

A LITTLE MAGIC

By Whitney Ryan Garrity

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CHARACTERS

(In Order of Appearance)

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| MISS AMELIA NEWCASTLE | The school secretary, devoted to Principal Crown |
| LYNETTE | In a trio of girls who sing as The Songbirds |
| ROBIN | In a trio of girls who sing as The Songbirds |
| GAIL | In a trio of girls who sing as The Songbirds |
| DONNY | Marky's best friend, victim of Earl |
| MARKY | Donny's best friend, victim of Earl |
| EARL | The school bully |
| DELIA STEPFORD | School cheerleader, pretty and snobbish |
| DAISY STEPFORD | Delia's sister, also pretty and snobbish |
| ELLA SINDERS | A lovely girl, but also shy, awkward and insecure |
| DUKE COURTLAND | A meek boy who likes Delia |
| HARLEY QUINN | Duke's comical side-kick |
| NOBLE CROWN | The handsome but melancholy Quarterback and Homecoming King |
| PRINCIPAL REX CROWN | A likable authoritative figure, Noble's father |
| MISS FAYE | The flamboyant Drama teacher |
| ELLEN TERRY | Legendary actress of the past |
| ELEONORA DUSE | Legendary actress of the past |
| SARAH BERNHARDT | Legendary actress of the past |
| JOHNNY THRUSH | A mysterious teen singer |
| ODETTE | A giggly prospect for Homecoming Queen |

SETTING

Brothers Grimm Memorial High School; Not Too Long Ago

PROPERTY LIST

Clipboard (MISS NEWCASTLE)

Pen (MISS NEWCASTLE)

Microphone stand (MISS NEWCASTLE)

Text books (LYNETTE, ROBIN, GAIL, ELLA, HARLEY)

Envelope (MISS NEWCASTLE)

Gown (TRUNK)

Cape (TRUNK)

Gloves (TRUNK)

Red shoes (TRUNK)

Do Not Copy

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ACT I

SCENE 1: MORNING

AT RISE: *The Lights fade up to reveal a unit set consisting of a series of platforms, connected by ramps and steps. On each side, tall turrets are adorned with waving flags. The backdrop depicts a row of colorful lockers. Centered over the stage is a huge ornamental crest with the monogram BGM. Streamers of brilliant gold and purple flow from the crest to the sides of the proscenium. Presently, MISS AMELIA NEWCASTLE enters from DSR, carrying a clipboard and a microphone on a stand. SHE sets the microphone stand down in front of her and speaks into it tentatively and somewhat flustered.*

MISS NEWCASTLE: Hello? *(Taps the microphone)* Is this ... is this thing on? *(Taps the microphone again, causing a loud burst of feedback noise. SHE clamps her hand over the microphone, to stifle the noise.)* Oh, dear! *(Uncovering the microphone.)* Oh, well ... *(Gamely)* Good morning, students of Brothers Grimm Memorial High School. This is Miss Newcastle announcing the ... um ... announcements! *(Consults the clipboard)* First off, the school would like to congratulate the Royal Knights for their victory against the Dreaded Dragons in yesterday's exciting football game! *(Spiritedly)* Boy! We really gave those Dragons a thrashing, didn't we? Yessir, we certainly routed them, all right! We mopped field with those no-good, dirty— *(Catching herself)* Oh, dear! Perhaps that was a trifle overzealous! Sorry! *(Clears her throat and consults the clipboard again.)* Special credit should go to Football Captain and Quarterback, Noble Crown – son of our glorious leader, Principal Crown! *(Sighs lovingly, then clears her throat again, embarrassed.)* Way to go, Noble and the Knights! Also, the Homecoming Committee announces that this year's theme will be a masquerade ball. *(Excitedly)* Oh now, won't that be delightful? *(Sighs dreamily)* I remember *my* Homecoming Dance! I wore the prettiest little Alice blue gown, with a jeweled bodice and cinched waist. Of course, back then, I had the figure to— *(Stops abruptly, embarrassed)* But I digress! Sorry! In any case, enjoy your day, students. This is Miss Newcastle saying ... *(Taps the microphone again, causing the*

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feedback noise. SHE clamps her hand over the microphone.) Oh, dear! I hope I was on!

