

CSI: NEVERLAND

A COMEDY-FANTASY IN TWO ACTS

By Wade Bradford

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SYNOPSIS: CSI meets Neverland in this marvelous merger of comedic mayhem. Murk and Tinker, Fairy Forensics Officers, are investigating the mysterious murder of Peter Pantaloon's shadow. Their prime suspect is Head Librarian Brenda Brooks who despises Seuss, Hogwarts, giant peaches, and the boy who refuses to grow up. As Peter clearly laments the loss of his shadow, they whisk Brenda away for questioning and throw her in a line up with the infamous Captain Sharp. Meanwhile, Tinker pays the Lab Rats a visit only to discover that the culprit could quite possibly be the crocodile. But the croc died days ago from over-eating so Murk and Tinker convince Captain Sharp's girlfriend, Penelope Moppins, to go undercover. But it is Brenda Brooks who makes the startling discovery that Peter's shadow was maliciously murdered by Never's most poisonous fish, the Red Herring. She also rediscovers love and a love for the classics.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(FLEXIBLE CAST OF 24, APPROXIMATELY SEVEN WOMEN, SEVEN MEN, 10 EXTRAS)

LIBRARY KID	<i>(13 lines)</i>
BRENDA BROOKS, HEAD LIBRARIAN	<i>(92 lines)</i>
TINKER	<i>(78 lines)</i>
MURK	<i>(73 lines)</i>
DORIS, THE NEVER-EVER LAND 911 OPERATOR	<i>(3 lines)</i>
PETER	<i>(109 lines)</i>
THE LOST KIDS	
FOX	<i>(19 lines)</i>
BEAR	<i>(13 lines)</i>

SKUNK	(9 lines)
RACCOON	(11 lines)
CAPTAIN SHARP	(69 lines)
PIRATE DEVLIN	(5 lines)
PIRATE JOE	(6 lines)
NATIVES (3)	(18, 9, and 6 lines)
<i>(Native #1 is Lily Pad's father)</i>	
LAB RATS (2)	(9 and 7 lines)
LILY PAD	(10 lines)
WIDOW	(19 lines)
PENELOPE MOPPINS	(41 lines)
GRIMLEY	(19 lines)
BUSINESS PERSON	(2 lines)

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act One, Scene 1:	Corner of a library
Act One, Scene 2:	Never-ever Land Precinct
Act One, Scene 3:	Crime lab
Act One, Scene 4:	Native camp
<i>Optional Intermission</i>	
Act Two, Scene 1:	Never-ever Land/Native village.
Act Two, Scene 2:	Never-ever Land
Act Two, Scene 3:	Another part of Never-ever Land
Act Two, Scene 4:	Captain Sharp's quarters

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

SETTING:

A corner of a small town library.

AT RISE:

Brenda Brooks, a very somber, rigid librarian, sorts through a shelf of books. She looks as though she hasn't laughed in decades. A friendly, innocent looking Kid enters.

KID: Excuse me, Miss Lady . . . is this the new library?

BRENDA: No, this is the old library.

KID: Old library?

BRENDA: Yes, the old library. Over eighty years-old next year.

KID: But I thought we was gettin' a new library.

BRENDA: You mean, "thought we were."

KID: That's exactly what I said.

BRENDA: It's the same old library. I, however, am the new librarian.

KID: You don't look new.

BRENDA: Young man [or: Young lady] I am very busy; would you please take your gawking eyes and your bubble-gum belabored jaws elsewhere?

KID: *(Unconcerned. Looking at the books.)* Are these new books?

BRENDA: No. I am reorganizing this library. And in the process I am removing a few unnecessary novels.

KID: You're taking these ones away? They look like good books.

BRENDA: Too much fantasy and folly can spoil a child's mind. This library needs more science and less Dr. Seuss. More history and less Hogwarts. Children need academics and not adventures. One doesn't get into a university by studying unicorns.

KID: But some of these are my favorite books. *(Holds up a book.)* Like this one about the upside down pirates.

BRENDA: That's Treasure Island . . . and you're holding it upside down. Besides, it's a loathsome tale about loathsome people. Certainly not for students.

