and every-day to open, in comparison with the ‘fairy-tale’ tinted lighting required later in Act 1, Scene 3. **Tom Trix enter holding up umbrella in the way tour guides do. Tourists - any amount enter following.**)

Tom: (**Speaks to tourists**) Gather round. Gather round. I’m Tom Trix and I’ll be showing you round the Sleeping Gorgeous-Beauty Theme Park; got your tickets?

(**Tourists hold up tickets.**)

Tom: For those who haven’t booked for this fantastic tour, there’s still a few tickets left. Hurry, we start in a few minutes.

Tourist 1: How much?

Tom: £50 pounds.

Tourist 1: £ 50 quid!

Tom: (**Spiel**) Cheap at half the price £50 pounds!

(**Tourist 1 looks confused but gets out money. Tom takes the money, and puts it in his bag.**)

Tom: (**Sales spiel**) You get a walking tour of the whole estate, with four stopping points; the former formal gardens, the former kitchen gardens, the former stables, and the tea shop where my cousin Hat Trix will be serving his delicious hand-made jam tarts. There’s also a souvenir shop with ample opportunity to buy unique souvenirs, including a map of the bower, and the treasure buried near the princess.

Tourist 1: Is the treasure still there?

Tom: Yes, it’s behind an impenetrable, impassable, thorny hedge through which no steel blade can cut.

Tourist 1: We don’t get to see the princess?

Tom: No. She’s bewitched, and lying asleep behind the impassable thorny hedge through which no steel blade can cut. As we go round, I’ll tell you the story, starting with the evil witch casting a death spell on the princess. The witch you see made a habit of cursing princesses, whenever she was upset. There were quite a few princesses about at one time. Anyway, when she is 16, she will prick her finger on a poisoned splinter from a spinning wheel and die. In the teashop, preserved in a sealed glass jar, you will see part of the original splinter; the other part is still embedded in her finger.

Tourist 1: Yuk!

Tourist 2: (**Foreign accent**) She’s dead? She is a corpse?

Tom: No, a good fairy changed the death spell to an enchantment of 100 years.

Tourist 2: **(Foreign accent. Shakes head knowingly.)** She must be dead. After 100 years, you're a corpse!

Tom: **(Firmly)** She is not a corpse.

Tourist 2: **(Foreign accent)** How do you know?

Tourist 3: **(American drawl. Turns conversationally to others)** You know, people can live to be over 100 these days. My old grammy was 101 years old. She lived on punkin pie, and whisky rye for the last ten years.

Tourist 2: **(To Tom curiously. Foreign accent)** Is she sleeping, is she an old granny?

Tom: **(Slightly ratty)** Who's telling this story! She's not dead, and she's not a sleeping old granny. **(Calmer)** She is still as young and as beautiful as when she fell asleep behind the impassable, impenetrable, thorny hedge through which no steel blade can cut.

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Tourist 1: **(Really helpfully)** Have you tried Tungsten steel? Tungsten steel will cut through anything.

Tom: **(Takes a deep breath; ignores and starts spiel)** Kings and princes have travelled from near and far, and tried everything from dynamite to weed killer. Not the slightest tremble of the razor-sharp thorny twigs, not a quiver of the pink blossom, not a withering of the green leaves has resulted.

Tourist 3: **(American drawl)** Wow!

Tourist 2: **(Foreign accent. Annoyingly persistent)** How you know she's not dead if the hedge impenetrable?

(SFX. Tom's mobile phone rings)

Tom: **(Answers phone. Puzzled.)** Yes? What? Why? **(Reluctantly)** Yes, yes, yes, ok. **(To tourists in apologetic manner)** I'm sorry, but something has cropped up. This tour is cancelled. Keep your tickets and come back another day.

Tourist 3: **(American drawl)** But we've flown all the way from the states!

Tom: I'm sorry, but an emergency has occurred. Please leave by the *front* gates right away.

(Tourists all start moving in one direction. SFX. Tom's mobile phone rings.)

Tom: **(Answers phone. Amazed.)** What! **(To tourists)** Please leave by the *back* gates immediately.

(Tourists all start moving in opposite direction. SFX. Tom's mobile phone rings.)

Tom: **(Answers phone)** What!

Tom: **(Urgently)** You must leave by the *side* gates now! There's no time to lose! This way, this way, follow me – run!

(Tom exits. Tourists follow in panic, making noise with shoes as they hurry)

Tourist: **(Any)** What's happening?

Tourist: **(Any)** It must be some sort of emergency!

(Tourists general hubbub. Exit.)

Scene 2 – Theme Park

- Hat:** (Enters quickly. Looks around) Have you locked the gates?
- Tom:** (Enters quickly) Yes. What's going on Hat?
- Hat:** You're not going to believe this Tom.
- Tom:** Believe what Hat?
- Hat:** You know this cock and bull story we tell, about this being the derelict estate of a once royal family, and how a wicked witch put a spell on another baby princess, so that she'd prick her finger and die when she was sixteen. Just like the old fairy tale, only a different one. But a good fairy used her powers to soften the blow, so that she'd only sleep for 100 years - **(Interrupted)**
- Tom:** I spin this yarn six times a day! Do you think I don't know it like the soles of my feet!
- Hat:** Back of your hand.
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- Tom:** (Examines both sides of his hand) What's wrong with it?
- Hat:** It's an expression. If you know something well, you say you know it like the back of your hand. I mean, how well do you know the soles of your feet?
- Tom:** Better than the back of my hand. **(Lifts up foot)** On the sole of my foot, I've got this really painful verucca...**(interrupted)**
- Hat:** Listen!
- Tom:** To what? What to?
- Hat:** Are you a bloomin' owl! Listen to me! What comes next?
- Tom:** Well, I got this stuff from the chemist that I have to paint on it every night...**(interrupted)**
- Hat:** The story! What comes next in the story!?
- Tom:** Where did I get to?
- Hat:** The good fairy lessened the death spell, by making it 100 years of sleep.
- Tom:** **(Telling story as if to tourists)** Until a prince comes, uses the magic sword given to him by an old wizened wizard, hacks through the impassable, impenetrable, razor-sharp thorny hedge, kisses the princess tenderly, whereupon she wakes up. They are then married and live happily ever after. Now ladies and gentlemen we come to the end of our tour. The teashop with the**(interrupted)**

Hat: He's come!