(MISS NEWCASTLE shrugs and exits DSR, with the clipboard and microphone stand. A School Bell sounds. LYNETTE, ROBIN and GAIL enter, carrying textbooks and chirping excitedly.)

LYNETTE: Okay, okay, girls ... let's try it once more.

LYNETTE, ROBIN and GAIL: *(Singing a-cappella) Doo-doo-do-wah!*

LYNETTE: *(Pacing)* Hmmm ... not bad. Of course, we're going to need more rehearsals.

ROBIN: Lynette, we've been rehearsing practically non-stop for nearly two weeks now!

GAIL: Yeah! *Doo-doo-* do you mind if we take a break?

LYNETTE: *(Stop pacing)* A break? No, we cannot take a break, Gail! We have to be perfect. Do you understand? Perfect! *(Excitedly)* Just think of it, girls! Teen-idol Johnny Thrush has asked us ... *us* ... to sing backup for him at the Homecoming Dance! This ... this could be our big break - the gig that could finally put us, as the Songbirds, over the top!

GAIL: *(Dryly)* If we live through the rehearsals!

ROBIN: I have a question, Lynette. Does singing at the Homecoming Dance mean that we won't be able to *dance* at the Homecoming dance? I was kind of hoping that Noble Crown would ask me.

LYNETTE: *(Scoffs)* Right, Robin ... you and every other girl in the school! Especially Delia and Daisy Stepford. You can just bet *they* are going to pounce on Noble!

GAIL: Do you think that Noble will even come to the dance?

ROBIN: Why wouldn't he? He's the Homecoming King.

GAIL: Well ... I mean, he hasn't been to *any* parties or dances since ... well, since *you know!*

ROBIN: I'm sure that Noble isn't going to miss the Homecoming Dance, Gail. I mean, *everybody* is going to be there!

LYNETTE: And that is all the more reason to keep rehearsing, girls!

GAIL: *(Aside, to ROBIN)* I think she's trying to *doo-do-* do us in!

(LYNETTE, ROBIN and GAIL start off as DONNY and MARKY enter.)

LYNETTE: *(Leading the GIRLS past DONNY and MARKY)* Sorry. No time to chat, boys.

(LYNETTE exits. ROBIN and GAIL look at DONNY and MARKY apologetically and follow her off.)

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MARKY: Drat! Robin was standing right here and I didn't ask her to the Dance!

DONNY: Why didn't you?

MARKY: (*Nervously*) Because she was standing right here!

DONNY: I know what you mean, buddy. I was gonna ask Gail ... but I was afraid she'd say "no." And I was even more afraid she'd say "yes!"

MARKY: Well, my friend. It looks like we'll be going to the dance by ourselves this year ... again!

DONNY: Okay ... but this time, I get to lead!

(*EARL swaggers in, joining DONNY and MARKY.*)

EARL: Well, well, well! Look who it is ... Tweedle-Dum and Tweedle-Dumber!

MARKY: (*Meekly*) Hello, Earl.

DONNY: Always nice to see you, Earl.

EARL: Gee, I'm flattered. But instead of payin' me compliments, how 'bout payin' me some dough? Come on, dweebs, fork over the lunch money!

DONNY: Again?

MARKY: Earl, we haven't had a hot lunch since the third grade!

EARL: Yeah, well ... I had the chicken pox that year! Now, cough up the money!

DONNY: You know what, Earl? You're a bully!

EARL: (*Getting into DONNY's face*) Yeah ... so? You leadin' up to a point here?

DONNY: (*A nervous, high-pitched voice*) My point ... (*Clears his throat, speaks normally*) My point is that it's about time that someone stood up to you! (*DONNY scrambles behind MARKY and pushes him forward.*) Go ahead, Marky!