KID: What about this one?

BRENDA: James and the Giant Peach? Preposterous. Even with modern agricultural techniques, fruit simply cannot grow to that extreme size. Silly, silly stuff. Guaranteed to warp young brains.

KID: Oh well. Too bad they have to go. *(Pause.)* Got any of those Narnia stories?

BRENDA: Certainly not. Now will you please leave?

KID: How about comic books?

BRENDA: Get out!

Kid runs offstage.

BRENDA: It would seem I've come just in time. The children of this town are so wrapped up in foolishness they probably believe in fairy tales! Such nonsense!

Suddenly, the lights all shut off...except for a single spotlight that shines on the librarian. She stares at it like a stereotypical deer caught in a set of headlights.

SERIOUS WOMAN'S VOICE: Brenda Brooks?

BRENDA: Yes? Who's there?

SERIOUS WOMAN'S VOICE: Head Librarian of Johnson County?

BRENDA: Um, that's me . . . Uh, what happened to the lights?

SERIOUS MAN'S VOICE: Ma'am, we're going to need you to place your hands upon your head.

BRENDA: Is this the police?

SERIOUS MAN'S VOICE: Hands above your head. Now.

She obeys.

BRENDA: Is there a problem?

SERIOUS MAN'S VOICE: Ma'am, I now need you to turn around.

BRENDA: *(Turns to face upstage.)* I don't want any trouble. She obeys each of the following commands.

SERIOUS MAN'S VOICE: Please place your right foot in. Now place your right foot out. Place your right foot in. Now, shake it all about.

BRENDA: (*Stops and faces downstage.*) What? This is ridiculous. Who are you people???

The lights come up. Two police detectives move in on each side of her. They are dressed in professional attire; however, they also have brilliant fairy wings attached to their backs. They are Fairy Police Detectives, Tinker and Murk.

TINK: We're the Fairy detectives. I'm Lt. Tinker. This is my simpleton partner, Lt. Murk.

BRENDA: Fairy detectives? But I don't believe in fairies!

MURK: (*Deadpan.*) Oh. That hurts.

TINK: We're here to investigate a murder.

BRENDA: A murder?!! Who's been killed?

TINK: Ha! As if you didn't know. Ever hear of a boy by the name of Peter. Wears green tights. Hangs out in Never-ever Land. Flies around London Town.

BRENDA: Are you telling me that someone murdered Peter Pantaloon?

MURK: No, not Peter. Someone murdered his shadow.

BRENDA: You can't murder a shadow!

MURK: Oh yes you can.

TINK: Take a look at the body.

Murk unrolls Peter Pantaloon's shadow. It's a black cloth cut out in the shape of Peter Pantaloon. There are three holes, each the size of silver dollars cut out from the "shadow." It looks as though it has been shot three times in the chest.

MURK: Gruesome, isn't it?

BRENDA: And you think I'm responsible for this? (*Tinker has brought two rolling office chairs center stage.*)

TINK: You certainly have the motive. *(Forces Brenda into a chair.)*

BRENDA: How dare you.

TINK: Where were you on the 30th of February?

BRENDA: But . . . there's no such thing as the 30th of February.

TINK: Aha! So, you can't account for your whereabouts!

MURK: Ma'am, we have reason to believe that you wanted the victim eliminated.

TINK: And he's not the only one!

BRENDA: I don't understand.

TINK: Oh, come on! We heard that you wanted to get rid of Aladdin and his Magic Lamp . . .

BRENDA: Well, I -

MURK: - and kill off Jack and his Beanstalk . . .

TINK: And probably chop up Pinocchio while you're at it.

MURK: Well, do you confess? *(Shows her a list.)* You've been plotting to eradicate every name on this list.

BRENDA: But those are all just nonsensical characters. They aren't even real!

MURK: *(Offended.)* Hey now. Those are personal friends of mine.

TINK: I've heard enough. Let's bring her in.

BRENDA: Where are you taking me?

TINK: The Never-ever Land Precinct. You'll need some of this.

Tinker sprays something in Brenda's face. It's very painful.

BRENDA: Ow! Ugh! What is that? Pepper spray?