Tom: Who's come?

Hat: The prince?!

Tom: Prince Harry?

Hat: Don't be ridiculous!

Tom: Prince Will?

Hat: No! The prince in the fairy tale.

Tom: Have you been drinking?

Hat: No, I haven't! Look Tom, there's this prince, geared up in cloak, crown, and all the trimmings. He was by the former stables and demanded the way to the bewitched bower. He said he's prince of some little kingdom I've never heard of. He's read about this place, and all the princes who've tried and failed to get through the hedge to the princess - **(interrupted)**

Tom: But we made it up! We made it all up!

Hat: I know we did - but he believes it! He's come to test his powers on the hedge.

Tom: He's winding us up! It's somebody from one of these reproduction societies.

Hat: **(Corrects)** Re-enactment. - I don't think so. There's something a bit different....**(trails off. Scratches head.)**

Tom: He'll be straight through the hedge before you can say Jack Wilkinson!

Hat: Robinson!

Tom: Before you can say Robinson.

Hat: It's Jack Robinson!

Tom: I said that!

Hat: Oh, never mind.

Tom: **(Sighs and continues)**...in no time! There's only those quick growing conifers we planted around that copse of spiky thorn bushes that were already there. All he needs is a hedge trimmer!

Hat: He hasn't got a hedge trimmer; he's carrying a sword given to him by an old wizened wizard who taught him as a boy.

Tom: The electric fence might hold him back a bit.

Hat: He's come to claim his prize!

Tom: What prize?

Hat: The princess!

Tom: But there isn't a princess! We made it up!

Hat: (Shrugs) I know, and we had a peep through the spiky thorn bushes didn't we just to see what was there. It was just a big tangle of undergrowth; oh, and there was a broken-down old gazebo somewhere.

Tom: (Remembering) Oh yes - with creepers growing all over it. - Wild roses and honeysuckle. - When he finds out there's nothing there, and he blabs this place is a con, it won't be worth a monkey's uncle.

Hat: (Corrects) Two pence. Worth two pence.

Tom: That as well!

Hat: We'll be ruined! He'll have to be stopped!

Tom: Do you think he's real? I mean, do you think we're dreaming Hat? You haven't been adding halluci – halluciwhatnot to your tarts?

Hat: Hallucinogenic - no, I haven't! I think we ought to turn the electric fencing up – keep him out. It's only deer proof strength at the moment.

Tom: I say, I say, why was the actress afraid of the deer?

Hat: What?

Tom: She got stag fright!

Hat: (Sarcastically) Very funny!

Tom: Alright – where do deer go for their coffee?

Hat: I don't know, where do deer go for their coffee?

Tom: Star-bucks! (Laughs) - What were you saying?

Hat: Turning up the electricity on the fencing. If he's not real it won't hurt him.

Tom: And if he's real?

Hat: Serves him right.

Tom: I suppose so. - Cheek, strutting in here like he owns the place, in his fancy leggings.

Hat: (Explaining what leggings are) Hose.

Tom: (Misinterprets) Good idea! If we water the hedge with a hose first, he'll get an even bigger shock!

(Hat has a confused look. Tom & Hat exit)

Scene 3 – another dimension

(Music: Extract from ‘When you Wish Upon a Star’ by Cliff Edwards. Lighting to signify entry into another dimension. Keep fairy-tale type lighting until end of Act 1. Backstage Crew: Enter prancing, artistically draping bits of greenery, flowers & birds randomly. Exit.

Much Put-Up-on: **(Enters, struggling under a load of baggage)** Hello everyone! **(Waits for a reaction)** I said hello everyone!

Audience: Hello!

Much Put-Up-on: **(Addressing audience)** I’m Much Put-Up-on, that’s my name. **(Indicates baggage)** As you can see it’s very apt. Ever since I applied for this job as aide to Prince Extremely-Charming, it’s been do this, and carry that; a proper carry on. He’s got this old map, and taken it into his head that he’s the one to wake Princess Gorgeous-Beauty with a kiss. I’ve got a photograph of her in my pocket – **(gets big photo of sleeping Beauty from pocket & shows audience)**. I don’t know how they managed to get the photograph, but they can do all sorts these days can’t they? Perhaps they flew a drone over? The trouble is, I’ve fallen for her myself. **(Very sadly)** But what have I, a poor youth and orphan with no money, or prospects got, compared to a prince of the realm? **(Begging sympathy)** I said, what have I, a poor youth and orphan with no money, or prospects got, compared with a prince of the realm? **(React to audience reaction with a ‘thank you very much’ or similar.)**

Prince: **(Enters boldly. Slaps thigh in panto style. Strikes arrogant pose)** What a delightfully rundown romantic estate! I’ve seen it in my dreams. I’ve seen the impassable, impossible, impenetrable hedge, behind which my dearest treasure lies.

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Much Put-Up-on: And I’ve seen the teashop and souvenir shop. You’ve never seen so much tat in all your life! Mind you, they have got the genuine, authentic, original, poisoned splinter in a sealed glass jar in the souvenir shop.

Prince: The serfs have taken advantage of my dear heart’s long sleep. I saw one of them outside the old stables. A villainous looking fellow! As soon as the princess awakens with my kiss, they shall be outed.

Much Put-Up-on: They might be a bit put out about that!
(Sidekick 100-1 enters)

Much Put-Up-on: **(Looks at horse)** I don’t know why I’ve got to carry all the baggage when you’ve got this horse. **(Feels saddle bags. Surprised)** There’s bags of rooms in these saddle bags!

Prince: **(Pats horse)** Sidekick 100-1 is not a pack animal; she's a pedigree racehorse. She comes from a long line of pedigree racehorses, and she's also extremely entertaining.

(Sidekick 100-1 does a little choreographed tap dance routine or something amusing.)

Much Put-Upon: I'm not a pack animal, and I'm extremely entertaining **(does a little choreographed dance routine or a trick)**, but I've still got to carry the baggage!