MARKY: Me?! (*MARKY scrambles behind DONNY and pushes him forward.*) You tell him off, Donny!

DONNY: Okay ... (*Nervously*) Well ... uh ... Earl ... sir! You better ... I mean, we would appreciate it if you ... that is to say ... (*DONNY quickly produces money from his pocket and thrusts it at EARL.*) *Bon Appetit!*

EARL: (*Laughing*) Thanks! See you guys tomorrow. (*Exits*)

MARKY: (*Sarcastically*) That's tellin' him!

DONNY: Look who's talkin'! I didn't see you – (*Looking off-stage*) Ohm-gosh! Here come the Stepford Sisters!

(*MARKY and DONNY adjust their hair and clothing in perfect unison.*)

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Do you think *they* would go to the dance with us?

MARKY: Delia and Daisy? They could have their pick ... (*Shrugs*) So why would they pick us?

DONNY: (*Rallying*) Oh, come on! I mean, look at us! We're ... well, I mean, at least we're ... (*Defeated*) We're not going to have dates for the Dance, are we?

MARKY: Look on the bright side, Donny. With Earl around, maybe we'll starve to death *before* the Dance!

(*DELIA and DAISY STEPFORD enter. THEY are very pretty girls in matching cheerleader uniforms.*)

MARKY: Hi, Delia.

DONNY: Hi, Daisy.

DELIA: (*Distastefully*) Daisy, do you hear something?

DAISY: You mean, those two boys attempting to engage us in conversation?

(*DELIA glares at DAISY, DAISY shrinks.*)

No, Delia. I didn't hear anything.

MARKY: (*Throwing up his arms in defeat*) Come on, Donny.

(*MARKY and DONNY exit.*)

DELIA: (*Fuming*) Imagine the nerve!

DAISY: (*Matching DELIA's tone*) Yeah, the nerve!

DELIA: Expecting to talk to *us*!

DAISY: Yeah, *us*! (*Shrugs*) Of course, one of them was kind of cute.

DELIA: Daisy, please. You forget yourself. We are the most beautiful and popular girls at Brothers Grimm Memorial High School, are we not?

DAISY: We are!

DELIA: And as such, we have a certain image to maintain.

DAISY: We do!

DELIA: We cannot be seen talking to just anyone! Besides, look at us...

(*THEY do.*)

We could have any boy we want!

DAISY: We could! (*Pause*) So who do we want?

DELIA: Why, Noble Crown, of course.

DAISY: (*Noncommittal*) Oh, yes. Well, he's nice ...

DELIA: (*In disbelief*) Nice? He's *nice*? He's handsome, tall and strong – not to mention the Head Quarterback, Captain of the Football Team and Homecoming King. Noble Crown is certainly a fitting catch for girls of our beauty, grace and social standing. And I am confident that the Homecoming Dance will provide the proper setting to cause Noble to finally succumb to our obvious charms, falling head over heels in love with me ... (*Off-handedly*) Or you, as the case may be.

DAISY: You know, I've never really understood that expression "head over heels", I mean isn't it normal for a person's head to be over their heels?

(*DELIA glares at DAISY and SHE shrinks.*)

Um ... besides ... what if Noble doesn't attend the Dance?

DELIA: Nonsense! He's already been elected Homecoming King. He has to be there to select me ... (*Off-handedly*) Or you, as the case may be ... (*Regally*) As his Queen!

DAISY: But what about this mother?

DELIA: Don't be silly, Daisy. Why would Noble choose his mother as Homecoming Queen?

DAISY: No, I mean that since Noble lost his mother last year, he hasn't really shown much interest in dances. (*Sympathetically*) He hasn't shown much interest anything, for that matter!

DELIA: (*Annoyed*) First, Noble did not *lose* his mother, Daisy. You lose things like gloves and umbrellas. Noble's mother died. And second, perhaps poor Noble simply needs someone to help him take his mind of his troubles. Someone like me ... (*Off-handedly*) Or you, as the case may be.

DAISY: (*Looking off-stage*) Oh, look. Here comes that Ella girl.