TINK: Pixie dust.

MURK: *(Taking her by the arm.)* Have you ever flown before?

BRENDA: What???

MURK: Oh, it's great fun. Just think happy thoughts.

BRENDA: It feels like my eyes are on fire!

MURK: That's not happy enough.

TINK: Come on everybody! Here we go!

They run stage left and then leap offstage. Lights out.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

SETTING:

Never-ever Land Precinct.

AT RISE:

The backdrop and set dressing should reveal an exotic island setting. However, center stage there is a very plain-looking business desk complete with phones and other office props. The Never-ever Land 911 Operator sits at the desk. The phone rings; she picks it up.

OPERATOR: Never-ever Land 911. What's the emergency? Being harassed by mermaids? How dreadful. Please hold. Never-ever Land 911, what's your emergency? Trapped in Skull Cave? The tide is coming in? Oh dear. Hold please. Never-ever Land 911, what's your problem? Your rowboat's falling apart? And you're being attacked by a tick-tocking crocodile? Oh you poor dear. Please hold. 911 - - Hey Thumbellina, how you doin' girl? He did? Why you need to dump that boy. No, I'm not busy. You tell me all about it. Uh-huh? Uh-huh?

Peter, a flamboyant young man (could be played by a male or female actor) dashes on stage.

PETER: Where's Tinker Bell? Where's the detective squad? And where-oh-where is the criminal who killed my beautiful shadow? I want justice! I want revenge! I want one of these donuts with sprinkles on it. *(Takes a donut from the Operator's desk.)*

OPERATOR: *(Still focused on her phone call.)* Yeah, that's just Peter. I think he's got his pants on too tight.

BRENDA: *(Offstage.)* This isn't happening. *(She enters along with Tinker and Murk.)* This is just a dream! A terrible, nauseating dream!

MURK: No, that's just jetlag. Right this way.

TINK: Doris, we need your desk.

OPERATOR: Fine by me. It's my coffee beak. *(She keeps talking on the phone as she leaves.)* Girlfriend, you tell that Tom Thumb if he don't behave himself I'm gonna come over there and step on him. *(Exits.)*

PETER: *(Leering at Brenda.)* Is this the culprit?

TINK: Not now, Peter. We've got a lot of work to do. *(To Murk.)* Put her in the lineup.

Murk takes the bewildered Brenda offstage.

PETER: No! Let's cover her with honey and roll her in fire ants!

TINK: We're taking care of it.

PETER: Or let's tie her to the bottom of a pirate ship! No, no, even better! We dress her like a fire hydrant and take her to the Dog Park!

TINK: Peter! I am trying to do an investigation here!

PETER: Gosh, Tink. When you and me hung out together, we used to love to think of new ways to torture people.

TINK: That was before I joined CSI. I've got important responsibilities now, Peter.

PETER: Just do me a favor. Let me know when this whole thing is over. Ever since this heinous crime was committed, I've felt miserably alone. I haven't been able to sleep. And worst of all . . . I . . . I can't say it . . .

TINK: What is it?

PETER: *(Almost in tears.)* I can't fly!

TINK: Why not?

PETER: I don't know. I guess I never realized how lonely I'd feel without my shadow. It's as though my life has fallen apart, and I don't know how to stick it back together. Oh, tape! *(Picks up Scotch tape and begins applying it to himself.)*

TINK: It's more than that, Peter. It may be that the suspect may have been after you. Can you think of anyone that would want to see you dead?

Peter has been playing with the tape, putting it all over his face, deforming his expression.

PETER: No. Everyone loves me.

TINK: This is serious! *(She rips the tape off of his face.)* Your shadow is filled with puncture wounds and you might be next!

PETER: Don't worry, Tink. I've got my Lost Kids to protect me. I'll call for them now.

TINK: *(Annoyed.)* Fine. look, I've got work to do in the lab. Keep those rascal friends of yours under control. *(Exits.)*

PETER: Ha ha! No one can control the rambunctious nature of my Lost Boy Crew! Lost Kids, Ho!!! Your fearless leader needs you! *(A strange bird-like call.)* Lulululululu!