Prince: Oh, stop grumbling Much Put-Upon, and give me the map we sent for from ye oldy souvenir shop.

Much Put-Upon: **(Extracts rolled up map from pocket. Unrolls, & then squints and reads something on map, as if reading an instruction)** Pronto *Press*.

Prince: **(Takes map quickly)** You can iron it out later. No time for that now. Time is of the essence. **(Studying map)**

Much Put-Upon: Why the hurry? Princess Sleeping Gorgeous-Beauty has been asleep for the last 100 years. She won't notice a week or two either way. I wonder if she'll be hungry? I'm always starving when I wake up. Perhaps we should buy her an oldy worldy currant bun from the teashop? Preferably one that isn't a hundred years old.

Prince: **(Slaps thigh boldly)** After I've kissed her, she won't even think of her stomach!

Much Put-Upon: **(Wistfully)** Maybe I should be kissed a bit more then, I'm always ravenous. **(Looks at photo of princess admiringly. Sighs)** Isn't she lovely? Isn't she wonderful? **(Sings adapted verse from 'Isn't she lovely?' by Stevie Wonder)**

Much Put-Upon: **(Sings romantically to photo in his hand)** Isn't she lovely?
 Isn't she wonderful?
 Isn't she precious?
 Only a hundred and sixteen years old,
 I never thought through love we'd be
 Finding one as lovely as she
 But isn't she lovely made from love? **(Sighing, shows audience and prince the photo)**

Prince: **(Ignores. Engrossed in map.)** Hmmm, so the treasure looks as if it's lying beneath her bower.

Much Put-Upon: **(Looks from photo of princess to prince, and back again, puzzled)** I beg your pardon?

Prince: Granted....Now then, you look for the enchanted bower, and make a start on the hedge. I'm just going to the teashop for my break.

Much Put-Upon: Me? But isn't it the prince who hacks his way through the impassable, impossible, imposing hedge, not his mere assistant!

Prince: Don't worry, I'll be back to finish the job and claim my prize.

Much Put-Upon: What prize?

Prince: Oh, the er, princess, what else could I mean? **(Hands him a wonky sword)** You may use this to cut through the hedge. Take good care of it. It was given me by a wizened old wizard.

Much Put-Upon: **(Looks at sword)** This doesn't look like it would cut through butter!

Prince: It's lucky I'm not asking you to cut through butter then. **(Exits humming 'When you wish upon a Star')**

Much Put-Upon: **(To self)** Darn, he's forgotten to leave me the map. **(Addresses horse)** If that doesn't take the biscuit. Leaving us to do all the donkey work.

(Sidekick 100-1 snorts loudly, neighs, shakes head, and trots quickly offstage. SFX. A horse snort, a neigh, to synchronize with horse.)

Much Put-Upon: **(Gazes after horse. Looks at audience)** Charming, absolutely charming!
(Exits)

Scene 4 – Another dimension

(A dramatic flash, and a bang.)

- Witch:** **(Enters very dramatically – traditionally from left side of stage. Cackles evilly. Addresses audience)** Remember me? **(If audience boos react)** Witch Wickedly Wicked, the uninvited guest at the royal Christening party? When I cursed the royal babe, they whined and said they'd forgotten to send me an invitation. Bah, it was a deliberate snub! One hundred and sixteen years ago this very day. I remember it as if it was yesterday. I remember that stupid Fairy Goody One-Shoe waving her shoe and commuting my spell to a century of sleep. **(Chants angrily)** When I make a spell, I make it well. When I make a curse, it couldn't be worse! When I enchant, it's not just cant. **(Angrily)** And when I say die....they don't just sleep for 100 years and then wake up again!! **(Stamps foot hard)**.....If the right prince comes along and wakes her with a kiss, something ghastly is going to happen. She'll live happily ever after! Fairy Goody One-Shoe caused a thorny hedge to spring up around the princess, which I can't pass through: but, if some idiot should come along and cut a hole, I will make very sure Princess Sleeping Gorgeous-Beauty stays asleep – permanently! My reputation as a wicked witch is at stake. **(Cackles evilly)**
- Prince:** **(Enters suddenly)** Excuse me, but I couldn't help overhearing. **(Slaps thigh and strikes arrogant pose)** Allow me to introduce myself. I'm – **(interrupted)**
- Witch:** **(Jumps with surprise. Says fiercely)** – Oh I know who you are! You're the extremely charming prince come to wake Sleeping Gorgeous-Beauty with a kiss, and live happily ever after. Well, over *your* dead body!
- Prince:** Oh, that's not very nice. **(Bows elegantly)** I was thinking, that we might be of service to each other.
- Witch:** Of service? You mean you want me to help you wake the princess? **(Sarcastic)** What was the point of putting a curse on her, if I was going to wake her up! **(Crossly)** Do you think she'd like muffins for breakfast!!
- Prince:** **(Shrugs casually)** I'm not interested in Princess Sleeping Gorgeous-Beauty. What I'm interested in, lies under her bower.
- Witch:** I beg your pardon.
- Prince:** **(Charmingly)** Granted.
- Witch:** **(Curious)** What's under her bower?
- Prince:** **(Says as a statement)** Yes, what's under her bower.
- Witch:** **(Annoyed)** It was a question!
- Prince:** Oh. **(Confidingly)** What under her bower is treasure! **(Taps map)**. According to this oldy worldy historical document purchased at great expense from ye oldy tea and souvenir shoppy, the king and queen buried a king's ransom beneath

their daughter, so that when she awoke, she wouldn't want for anything. A bit like the Egyptian pharaohs.

Witch: **(Muses)** A king's ransom! Did they now? How very interesting. And you want me to help you to get the treasure out I suppose?

Prince: Yes. You can make me invisible, or put a spell on the serfs who work here.

Witch: And I get?

Prince: I get the treasure, and you get the princess. If I don't kiss her, she won't wake up. Then she can just go on sleeping, can't she?

Witch: **(A nasty smile)** Permanently.

Prince: Well, I suppose it will be permanent if she carries on kipping.

Witch: **(Smiles nastily. Gets out tiny old looking bottle).** I'll moisten her lips with the solution in this tiny bottle, and she'll sleep forever.