DELIA: (*Sympathetically*) Tsk, tsk. Such a poor, unfortunate creature.

(*DELIA laughs cruelly and DAISY joins in, as ELLA SINDERS enters. SHE is an unprepossessing girl, wearing glasses and laden down with books.*)

ELLA: (*Timid but cordial*) Hello, Daisy. (*Warily*) Delia. (*Moving away*) I'm just on my way to –

DELIA: (*Moving to ELLA; in a mock-friendly tone*) Well, hello there. (*Taking ELLA's arm*) Ella, isn't it?

(*ELLA nods.*)

Daisy and I were just talking about the Homecoming Dance!

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DAISY: We were?

(DELIA glares at DAISY. DAISY shrinks, then moves to ELLA's other side.)

I mean, we were!

ELLA: *(Spiritedly)* Oh, yes ...it sounds like it should be fun!

(Withdrawing) I mean, well with the masquerade ball and all.

DELIA: Well, we'll be sure and tell you all about it.

ELLA: Oh, well ... that's awfully nice of you— *(Breaks away from DELIA and DAISY)* Wait ... what makes you think that I won't be there too?

DELIA: You? At the Dance?!

(DELIA cackles cruelly. SHE stops abruptly and glares at DAISY. DAISY cackles half-heartedly.)

I mean, can you imagine what she would wear, Daisy?

DAISY: Now, Delia ...

DELIA: Oh, you're right ... what would it matter? Who would dance with her anyway!

ELLA: *(Angrily)* Oh! You think you're so special! Just because you're beautiful and you're popular ...

DELIA: Well ... yes.

ELLA: You think you can do or say anything that you please ...

DELIA: Well ... yes.

ELLA: Well, you know, someday ... someday, things could be very different around here!

DELIA: They could be, but they won't be. So why don't you just run along and ... do whatever pathetic little things it is you do? We have much more important people to discuss.

DAISY: You mean like when we were discussing Noble Crown?

(DELIA glares at DAISY and SHE shrinks.)

ELLA: *(Sighing)* Noble Crown? *(Catches herself)* I mean ...

(Nonchalantly) That name sounds familiar.

DELIA: Why, Daisy! I do believe our friend Ella here has a little crush on Noble!

ELLA: *(Embarrassed)* No, I—

DELIA: *(Laughs)* Oh, Daisy! Can't you just picture Noble with the likes of her? Can you imagine him asking Ella instead of one of us?

DAISY: But he hasn't asked one of us.

(DELIA glares at DAISY, then turns back to ELLA.)

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DELIA: Maybe he'll even make you his Homecoming Queen at the Dance! Queen Ella ... *(Laughs)* Maybe we should bow to her, Daisy. *(DELIA executes an elaborate mock curtsy to ELLA. SHE turns to DAISY, commandingly.)* Bow to her, Daisy!

(DAISY sighs, exasperated, and curtsies to ELLA.)

ELLA: You think you're so funny!

DELIA: Well ... yes. *(Pulling ELLA aside)* But ... just between you and me, sweetie. I wouldn't go polishing your tiara just yet. The fact is Noble Crown doesn't even know someone like you exists. Now ... run along.

(ELLA runs off, holding back tears.)

DAISY: Was that really necessary, Delia? I think you made her cry.

DELIA: What? Can I help it if the girl's emotional? Besides, what is she to you? *(Pulling DAISY off to the side)* Now, let me you tell about the dress I've found for the Dance!

(DELIA and DAISY engage in a hushed conversation, as DUKE COURTLAND enters, followed by HARLEY QUINN.)

DUKE: *(Looking at DELIA)* There she is! *(Sighs)* Isn't she beautiful?

HARLEY: *(Looking at DAISY, sighs)* She sure is!

DUKE: What I wouldn't give for the opportunity to escort Delia Stepford to the Homecoming Dance.

HARLEY: Delia? I was talking about Daisy.

DUKE: *(Dejectedly)* Oh, what's the difference? We have the same chance with one as with the other – no chance!