Offstage a call of "Lulululululu" is returned.

PETER: Aha! The lively Lost Kids come forth!

Between four and six Lost Kids (and/or Lost Girls depending on how the director chooses to cast the show) hobble on the stage. They are not as young as one might expect the Lost Kids to be. In fact, they are all very old. They wear boyish outfits in the manner of animals. The four main ones are FOX, BEAR, SKUNK and RACCOON. Their costumes look like traditional Lost Boy attire. However, each Lost Boy is hunched over and elderly. Some are bald, some have white hair. Some have thick glasses while others gingerly use canes or walkers. In their octogenarian manner, they march up to Peter.

FOX: *(Sounding very old.)* Lost Kids reporting for duty, sir!

The Lost Kids still-march in place.

PETER: At ease, Sergeant.

FOX: Company . . . nap!

They immediately cease marching and subsequently fall asleep standing up.

PETER: Sarge Fox! Everyone! This is no time for loafing! Dark and deadly deeds are at work. It's all very dreadful and depressing. And so I desperately need to be cheered up. Therefore, I believe a game of tag is in order! The champion will win this!

He holds up a small vial.

BEAR: That's my heart medicine!

PETER: Then you better catch me! Ready, set, go!

Peter runs about. The old Lost Kids slowly limp around trying to tag him. Peter easily dodges in and out of them. He's having the time of his life. But everyone else is miserable.

PETER: What fun, eh lads? Glorious it is to be forever young!

SKUNK: *(Staggering about, out of breath.)* I . . . I'm . . . hyper . . .

PETER: I'm hyper too! Hoo-hoo!

SKUNK: I'm hyper-ventilating! *(He breathes into a paper bag.)*

The others are exhausted, too. Some sit down or lean on each other. Peter hops up onto the desk.

PETER: What's wrong with you fellows?! Out of breath like a broken down old mare! Why, there was a time when we would explore the island's jungle-scape, search for buried treasure, battle with ferocious natives with slingshots and mudball catapults, climb the very mountains of Never-ever Land. Now, what adventure should we quest upon today?

RACCOON: I know where I'd like to journey to.

PETER: Where?

RACCOON: The bathroom.

PETER: *(Annoyed sigh.)* Fine. Who else needs to go?

Every Lost Kid raises his hands . . . everyone except Bear.

PETER: Bear, you don't need to go?

BEAR: Depends.

PETER: Depends on what?

BEAR: Depends undergarments. They work like a charm.

PETER: (*Disgusted.*) Ugh!

FOX: Peter, when we came to Never-ever Land, you said we'd never grow up.

SKUNK: And now after eight decades - look at us!

RACCOON: We're ancient!

PETER: Maybe you are a smidge older than when I found you. But the point is . . . you're all young at heart! And you've led rich, full lives.

SKUNK: I'm 94 years-old and I've never kissed a girl.

PETER: Good for you! Girls are gross.

FOX: I could've had grandchildren by now.

All the Lost Kids sigh lamentably.

PETER: Enough moping, lads. We've got a storm brewing about us. It seems someone has killed my shadow.

The Lost Kids gasp.

RACCOON: Who would do such a thing?

BEAR: Someone cruel enough to snuff out a shadow might do the same to the rest of us.

PETER: There's more. Ever since the crime was committed, I . . . I haven't been able to fly . . .

FOX: Not fly?! But you're the President of Flight Club!

RACCOON: We've got to do something!

SKUNK: We'll help you out!

PETER: Good. (*Discreetly.*) Then let's call to order a secret meeting.

BEAR: (*Shouting.*) Hey everybody! Secret meeting!

PETER: Shh! I now call Flight Club to Order. Come lads, form the obligatory semi-circle. *(They do.)* Now, the club rules. Rule number one: No one talks about Flight Club. Rule number two: No one talks about Flight Club.

FOX: Um, Peter, sir . . .

PETER: What is it?

FOX: We've been meaning to tell you . . . rule number one and rule number two sort of repeat themselves.

PETER: I know. That's to emphasize the point.

FOX: And the point is?

PETER: No one mentions anything about Flight Club!