Prince: That sounds like a solution to the problem. And your reputation as a wickedly wicked witch, will be safe.

Witch: Yes. So, you'll cut a hole in the hedge, so I can get through?

Prince: Oh, I've got a lackey to do that; Much Put-Upon.

Witch: Does he know about the treasure?

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Prince: Of course not, otherwise he'd want some. He's here to do the donkey work.

Witch: When he's cut a hole in the hedge, you can moisten his lips with the solution too. **(Hands prince another tiny bottle)** Take this bottle. Tell him it's a tonic. He can do – **(Stops herself from saying 'die')** – doze next to Princess Gorgeous Sleeping-Beauty.

Prince: **(Takes bottle and looks at it)** That will be, nice for him. Well, I'd better go and see how he's getting on. **(Exits)**

Witch: **(Watches him leave, then cackles evilly.)** I knew an idiot would come along! **(React if audience boos with something like 'Oh come on! everybody loves a villain'! Exits in dramatic witch like way.)**

(Sidekick 100-1 enters slowly as if listening around a corner; looks in the direction the witch and prince exited. Shakes head slowly as if in disapproval. Trots off.)

Scene 5 – Another dimension

(Pretty twinkling lights, & a tinkling sound as Fairy enters. Fairy Goody One-Shoe enters in a fairy like way. Traditionally from right side of stage. Makes a movement with her shoe. Speaks in rhyme. Reacts as if she has overheard part of previous conversation. Addresses audience)

Fairy: **(Shocked)** What a wicked scheme! If robbing Princess Gorgeous-Beauty of her chance of happiness is what they mean, I Fairy Goody One-Shoe will intervene! I need allies to act as lookouts, staunch and true, brave and stout. **(Look towards entrance)** Here come two, I have no doubt.

(Tom & Hat enter)

Fairy: **(Waves her shoe at them)** Good sirs, there is afoot an evil plan, and I need all the help I can get.

(Tom & Hat stop in tracks)

Tom: **(Amazed)** Good grief! It's a fairy!

Fairy: **(Addressing Tom & Hat)** Goody One-Shoe is my name. I have a special claim to fame. T'was I, who cast a spell on Beauty, to save from death it was my duty.

Hat: This is getting ridiculous! Madam, if you're looking for the prince, please tell him that this is private property!

Tom: And we're closed! Particularly to princes and fairies!

Fairy: What about witches?

Hat: You mean – there's one of those as well! This is getting to be like a pantomime!

Tom: **(Speaks in rhyme)** That's why the fairy speaks in rhyme, because it *is* a pantomime!

Hat: **(To Fairy)** So – what's this about a witch?

Fairy: The witch is here to kill poor Beauty, the prince is here to steal her booty.

Tom: **(Puzzled)** Just the one?

Hat: Just the one what?

Tom: Booty. Don't they have shoe shops where he comes from?

Hat: **(Corrects him)** Booty – treasure!

Tom: Treasure?

Fairy: The prince has got a treasure chart, purchased with a stale jam tart.

Hat: **(To Tom)** It's a map from the souvenir shop!

Tom: But it's rub- **(Stops himself from saying 'rubbish')**

Fairy: (Curious) It's rub?

Hat: (Covering up quickly) Rhubarb! A rhubarb jam tart!

Fairy: Please keep a watch for witch and prince, and do not trust them half an inch.
(Makes a movement with shoe. Exits in fairy like way.)
(Pretty lights and a SFX. tinkling sound as Fairy exits in fairylike way.)

Tom: (Worried. To Hat T) But there's no treasure!

Hat: I just shut my eyes and made a mark on the map, to make it more interesting; no treasure, and no princess! (Determined) We've got to get rid of them Tom!

Tom: All of them? The prince, the witch and the fairy?

Hat: (Worried) Oh, and there's some sort of servant with the prince.

Tom: (Counts on fingers) Get rid of the witch, the fairy, the prince, and his servant?

Hat: And his horse.

Tom: (Counts on fingers) Get rid of the witch, the fairy, the prince, his servant, and his horse?

Hat: You don't need to keep saying it! The list won't get any shorter!

Tom: It keeps getting longer!

Hat: We could give them all a poisoned jam tart; we've got that slow-release rat poison. (Angry outburst) That prince has brought all this trouble on us!

Tom: (Protests) We don't need to poison the horse though – it can't talk! After all, it's not going to say oat.

Hat: Hmm – I suppose we could keep the horse; a sort of sad reminder of the last prince who tried and failed.

Tom: I say, I say, you're riding a horse full speed, there's a giraffe right beside you, and a lion nipping at your heels. What do you do?

Hat: (Sighs) I haven't a clue. What do you do?

Tom: Get off the carousel and sober up!

Hat: Are you listening to me at all!

Tom: Yes, you're talking about keeping the horse as a sad reminder. Like carrying on with the fairy story.

Hat: Carrying on with the fairy story? – That's it – we'll carry on with the story! If the prince wants a princess, we'll give him one!

Tom: But it's make-believe; we haven't got a princess to give him!

Hat: (Thoughtfully) Not yet.

Tom: What do you mean, not yet?

Hat: We'll plant one.

Tom: What, like the quick growing conifers?

Hat: Don't be stupid! No, somebody imitates Sleeping Gorgeous-Beauty. We take a photo of her with the prince after he's kissed her, and woken her up. We send it to the press. The headline will read 'Happy Ever After'. Visitors will flock here in droves.

Tom: **(Brightening)** And the story will be even better, with the happy ending. **(Gets hankie out & dabs eyes)** Oh, I'm getting quite teary! **(Afterthought)** But what about the treasure? They all think there's treasure.

Hat: We'll tell them we've had grave robbers. When the witch and the prince, and the fairy and his servant, and his horse, if they're real, find out there's no treasure, they'll all clear off back to where they came from.

Tom: Where did they come from?

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Hat: I don't know; all I know, is that they're a thorough nuisance!

Tom: But what about – hang on - **(scratches head)** didn't the fairy say, the witch wanted Sleeping Beauty dead? And, and anyway, we haven't got a princess!