HARLEY: Oh, come on now. Don't take you yourself out of the game before you even get to bat. You can't score a touchdown that way!

(DUKE gives HARLEY an incredulous look.)

I mean ... well, you know what I mean. What is the worst thing that could happen if you marched over there right now and asked Delia to the dance?

DUKE: Well, let's see ... she could laugh in my face and humiliate me in front of the whole school!

HARLEY: *(Nods)* Well, yeah ... there is that.

DUKE: And what about you? Go on over there and ask Daisy, why don't you?

HARLEY: All right, I will!

(Much to DUKE's surprise, HARLEY moves to DELIA and DAISY. DUKE follows.)

HARLEY: Hey, Daisy!

DAISY: (Pleased) Harley!

DELIA: (Not pleased) What do the two of you want?

HARLEY: Well, I was wondering if ... maybe ... perhaps ... you would consider attending the Homecoming Dance with me? (Clutches DUKE) Man, that was hard!

DUKE: You did great!

HARLEY: Am I still breathing?

DUKE: (Pushing HARLEY off him) You're fine!

DAISY: I'd like that very much, Harley.

HARLEY: (Moving away, dejected) Oh, well. Thanks anyway.

DUKE: (Grabbing HARLEY and pulling him back) You idiot! She said "yes"!

HARLEY: She did?

DELIA: She did?!

DAISY: I did!

DELIA: (Politely, to DUKE and HARLEY) Would you gentlemen please excuse us for a moment?

(DUKE and HARLEY shrug and move away. DELIA turns to DAISY, shouting angrily.)

Have you lost complete control of your senses?!

DAISY: (Flinching) Well, maybe just my hearing! Why are you shouting at me?

DELIA: What on earth possessed you to say "yes" to Harley Quinn? I mean ... (Shudders distastefully) Harley Quinn! (Looking over at DUKE and HARLEY) Now, Duke I could understand, but—

DAISY: (Gleefully) Oh, so you like Duke, do you?

DELIA: (Coyly) Well ... let's just say that I *would* like Duke ... if he wasn't completely beneath me. I certainly wouldn't consider attending the biggest event of the school year with him! Image, dear sister. Image is everything!

DAISY: And just who *are* you planning to attend the Dance with, Delia?

DELIA: Well, I ...

DAISY: Delia, the Dance is a day away and we – the most beautiful and popular girls in school – still, as of yet, have not been asked! It seems impossible ...

DELIA: Yes, it does!

DAISY: But it's true.

DELIA: (Realizing) Yes, it is!

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DAISY: If we don't have dates, we can't go and if we don't go, Noble cannot possibly pick me as his Queen ... *(Off-handedly)* Or you, as the case may be.

DELIA: But Duke and Harley?

DAISY: Of course, we could always attend the Dance *unescorted* ... how's that for an image, sister dear?

(DELIA takes this in for a moment and then rushes quickly to DUKE and HARLEY. DAISY follows, a very self-satisfied smile on her face.)

DELIA: *(Panicked)* Boys ...!! *(Regaining her composure)* I mean ... hello, boys. Harley, I've decided to allow you to escort my sister to the Dance after all.

HARLEY: *(High-fives DUKE)* All right! *(Embarrassed)* I mean, I'd be delighted.

DELIA: *(Closing in on DUKE)* And Duke ... isn't there something that you would like to ask *me*?

DUKE: Well, yes ... actually there is.

(DUKE clears his throat and takes a deep breath. HE shakes his arms, letting out the breath. HE looks into DELIA's eyes.)

Are those contact lenses?

DELIA: *(Hitting DUKE impatiently)* I mean about the Dance, you moron!

DUKE: Oh! You mean, you'd actually consider going to—

DELIA: *(Quickly)* I'd love to!

DUKE: You would?

HARLEY: She would?!

DELIA: *(Annoyed)* I would!!

DUKE: Well then, I guess it's a date. You and me ...

HARLEY: And me and Daisy!

(DAISY takes HARLEY's arm.)