BEAR: Uh-oh. *(Everyone looks at him.)* I handed out flyers . . . And put an ad in the newspaper . . .

PETER: Hmmph.

BEAR: And on Google.

PETER: No matter! Members of Flight Club, your mighty leader has lost his mirth and is unable to fly. I charge each of you, go throughout Never-ever Land and find me a new set of happy thoughts, so that I may fly again! Now go, go! Dash away at the speed of lightning!

FOX: Here we go! *(They "dash" away at a snail's pace.)*

PETER: Hurry!

Peter sighs, annoyed. Then, he pushes them offstage. Murk enters, just as the Lost Kids exit.

MURK: Mr. Pantaloon, we need your assistance.

PETER: Yes?

MURK: To the best of our knowledge, you were the only witness to the crime. You were at the Never-ever Land pier, all by yourself - -

PETER: But I've already told you; it was too dark to see anything or anyone clearly.

MURK: It would help us if you'd take a look at this line up. Just in case it triggers any memories. Maybe you'll be able to identify the assailant.

PETER: Ooh! A lineup! Send them in!

MURK: (*Calling offstage.*) Send in the suspects.

The suspects enter single file. There are two pirates (Devlin and Joe) along with the infamous Captain Sharp. In the middle of this surly group is Brenda.

MURK: Recognize anyone?

PETER: Why, you've rounded up that old codfish, Captain Sharp!

SHARP: Why the devil have I been detained here?!

MURK: You were caught your little dingy in Never-ever Land Bay after hours.

SHARP: I protest! There is no crime against rowing. And my dingy is not little.

PETER: Aha! Headed into Never-ever Land town to plunder and pillage, maybe kill a shadow along the way!

SHARP: Certainly not!

PETER: Oh yeah? Then what were you doing?

SHARP: I'll not tolerate questions from an upstart elf-child! If I want to lurk about by the light of the midnight moon, then I shall do so. I am Captain Sharp, and I answer to no one.

PIRATE (DEVLIN): Aye! That's right!

PIRATE (JOE): It's none of your business that the good captain was off to visit a floral shop!

SHARP: I told you bumbling blockheads not to say anything!

MURK: But why would a villain like you buy flowers?

SHARP: No reason. I wasn't. I mean - - I don't wish to talk about it!

PETER: Ooh! Ooh! I know! Captain Sharp is in love!

SHARP: Silence, you green-tighted numbskull! What do you know of love? You are incapable of emotional depth. Besides, what are you? An elf? A human? Some kind of hobbit? Don't you have some magic ring you need to toss in some volcano? Why, I can't even figure out your gender. I'm not sure if you're a womanly man or a manly woman.

MURK: Let me see this. *(He takes a receipt that sits in the hat band of the captain.)* It's a receipt from the flower shop. A dozen roses. And the time is printed on it. Well, your story checks out. You and the rest of your - - what's the politically correct term - - buccaneer scum are free to go.

SHARP: Pirate profiling. Shame on you, sir. Shame on you!

Sharp and the pirates exit.

BRENDA: Does this mean I can go too?

PETER: Wait a moment. Who is she?

MURK: Brenda Brooks. We got a tip that she hates pixies, leprechauns, all things fantasy.

PETER: *(Seeming to recognize her.)* Brenda-lady? Is it you? My old friend?

BRENDA: What?

MURK: So, you do know each other.

BRENDA: I don't know him! I've never seen him before in my life!

MURK: That's what they all say?

PETER: You lived in London next to that giant clock. You helped me sew my shadow onto my feet.

MURK: And now it turns out you had a relationship with his shadow! When did you stop seeing him?

BRENDA: I didn't - -

MURK: Aha, sounds like a confession. Let me get a pen and some paper. I want you to write all of this down for me. *(As he speaks he handcuffs her to the rolling office chair. Then he exits.)*

BRENDA: But I didn't do anything! I'm innocent!

PETER: *(Moving next to her.)* I believe in you, Brenda-lady. You were always so nice to me and the Lost Kids. But tell me, how did you get so old and grumpy?

BRENDA: I am not old. And I'm not grumpy. I'm just confused. I can't figure out how I arrived in this weird and dangerous world.