Hat: Oh yes, we have.

Tom: **(Surprised)** Where?

Hat: Here.

Tom: **(Looks around puzzled)** I can't see anyone.

Hat: Go and get your dress on. You'll make a gorgeous Sleeping Beauty!

Tom: **(Reacts strongly)** You must be joking! Oh no, oh no, no, definitely not **(Exits very rapidly)**

Hat: **(Calls after him encouragingly. Exits rapidly after him.)** You'll love the dress, and wait till you see the blonde wig!

Scene 6

- Much Put-Upon:** **(Enters walking very unsteadily and with hair on end. Speaks to audience.)** I'll just have to have a little rest. I've had an awful shock. I was hacking the hedge with the sword the old wizened wizard gave Prince Extremely-Charming, when suddenly, suddenly, there was a fizzling, a sizzling, a flash, and I was thrown through the air like a bird. I don't know what happened to the sword. **(Wait for sympathy. React.)** Prince Extremely-Charming will be angry with me, but I'm through with the hedge. When I say through with it, I haven't got through it – I don't think I've even made an impression, but I can't go through with it again. I feel like I'd been kicked by a horse.
- (Sidekick 100-1 enters and sidles up to Much Put-Upon. Gives him a push with his nose.)**
- Much Put-Upon:** **(Looks at horse)** It wasn't you, was it?
- (Sidekick 100-1 gives a loud Neigh.)**
- Much-Put-Upon:** Well, you would say that, wouldn't you.
- (Sidekick 100-1 whispers in Much Put-Upon's ear)**
- Much Put-Upon:** **(Strains to hear)** I can hardly hear you. Speak up a bit.
- (Sidekick 100-1 whispers in Much Put-Upon's ear)**
- Much Put-Upon:** Oh, I see – you're a little hoarse. **(Looks at audience with raised eyebrow.)**
- (Sidekick 100-1 whispers in Much Put-Upon's ear again)**
- Much Put-Upon:** What! The prince isn't interested in the princess – he just wants to steal her treasure? There's treasure?
- (Sidekick 100-1 nods)**
- Much Put-Upon:** And the witch wants to get at Sleeping Gorgeous-Beauty to send her to sleep again?
- (Sidekick 100-1 whispers in ear)**
- Much Put-Upon:** Wants to kill her! - But that's terrible!
- (Sidekick 100-1 whispers in ear)**
- Much Put-Upon:** And kill me?! That's even more terrible!
- (Sidekick 100-1 whispers in ear)**
- Much Put-Upon:** She's worse than your uncle? Who's that?
- (Sidekick 100-1 whispers in ear)**
- Much Put-Upon:** Al Ca-pony! **(Shocked)** Oh no! What shall I do?
- (Sidekick 100-1 whispers in ear)**

Much Put-Upon: **(Looks at horse, as if repeating what it has whispered.)** How do you know, you're only a horse....Tell you what horse, I'm getting out of here! **(Walks quickly to exit, then stops. Short pause. Turns and returns with resolution.)** What am I thinking of? Abandoning the woman I love! **(Gets out photo of princess. Shows to horse. Sings all or own selected verses, of 'What kind of fool am I by Perry Como with passion and feeling to horse.)**

Prince: **(Enters briskly, slaps thigh, strikes arrogant pose. Annoyed. Carrying small branch of scorched conifer)** I'm much displeased with you Much-Put-Upon. I've just inspected the hedge, and you've barely made an impression on it, save for a few blackened scorch marks **(waves small branch of scorched conifer at Much Put-Upon)**. And where's my sword?

Much Put-Upon: It's probably up a tree.

Prince: I see you've been wasting your time and my money, in song and dance!

Much Put-Upon: **(Upset)** I've had a nasty shock; I'm going to the tea shop for a jam tart.

Prince: There's that villainous fellow serving. Avoid the rhubarb ones; **(pulls face)** far too sour. They've given me stomach ache. **(Shows paper bag with tarts in; lifts out one, tries to tempt)**. These plum tarts aren't bad; these are the last two; they look delicious, don't they? I might give you one later as a reward, once we're through the hedge.

Much Put-Upon: **(Looks suspiciously at plum tart; points)** What's all that shiny stuff on top?

Prince: **(Falsely)** Glaze. **(Dismisses)** – Off you go, and don't be long!

(Much Put-Upon exits. Sidekick 100-1 exits making SFX. long loud horse farting noise.)

Prince: **(Stares after them.)** I hope they haven't got wind of my plan! **(Short pause. To audience confidentially)** Witch Wickedly Wicked made a habit of cursing princesses. A christening she wasn't invited to here, an engagement party there, a bar mitzvah, a coffee morning, a jumble sale. The countryside is littered with princesses, all snoozing away, nest eggs close by for when they wake. All timed to wake up at certain times, like boiled eggs. And I'm tracking them down. Well not them precisely, but their lovely treasure. Somebody else can kiss them, and wake them up. If I kiss them, they'll all fall in love with me, and want to marry me, and who wouldn't? **(Takes little mirror from pocket, strokes moustache, and admires self. Pats hair)**. And that would be a proper mace and chain in the garderobe and no mistake. ... My worry is, how much do I trust the witch? **(Extracts little bottle of poison given by witch from pocket, shakes it, and holds it up to light to see how much it contains. Smiles. To self.)** Good; still some left for her, if she double crosses me! **(Exits.)**

(Twinkling lights & tinkling sound, as Fairy enters in a fairylike way.)

Fairy: **(Despairing)** Princesses cursed both far and wide, lay scattered round the countryside. Poor girls; my wings are worn to shreds, trying to save them in their beds. The witch, not satisfied with sleep, wants in endless sleep to keep. The greedy prince in search for gold, has to the devil his soul sold. I am feeling overwrought that my protection's come to nought. Time is passing, it does fly, a

hundred years soon flashes by. **(Looks up beseechingly.)** I need some help from up on high.

(SFX. A loud gust of wind. Wonky sword is tossed by unseen hand onto stage, as if blown from tree.)

Fairy:

But wait! What's this the wind has brought to me? **(Picks up sword and looks at it wonderingly.)** A wonky sword from up a tree!