DUKE: *(To HARLEY)* Oh, man. Wait till we tell—

DELIA: Oh, now. Let's just keep this our little secret, shall we?

DUKE: Oh, sure.

HARLEY: Of course.

DUKE and HARLEY: We understand. *(Pause)* Why?

DAISY: Oh ... well, because ...

DELIA: Because it's so much more romantic that way!

DUKE: Oh, sure.

HARLEY: Of course.

DUKE and HARLEY: We understand. *(Pause)* It is?

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DELIA: *(Annoyed)* Yes, it is! *(Catching herself)* I mean ... *(Sweetly)* Of course it is. Now, Daisy and I must be off, but we'll see you boys later. And remember it's a secret. *(Aside to DAISY, as SHE pulls her away)* As soon as one of us is crowned, we dump them like hot potatoes!

DAISY: Whatever you say, sis.

(DAISY waves sweetly to HARLEY, as SHE and DELIA exit.)

HARLEY: Wow, if I had known it was that easy to get a date, I would've tried it years ago!

(DUKE and HARLEY move to another platform. A bench is in place. THEY are joined by NOBLE CROWN. HE is a handsome but serious-looking teen, wearing a gym uniform.)

DUKE: *(Excited)* Noble ...!

HARLEY: Guess who we're taking to the Homecoming Dance?

NOBLE: Who?

(DUKE and HARLEY look to each other and then back to NOBLE.)

DUKE and HARLEY: We can't tell you.

NOBLE: Oh. *(Shrugs)* Well, I guess congratulations anyway.

(NOBLE unties his sneakers and removes them. HE produces a pair of jeans from a locker and puts them on, over his gym shorts. DUKE and HARLEY stand awkwardly.)

HARLEY: *(Patting NOBLE on the back)* So ... Noble, great game the other night. Nobody passes like you. Boy, I don't know what the team would do without you.

DUKE: *(Hurt, sits on the bench)* Hey! I'm on the team too, you know!

HARLEY: Oh, yeah. Sorry, buddy. *(Pats DUKE on the back)* Nobody warms a bench like you. Boy, I don't know what the team ...

DUKE: *(Annoyed)* Never mind! *(To NOBLE)* So who are you taking to the Dance, Noble? Decided yet?

NOBLE: *(Putting his sneakers back on)* Well, according to tradition, as the King, I'm supposed to come alone. I select my Queen at midnight. That is, if I go at all.

HARLEY: If?!

DUKE: You mean, you might not go?

NOBLE: Oh, come on, guys. *(Pulls off his shirt)* It's just a silly, little dance with a bunch of silly, little traditions. *(Produces a shirt from*

the locker) I've got better things to do with my time. (*Puts on the other shirt and tosses the gym shirt into the locker*)

DUKE: Oh, sure.

HARLEY: Of course.

DUKE and HARLEY: We understand. (*Pause*) Like what?

NOBLE: Oh, you know ... things!

DUKE: Look, Noble. We're friends, right?

NOBLE: Right.

HARLEY: And we can talk, right?

NOBLE: We're talking now.

DUKE and HARLEY: Right!

DUKE: (*Uncomfortable*) Well, Noble ... it seems to me ... to us, I mean ... that you ...

HARLEY: What Duke is tryin' to say is ... well, I think ... I mean, we think ... that you ...

DUKE: (*Quickly*) You just haven't been the same since ... (*Faltering*) Since ...

HARLEY: Since your mother's been ...

DUKE and HARLEY: Gone.

NOBLE: (*Suddenly angry*) Gone? She isn't *gone*, guys! She didn't just disappear in a puff of smoke – *poof* – like magic! She died. And you're right, I'm not the same. How could I be? Should I just go on as if it didn't happen? Or like it doesn't matter? Or like I don't care? Well, it *did* happen and it *does* matter and I *do* care! So I'm not the same. And I can't go to all these stupid parties and dances and pretend that everything is fine. (*Sits with sigh*) I'm sorry, guys. I know that this Dance means a lot to you. I wish it meant something to me, but it doesn't. Not much does anymore. But you know something? The Homecoming Dance sure meant a lot to my mom. That's where she first met my dad – at *his* Homecoming Dance!