PETER: It's not dangerous! Not when you're with me, at least. Oh, if you were by yourself, sure, then you'd be at the mercy of the stormy elements, and all the wild creatures of Never-ever Land. Worst of all, you would be open prey for the natives of this mystical island.

BRENDA: Natives?

PETER: Yes, an aboriginal people that are as clever as they are diabolical. But fortunately, you are with me, and I can out-trick any trick the tropical tribe would dare to try. Fear not, for you are safe with me and my trusty dagger!

While Peter has been speaking, Natives have been sneaking onto the stage (4 to 6 of them, males and/or females). They are disguised as vegetation. Suddenly, the Natives stand up, surrounding Brenda and Peter. They cry out angrily and point spears at the twosome.

PETER: We're doomed!

BRENDA: What about your trusty dagger?

PETER: It's actually made of licorice. Would you like a bite?

NATIVE#1: Take the prisoners to the volcano side of the island.

NATIVE#2: The volcano side? It's stinky over there. Why can't we ever go to the flowery side of the island?

NATIVE#1: You be quiet!

BRENDA: What do you want with us?

NATIVE#1: Dinner!

PETER: Thank goodness! I'm hungry!

The Natives push Peter into a chair. Then they roll Brenda and Peter offstage as our heroes scream with fright. Lights down. End of ACT ONE, SCENE 2.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

SETTING:

The Crime Lab.

AT RISE:

Peter's dead shadow is attached to a white board. Lt. Tinker uses a magnifying lens to analyze the three holes in the Shadow's corpse. Two short Lab Technicians (each one wearing a mouse nose) enter, both carrying clipboards.

TINK: Oh good, the lab rats. What did you find out?

LAB RAT #1: Well, we found out one thing.

LAB RAT #2: These aren't bullet holes.

TINK: So what made them?

LAB RAT #1: We're still conducting tests.

TINK: Is there anything you need?

LAB RAT #2: A big slice of cheese.

LAB RAT #1: And maybe an exercise wheel.

TINK: No, I mean, what do you need for the investigation?

LAB RAT #2: We need cheese! We can't work on an empty stomach. Look I've been nibbling on my clipboard. *(Holds up the clipboard. It has holes in it.)*

TINK: *(Takes clipboard. Examines holes, looks at shadow.)* Wait . . . these wounds . . . could they have been made by an animal?

LAB RAT #2: Hey, I didn't bite him. I'm hungry, but I'm not that hungry.

LAB RAT #1: Besides, chewing on shadows gives me gas.

TINK: Not you guys. Something bigger.

LAB RAT #1: Like a shark?

TINK: Or an old crocodile! You two keep testing. *(Rats exit.)* I'll think I'll pay a visit to the local swamp.

Murk pokes his head onto the stage (the rest of his body is not yet seen).

MURK: Hey, Lt. Tinker. Can I talk to you a second?

TINK: I'm busy Murk.

MURK: Have you seen Peter? Or Brenda?

TINK: No. Why? What happened?

MURK: Well, they may have been kidnapped.

TINK: By whom?

MURK: Well, it's possible that CSI Headquarters has been attacked by a platoon of island natives.

TINK: Are you sure?

Murk steps onto the stage, walking toward Tinker. He has eight or nine arrows stuck into his back.

MURK: Pretty sure.

TINK: Murk!

MURK: I think there's a note on one of them, but I can't reach it. *(He stumbles and then falls to the floor.)*

TINK: Oh no! Hey, you're right. There is a note. *(Takes note attached to arrow. Reads it.)* They've been taken to the other side of the island! And - - oh my gosh - - they're going to eat them!

MURK: *(Weak.)* It must be a trap. Otherwise, why would they leave us a note.

TINK: You've got a good point.

MURK: I know. I've got a lot of them. And they're all very painful. *(He falls unconscious.)*

TINK: Murk! Murk? Speak to me! Oh no! There's only one thing I can do to save him. *(She talks directly to the audience.)* Folks, I need your attention. We've got a fairy officer down, and I need you to help me bring him back. If you really, truly believe in fairies, then we can make Lt. Murk come back to life. Now everyone, all together say: I do believe in fairies! *(Waits for response.)* Don't make me use my pepper spray. Say it nice and loud: I do believe in fairies! Now clap your hands three times. I think it's working. Clap three times again. *(Murk is starting to wake up, but she doesn't see.)* Now, pass this hat around and fill it with money!