(Twinkling lights & SFX. tinkling sound as Fairy exits holding sword.)

Scene 7

- Hat:** **(Enters carrying secateurs. Calls and signals as if to Tom)** Come on, the coast's clear.
- (Tom Trix enters dressed as princess.)**
- Hat:** Make a little gap in the hedge and squeeze through!
- Tom:** **(Looks at dress)** I might tear my dress.
- Hat:** It doesn't matter.
- Tom:** How can I wear it again if I tear it?
- Hat:** What are you talking about? You won't need to wear it again.
- Tom:** I might do. If Harry Styles can wear a skirt, I can wear a dress. **(Does a little swirl in dress)** It's surprisingly liberating.
- Hat:** Oh, for goodness sakes! Discover your inner self another day! Just get through the hedge. Use the secateurs. **(Hands secateurs to Tom.)**
- Tom:** **(Takes secateurs. Looks at his hands)** Have you got a pair of gardening gloves?
- Hat:** **(Sarcastically)** Hand cream?
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- Tom:** Yes please, if you've got any.
- Hat:** **(Gives him a slap)** No, I haven't got any! Get on with it! I've turned the electricity off. Just lie there till you're kissed, then I'll jump in with my camera.
- Tom:** What if he doesn't kiss me? I mean, what if he just starts ferreting about for treasure?
- Hat:** **(Anxious)** Don't let him ferret about too much! **(Firmly)** You grab him and kiss him. Hold him there till I've got the pic.
- Tom:** Shouldn't I slap him?
- Hat:** No! Don't slap him!
- Tom:** What then?
- Hat:** Well, I should think he'll be utterly repulsed, and go home.
- Tom:** **(Has a diva moment)** You know how to upset a girl don't you! I've a good mind not to go through with it! If you think I don't look nice, how can I have the confidence....
- Hat:** **(Interrupts)** I do think you look nice. I'm just...jealous.

Tom: (Considers)If we do reproductions afterwards, for the public, can I play the princess?

Hat: (Corrects) Re-enactments; yes, you can play the princess.

Tom: You can have a turn sometimes, perhaps.

Hat: Thank you. Now *please*, go and find a hole in the hedge.

Tom: OK.

Hat: I'll be around. (Exits)

Tom: OK. (A sudden thought. Calls to Hat) But what about the witch? (But Hat has gone. Exits holding secateurs)

(A dramatic flash, and a bang.)

Witch: (Enters very dramatically. Addresses audience. Angry) Do my eyes deceive me? Was that the princess? Blonde tresses, a tiara, and a pair of secateurs? That can mean only one thing! that Prince Extremely-Charming has broken his word, entered the bower through the hedge, kissed the princess, woken her up, set her free, and is this very minute digging for the treasure! And he's used my bottle of potion to poison his serf! (Howls) Oh, how my revenge will be awful, horrible, terrible, ghastly, vile, evil, disgusting – and every adjective I can't bring to mind right now! (Taps nails together, thinks) The thing is, which awful, horrible, terrible, ghastly, vile, evil, disgusting thing shall I do first? A) Do I go after the princess and see her off? Or B) do I go after the prince, stop him stealing the treasure, and see him off? Decisions, decisions. I'll ask the audience. (To audience) What would you do? (Ignores audience response) Hmm –50/50 split. I knew it was no good asking you! (Taps nails together thinking.) Wait, wait. I know what I'll do. I'd almost forgotten about this spell. I'll cast the gold fever spell upon the forest. (Waves wand around, while speaking spell in rhyme.)

(SFX. Strange unearthly music as witch waves wand around.)

Witch: Go forth strange music, over forest and trees, turning men to common thieves. With greed for jewels and rings that glisten, causing madness to those who listen. Spin, spider's web of desire, and set hearts on fire! Go forth now spell bold, and afflict hearers with a lust for gold!

Witch: They'll go mad for gold, and see each other off, saving me the trouble. Then the gold will be mine for the taking! GOLD! (Long, long, evil laugh. Stay on stage until after blackout.)

(Blackout. Backstage: Assist the witch to exit stage safely during blackout.)

Interval

(Backstage: During interval sprinkle a small pile of something non-slip & non sharp resembling clear broken glass on stage, including a large jar lid.)

Act 2

Scene 1

(Short extract from 'When you Wish Upon a Star'. Pretty lights, then music slurs, and darker lighting comes on. SFX. Cawing of crows. Bark of fox. A few black crow feathers falling on stage.)

Hat: (Enters) I hope Tom's not going to botch it. That blonde wig's gone straight to his head

(SFX. Strange unearthly music of witch's spell. Hat stops as he hears strange unearthly music of witch's spell. Listens for a few seconds, puzzled, touches head as if a sudden pain, shudders. Gradually through his dialogue, he succumbs to a demented 'gold fever'.)

Hat: I wonder if there really is treasure? I mean, that cross on the map was just something we made up – well, I made up, it was my idea; but all these characters turning up... I mean... perhaps I had a premonition? If there is treasure, it's mine! Treasure. – Gold! All my life I've dreamed of striking it rich. Gold! How do I claim it as mine? - The fairy said to watch out for the witch and the prince, they're after the gold! - I bet when Tom gets through the hedge he'll be after the gold! Tom's always been a millstone round my neck; always wanted a piece of my pie! - Gold! I must have felt deep down it was there all the time, my inheritance! I can see it now, piles of glittering gold, lying underneath the princess. Well, she can't have it! Wait, is she real? Is anyone real? Well real or not, she's not having it! (Violently) No-one else is having it! It's mine, all mine; gold lovely gold. (Shouts) gold! (Rushes offstage.)

Prince: (Enters. Slaps thigh. Strikes pose. Cross) Where has that stupid assistant of mine got to? He said he was going to the Oldy Worldy Tea Shoppy for a jam tart, not a three-course dinner. It's just like him to make a meal of things! Where's my sword I gave him to use on the hedge? The dolt said he'd lost it. (Sighs) I suppose I'll just have to rip through the impassable, impossible, imposing hedge myself with my gauntlets. (Does a few limbering up exercises. Puts foot into the small pile of 'broken glass'. Looks at it. Disgusted) Look at all this rubbish – broken glass. The peasants are letting the place go to ruin.