HARLEY: (*Awed*) Wow! I can't imagine Principal Crown at a dance ... dancing!

NOBLE: (*Laughs*) My dad wasn't *always* Principal Crown, you know!

DUKE: Well, I sure hope you change your mind and come to the Dance. But if you don't, I'll understand.

HARLEY: Me too!

NOBLE: (*Getting to his feet*) Thanks, guys.

(*DUKE and HARLEY exit. NOBLE retrieves a book from his locker and closes the locker. ELLA enters from the opposite side. SHE spots NOBLE and freezes, watching him longingly. The Lights dim as NOBLE and ELLA are separated by Spotlights – worlds apart, each lost in his/her own thoughts.*)

(Admonishing himself) Oh, Noble ...

ELLA: *(Admonishing herself)* Oh, Ella ...

NOBLE and ELLA: Just look at yourself! Pining away for someone ...

NOBLE: Who isn't even alive!

ELLA: Who doesn't even know you're alive!

NOBLE: If only she could hold me ...

ELLA: If only I could hold him ...

NOBLE: Once more!

ELLA: Just once!

NOBLE and ELLA: If I could tell her [him] ...

ELLA: How I feel.

NOBLE: What I'm feeling.

ELLA: In my dreams ...

NOBLE and ELLA: I see her [him] ...

NOBLE: In my dreams.

ELLA: So strong ...

NOBLE: So warm ...

ELLA: So handsome ...

NOBLE: So fair ...

ELLA: So wonderful.

NOBLE: So wise. And in my dreams ...

NOBLE and ELLA: We're together ...

ELLA: In my dreams.

NOBLE: But then, it's morning ...

ELLA: *(Overlapping)* Morning comes ...

NOBLE and ELLA: And she [he] is gone ...

NOBLE: *Poof!*

ELLA: Like magic!

NOBLE and ELLA: And I'm alone.

(The Lights are restored. NOBLE spots ELLA and moves to her, embarrassed.)

NOBLE: Oh ...

ELLA: *(Overlapping)* I'm sorry ...

NOBLE: *(Overlapping)* I didn't realize ...

ELLA: I was just ...

PRINCIPAL CROWN: *(Calling from off-stage)* Noble ...!

(ELLA runs off, frightened.)

NOBLE: Wait!

(*PRINCIPAL CROWN enters. HE is an imposing man, with a business-like stride. PRINCIPAL CROWN is followed by MISS NEWCASTLE, carrying her clipboard.*)

PRINCIPAL CROWN: Noble, I wanted to talk to you about—

MISS NEWCASTLE: Principal Crown, you'll be late for your meeting with Mrs. Bugbear, from the PTA. Do you remember what happened the last time you kept her waiting, sir?

PRINCIPAL CROWN: Yes. Make sure you hide all the breakables in my office, Miss Newcastle. Better nail down my desk too!

MISS NEWCASTLE: (*Jotting down on her clipboard*) Got it, sir.

PRINCIPAL CROWN: (*Laughs*) Miss Newcastle, I was joking. I can handle Mrs. Bugbear.

MISS NEWCASTLE: (*Smiles*) Of course you can, sir. (*Muttering to herself as SHE writes*) Hide the breakables.

NOBLE: So ... um ... you were looking for me, Dad?

PRINCIPAL CROWN: Yes, I wanted to ... (*Turns to MISS*

NEWCASTLE) Could we have a moment alone, Miss Newcastle?

MISS NEWCASTLE: (*Looking up from her clipboard, adoringly*) Nothing would please me more, Principal Crown! (*Embarrassed*) Oh! You meant with *him* ... and without *me*! Well, of course you did. So I'll just go and ... uh ... nail down a desk! (*Scurries off*)

PRINCIPAL CROWN: (*His hand on NOBLE's shoulder*) Noble, I'm worried about you. I know that this past year hasn't been easy for you ... for either of us ... but I was hoping that, with time, things would ... you know ... get better. And now, I hear that you're not planning to attend the Homecoming Dance. So I just think—

NOBLE: (*Pulling away*) Oh, not you too! I would think if anyone could understand how I feel, it would be you!