MURK: *(Refreshed and revived.)* Hey Tink! I'm okay!

TINK: Darn, I almost got a free hatful of money. *(Helps him up.)* We need to move fast. I'll go save Peter and our fantasy-hating friend. I need you to follow up on a lead. Find the Tick-Tock Crocodile who lives in the swamp. We have reason to believe he may have taken a bite out of Pantaloon's shadow. Good luck! *(She exits.)*

MURK: *(Trying to remove the arrows.)* I'm on the case. Do you got any pliers?

End of ACT ONE, SCENE 3.

ACT ONE, SCENE 4

SETTING:

The Native camp.

AT RISE:

Peter and Brenda are tied to their chairs. They are wrapped up in jungle vines. Upstage, Natives are involved in a ceremonial dance.

PETER: *(Trying to reason with the Natives, who simply ignore him.)*

You aren't planning to eat us, are you? I've just been reading a book called Fairy Food Nation, and it says cannibalism is one of the leading causes of obesity.

NATIVE#1: Do not worry. We are not going to eat you.

BRENDA: Oh thank goodness.

NATIVE#1: We have special guests coming. They are the ones who will eat you! *(Returns upstage.)*

Lily Pad, a beautiful island princess, enters. She sees Peter and her face lights up with joy.

LILY: Peter! *(She runs to his side.)* Oh, Peter, I thought that you had been killed! Thank goodness I'm not too late.

PETER: HI, Lily Pad. I love the new outfit. (*Lily Pad snuggles against him, making him feel uncomfortable.*) Okay, okay, personal space! Do you think you can get us out of here?

LILY: Who's she?

PETER: No one important. Lily, go talk some sense into your father! Tell him to set us free.

LILY: Oh Peter, I love you so much I could just about gobble you up.

PETER: Yeah, well, we're on the menu.

She moves upstage to speak with her father (Native #1) and the others.

BRENDA: Who was that?

PETER: An old friend. I saved her life once. She owes me.

BRENDA: Not that I care about this insane mystery in which I've become involved, but why did she think you had been killed?

PETER: Huh . . . I don't know.

BRENDA: Didn't the detective say that someone may have been trying to kill you instead of just your shadow?

PETER: Oh, Tink says a lot of silly things.

LILY: (*Returning from upstage.*) I'm sorry, Peter. But my father refuses to release you. There is nothing I can do without going against his will.

BRENDA: I doubt you tried very hard.

LILY: What?!

BRENDA: In fact, you'd probably like to see him dead. You're the suspect that should have been arrested! Not me! Not me!!!

LILY: Be quiet, you crazy old woman!

PETER: Hey, Lily Pad, be nice.

BRENDA: I am not an old woman!

PETER: She's not that old.

BRENDA: I'm only thirty-five.

PETER: She's only - good lord - you're ancient!

NATIVE#1: The guests are nearly here. Begin the barbeque!

The Natives set up the fire, which can simply consist of props used to represent firewood and the flames. Even cut-out, painted cardboard can do the trick. In fact, the more “cartoony” they appear, the better.

NATIVE#2: *(Politely to Brenda.)* Are you allergic to garlic?

BRENDA: No.

NATIVE#2: Great! *(Sprinkles garlic all over Peter and Brenda. Then he sticks an apple in each of their mouths.)*

MURK: Let me see this.

The elderly Lost Kids enter. They are upstage, and have not yet noticed Peter’s sticky situation.

NATIVE#1: Ah, the honorable guests, the Lost Kids. Enter old ones.

The feast is about to begin.

FOX: Well thank you, sir. Something sure smells good! What is that you’re roasting over there? It looks like some kind of green orangutan.

BEAR: Ooh, Green Monkey, my favorite!

The Natives exit (except for Native #2). Brenda and Peter spit out their apples.

BRENDA: Can’t they see it’s you?