(SFX. Strange unearthly music of witch's spell.)

Prince: (Listens to music, shakes head as if uncomfortable. Twitches. His gold fever increases through dialogue.) And where's my horse got to? My gauntlets are in the saddle bag. (Calls) Sidekick 100 to One – where are you? (Slight pause. Then calls crossly) Come here at once, you stupid beast! Come here! (Calls charmingly) I've got something nice for you – (Not at all charming sotto voce) A load of heavy gold to carry!

Tom: (Offstage. Calls in high voice) Coooooeeee!

Prince: (Looks around puzzled. Calls) Who's there?

Tom: (Offstage in high voice) The beautiful Princess, (a giggle) Sleeping Beauty.

Prince: (**Alarmed, to self**) Princess Sleeping Gorgeous-Beauty! She's woken up and escaped! But how? I haven't kissed her! (**Paranoid**) I bet it was that Much Put-Upon, he's crazy about her – at least he pretended to be crazy about her! It was all a dastardly ploy to get to the treasure! He's used my sword, given to me by the wizened old wizard, and already hacked through the impossible, impractical, imposing, hedge! Now, he's digging up my gold! (**Violently**) My lovely gold! I'll – I'll kill him! (**Shouts**) *Gold!* (**Rushes offstage.**)

Tom: (**Enters. Still in dress, wig and tiara. To self. Disappointed**) That's very odd! The prince ran straight past me. No kiss, no ferret, nothing! I didn't have a chance to grab him for a photo. I know what it is! Because I'm here in the forest, and not in the bower, he didn't recognise me as the princess! The sooner I've found a way through the hedge, (**makes draping action**) and draped myself beautifully in the bower, as if I've been there for 100 years, the better.

(**SFX. Strange unearthly music of witch's spell.**)

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Tom: (**Stops and listens. Shakes head as if he feels peculiar. Twitches. Develops 'gold fever' through dialogue and song**) I've just had a horrible thought! The prince doesn't recognise me as a princess because I'm not wearing any gold or diamonds! Proper princesses have jewellery! (**Indignant**) Proper princesses adorn themselves with precious gems. Proper princesses drip jewels! (**Looks at his hands**) Just look at my poor hands, not a sparkle. (**Looks down at his dress**) Just look at my plain dress, not a glitter! As far as jewellery goes, I'm practically naked! (**Gasps. Puts arms around self as if hiding nakedness.**) Hat's made a laughing stock of me! A princess without pearls! What if there is treasure? If there is treasure, it's mine, I need it! (**Paranoid**) Perhaps Hat's in league with the prince! Perhaps they're stealing the gold right now, but the gold's mine. (**Shouts**) *mine!*

(**Song 'Goldfinger' for Tom to dance and mime to. Alternatively, could dance and sing live. In last verse of song, change 'he' to 'she loves gold'.**)

Tom: (**Violently**) I need gold, and woe betide anyone who gets in my way! (**Shouts**) *gold!* (**Exits rapidly.**)

Scene 2

Much Put-Upon: **(He has a plaster on finger. Looks around him. To audience)** Hello, I gave the jam tarts a miss. They looked so old, as if they were made during the Spanish Armada-lade. I might try one of Prince Extremely-Charming's plum tarts later, though they looked very slimy. I didn't get Princess Gorgeous-Beauty anything – I didn't think she'd be that desperate. When I've rescued her, I'll take her out for a lovely meal. I wonder where she'd like to go? Being 116 years old, she won't know about places like Pizza Express. I know I can't win her, but at least I can get her out of the clutches of Prince Extremely-Charming, who's only interested in her treasure. I'm going to try and get though the hedge again. I've got to reach her before the prince and the witch. **(Casually shows audience plaster. Shrugs off)** just a little nick.

(SFX. Strange unearthly music of witch's spell.)

Much Put-Upon: **(Shakes head & body. Puts hands to head.)** Treasure! Gold! I can see it clearly. **(Stares)** It's in a big wooden chest, fastened with iron bands, buried under her bower! - I could do with some gold. Then I could buy myself fine clothes, and a copy of 'The Gentlemen's Book of Etiquette – the Manual of Politeness' by Cecil B. Hartley, then I could be as charming as Prince Extremely-Charming. **(Appalled)** – But what am I thinking! The gold belongs to the princess; it's her flank account for the future.

(SFX. Strange unearthly music of witch's spell repeats.)

Much Put-Upon: **(Puts hands to head, grimaces, groans, as if in pain.)** What is this strange music? It's sending evil thoughts into my ears! Stop! Stop! **(Covers ears)** Oh, I can still hear it inside my head! I can't get her great big chest out of my mind! Princess Sleeping Gorgeous-Beauty, help me! **(Desperately)** Where's her photograph! **(Rummages in pocket, and draws out her photo, clutches it to his chest. Kisses photo tenderly with feeling. Looking at the photo, trying hard to concentrate, he half sings/half says lyrics to 'When you Wish upon a Star' by Cliff Edwards.)**

(SFX. A magical tinkling twinkling sound, like a wish fulfilled.)

Much Put-Upon: **(Photo flutters from his hands to ground. Violently)** Gold! I'll kill anyone who gets in my way! **(Rushes offstage in a determined way.)**

(A dramatic flash & a bang.)

Witch: **(Enters dramatically. Picks up photo dropped by Much Put-Upon. Cackles evilly. To audience)** Well, everything's working like a charm if I say so myself! Even Fairy Goody One-Shoe can't stop me this time. The so-called princess, I thought I saw in the wood, **(shakes head in puzzlement)** was in fact, a man with hairy legs. The princess will still be dreaming behind the hedge. When one of them breaks through, the others will be upon them like hounds! They'll hardly spare her a glance; then when I enter, she'll be at my mercy! A few drops of my potion and she'll sleep the sleep of the dead. And while they're all fighting, I'll make off with the gold. If you want the answer to this murder mystery by the way, I'll let you into a little secret of who the murderer is –da da

- it's me! And the victim – Princess Sleeping Gorgeous-Beauty! **(Cackles evilly. If audience boos, she could say something like, 'I've given you the answer to this murder mystery, you should be grateful! That's gratitude for you!' Exits in dramatic, witch like fashion.)**

(Pretty twinkling lights, SFX. a tinkling sound as Fairy One-Shoe enters in fairy-like way.)

Fairy: **(Enters with wonky sword and shoe. Uneasy.)** Something's wrong within the wood; folk aren't behaving as they should! I suspect that they're afflicted, by evil summoned by Witch Wicked!

(SFX. Strange unearthly music of witch's spell.)

Fairy: **(Alarmed)** Gold Fever! I recognise that spell! It's very difficult to quell! The antidote it isn't easy; as affects man, and also gee-gee.

(SFX. Strange unearthly music of witch's spell. Fairy puts her hands over her ears desperately to block the sound. Then shakes her head and shudders.)

Fairy: **(Struggles to resist spell.)** The spell upon me it doth creep! I really could give up and weep! **(Despairing)** Whilst I do still possess my wits, I'll soon be like the other twits! **(Waves shoe as if making a spell. A plea.)** Within the wood I know doth lie, a true prince, and on him I'll rely. **(Slumps standing up. Then straightens, now affected by witch's 'gold fever' spell. Looks disparagingly at her shoe)** Gold! Just look at my poor shoe! With gold, I could buy Jimmy Choo! **(Shouts) gold!** **(Exits with sword aloft, not quite so fairy-like as usual.)**

(Pretty twinkling lights, SFX. a heavier tinkling sound as Fairy One-Shoe exits. Sidekick 100-1 enters. Looks around. SFX. Strange unearthly music of witch's spell. Sidekick 100-1 shakes head, body shudders violently. SFX. Short extract from 'Goldfinger'. A bunch of golden carrots is passed across stage either dangled on wire above, or dragged along, pausing just before Sidekick, but not allowing him to eat. Carrots pass offstage. Sidekick 100-1 gives a loud neigh, a buck if he can manage it, and races offstage after golden carrots. SFX. Synchronize loud neigh with horse. **Optionally someone dressed in orange with a spiky green hat could come on as the carrot, and go behind horse. Someone in audience calls 'behind you'. Then fun could be had with carrot eluding horse, until finally horse and carrot come face to face. Either horse or carrot could run off in fear, pursued by the other. SFX. Offstage. A loud bump as if someone has fallen.)**

(Princess Sleeping Gorgeous-Beauty Offstage SFX. A very loud scream. Prince enters wearing gauntlets and carrying small treasure chest)

Hat: **(Enters. Grabs hold of Prince's sleeve)** That's mine. Give it to me!

Prince: **(Struggles and pushes Hat Trix out of way)** Out of my way peasant!

Tom: **(Enters, still dressed as princess. Confronts.)** That belongs to me!

- Fairy:** **(Enters with sword. Demanding.)** You may be unwary, that even a good fairy, needs gold. Give it to me!
- Witch:** **(Enters dramatically)** You're all wrong! The chest is mine. Hand it over or else!
- (Much Put-Upon & Princess Sleeping Gorgeous-Beauty enter holding hands)**
- Much Put-Upon:** **(To Prince)** You know the treasure belongs to the princess. You're worse than a common thief. You should be ashamed!
- (Prince whistles twice loudly. SFX. Two loud human whistles, if actor is unable to whistle loudly. Sidekick 100-1 enters at trot with a carrot in mouth)**
- Prince:** **(Grabs hold of horse quickly & slings treasure chest on its back.)** This is where I love you and leave you! Sidekick 100-1, isn't a pedigree racehorse for nothing! **(Slaps thigh, strikes pose)** Tally ho Sidekick!
- (Sidekick 100-1 starts to trot off, with prince miming riding action alongside. Prince mimics riding action, then with a sudden cry of pain, staggers & falls. Cast all stare at prince for a second or two. Then, apart from the witch, they shake themselves, as if released from the 'gold fever' spell.)**
- Hat:** **(Approaches prince cautiously)** Is this for real?
- Tom:** If it's not it's very vivid!
- Witch:** **(Approaches with false kindness, bottle of potion in hand)** Methinks he just needs a little reviver.
- Fairy:** **(Sternly waves sword at witch).** Away with your potion! I know harm is your notion!
- Princess Beauty:** **(Approaches prince)** The poor prince! Is he asleep?
- Much Put-Upon:** **(Bends down and feels prince's pulse. Then declares dramatically.)** He's more than asleep – he's dead!
- (Cast all gasp loudly, horse neighs loudly, then all freeze for a few seconds in tableau, until monsieur parrot speaks.)**
- (Monsieur Parrot says he was here to watch the Sleeping Beauty panto, but now this has happened. He hopes the audience will help to solve the crime. He asks the characters to introduce themselves. They do this by taking traditional individual stage bows in character, saying their names and a line or two about themselves, and what they think about the murder. Form a line on each side. Much Put-Upon and Princess Gorgeous Sleeping-Beauty, take the bow holding hands.)**
- Monsieur Parrot:** To assist in your enquiries, we'll send the suspects around for interrogation. But mark my words, among the cast is the murderer. And it is the murderer who will not be truthful in answering your questions! Everyone else will tell you the truth. ***(Optional)** I'll send Princess Sleeping-Gorgeous Beauty round too. She

may remember something. She's been sleeping for the last hundred years, so she's had a good rest.

Now the table who gets to the truth with the most detail will be the winner. Who had the means, the motive, and the opportunity to 'do away' with the prince? Interrogate all your witnesses. Each table will have 3 minutes with each suspect. When a bell rings, they will move on. Remember, it will be the table who gives the best detail of who did it, how they did it, why they did it, and where they did it, who will be the winners. Bon chance mes amis.

(Cast: Go around the tables to be interrogated. Answer truthfully, and have your character's 'back story' thought out beforehand. Only the murderer may lie. If a question is really irrelevant, say so.

After the interrogations are over, Monsieur Parrot asks cast to line up, and the culprit step forward. After much wavering, the culprit steps forward, and says why they did it.)