PETER: Probably not. They all have glaucoma.

BRENDA: Well then shout for help!

PETER: H - -

Native #2 shoves apples back in their mouths. He points a spear at Peter.

RACCOON: *(To the other Lost Kids)* Hey, fella, you know how we need to find a new happy thought for Peter?

SKUNK: Yeah . . .

RACCOON: Let's take him a plateful of this barbeque pork. That'll make him happy!

PETER: *(Spits out apple again.)* It's not roast pork! It's me, you blind fools!

FOX: *(Looking about, squinting.)* Huh? Who said that? *(The Lost Kids stumble further upstage.)*

NATIVE#2: *(Angry.)* You no spit out apple!

PETER: I'm allergic to Red Delicious!

NATIVE#2: Oh. Me get you Granny Smith! *(Exits.)*

BRENDA: Hey you Octogenarians! Turn up your hearing aids and help us!

PETER: Lost Kids! Lululululu!

They follow his voice and stagger towards them.

BEAR: Peter, is that you?

RACCOON: You smell good!

PETER: Shut up and get this fire away from us!

FOX: You heard Peter!

They pick up the fire props and run offstage.

LOST KIDS: *(Ad lib.)* Ow! Ow! Ouch! Ooh! Hot, hot! Very hot!

The Lost Kids exit. Lily Pad approaches.

LILY: *(Carrying a knife.)* Peter, look what I have!

BRENDA: Oh no! She's come back to finish us off!

LILY: *(Uses knife to cut vines and pick lock of handcuff.)* I said I could not free you without going against my father's wishes. Lucky for you, I'm a rebellious child.

The Natives re-enter. They see the prisoners in the midst of escape.

NATIVE#3: Our dinner is trying to escape!

NATIVE#1: Shame upon you, daughter. How could you?

LILY: I love him, Daddy. And I want to be with him for the rest of my life. I want to marry him, have children with him, and grand children, and great-great grand children, and grow old together and die together and be buried together - - all the while holding hands and snuggling!

PETER: *(To Native #1.)* Perhaps you could put me back on the barbeque.

NATIVE#1: *(To the other Natives.)* Kill them immediately.

BRENDA: No! I'm not even supposed to be here! I don't belong in this world!!!

NATIVE#1: What do you mean?

BRENDA: I'm not from Never-ever Land.

NATIVE#1: Then where are you from?

BRENDA: Ohio. *(Feel free to reference your state.)*

NATIVE#1: We have never heard of this "Ohio." Tell us of your world.

BRENDA: What do you mean?

NATIVE#2: Tell us wild and adventurous stories of you homeland.

BRENDA: Huh?

PETER: The Never-ever Land natives simply adore stories.

NATIVE#1: If you tell us a story good enough to make us laugh or cry, you will be set free.

PETER: We accept your challenge. Brenda-lady is an excellent storyteller.

BRENDA: Actually, I'm quite dreadful with stories. Never really understood the point.

NATIVE#3: You tell story now!

NATIVE#1: And it better be good.

The Lost Kids hobble onto the stage.

FOX: Is it storytime? Oh boy!

The Natives and Lost Kids all gather around Brenda. Peter stands nearby.

BRENDA: Well, I suppose I could try . . . let's see . . . you want to know about my world . . . my life back home . . . hmmm. Where do I begin?

PETER: Start with "Once upon a time."

BRENDA: Oh, very well. Once upon a time there was a young woman named Brenda Brooks. She went to college, majored in Library Science with a minor in Linguistics, and now she works at the Johnson County Library.

PETER: Aha, so you're trying to bore them to death! Excellent strategy!

BRENDA: It's not that. It's just. I don't know what else to say.

PETER: Just tell us about the adventures you've been on . . . the heartaches, the victories. Here, I'll help. Tell me about the place where you live.

BRENDA: In a small apartment upstairs from an obnoxious landlord.

PETER: (*Jumping into a very animated storyteller mode.*) Once upon a time a brave woman-warrior lived in a tiny cave that was ruled by a cruel overlord.

BRENDA: I don't know about that, but he had lots of cats, and I'm allergic.

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