PRINCIPAL CROWN: And I do, believe me, I do. I just don't want you miss out on any more of the joys of being young.

NOBLE: Some joys!

PRINCIPAL CROWN: But there could be joys, Noble. And there *should* be! (*Pause*) I bet your mother would want you to go to the Dance. Regina certainly wouldn't want to be the reason that you were missing out on a major and enjoyable part of your life.

NOBLE: That's not fair, Dad.

PRINCIPAL CROWN: I only have to be fair when I'm Principal Crown. When I'm just your dad, fairness is optional ... like tinted windows or power steering! (*Puts his arm around NOBLE paternally*) Look, son. I simply don't want you look back on this part of your life and say "I wish I had". Besides you've already been elected Homecoming King! That's a great honor. Why, I remember when *I* was elected King ...

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NOBLE: Dad, if I promise to think about it, can we skip the story?

PRINCIPAL CROWN: (*Offering his hand*) Deal!

NOBLE: (*Shaking PRINCIPAL CROWN's hand*) You're a fair man, Principal Crown. And a pretty fair dad too!

PRINCIPAL CROWN: As your dad, I say thank you. As your Principal, I say run along to class before I give you a detention!

NOBLE: (*Laughs*) Okay, okay!

(*NOBLE exits. PRINCIPAL CROWN watches him, concerned. MISS NEWCASTLE hurries on and joins PRINCIPAL CROWN*)

MISS NEWSCASTLE: I lingered nearby ... sensing you might need me!

PRINCIPAL CROWN: (*Pacing*) Oh, what am I going to do about that boy, Miss Newcastle? It's been a year and he's still ... well, he's just not the same is all!

MISS NEWCASTLE: And what about you?

PRINCIPAL CROWN: (*Stops pacing*) Me? Well, at least I'm trying to move on with my life! I'm not turning down opportunities to—

(*MISS NEWCASTLE pulls out an envelope from her clipboard and waves it at PRINCIPAL CROWN.*)

What's that?

MISS NEWCASTLE: Your letter to the Homecoming Committee – declining to attend the Dance as a chaperone! (*Shrugs*) I just happened to see it out in plain sight ... underneath a few things ... on your desk!

PRINCIPAL CROWN: Oh, but that's different!

(*MISS NEWCASTLE gives him a look.*)

It is! They want me to go to that ... I mean, that's how I met Regina and I just can't ... I'm not ready to ... (*Sighs*) I guess you're right. Maybe if I go, Noble will too.

MISS NEWSCASTLE: (*Handing him the envelope*) Perhaps the time has come to practice what you preach, sir.

PRINCIPAL CROWN: (*Pacing again*) Now I suppose I will have to find some sort of a date to bring to the—

MISS NEWCASTLE: (*Elated*) I'd love to!

PRINCIPAL CROWN: (*Stops abruptly*) No, I wasn't—

MISS NEWCASTLE: (*Excitedly*) I'm afraid I am going to need the rest of the day off, Principal Crown! I must get out my old Alice blue gown! (*Accesses her figure*) Oh! Then I must let out my old Alice blue gown! (*Turns to PRINCIPAL CROWN*) Oh, won't this be fun?

(MISS NEWCASTLE rushes off, leaving PRINCIPAL CROWN dumbfounded.)

PRINCIPAL CROWN: But Miss Newcastle ...! I didn't mean ... *(Sighs)*
Oh, what the heck!

(PRINCIPAL CROWN tears the envelope in half and exits as the Lights...)

BLACK OUT

SCENE 2: THE NEXT DAY

AT RISE: LYNETTE marches on, ROBIN and GAIL follow wearily.

LYNETTE, ROBIN and GAIL: *(Pathetically)* Doo-doo-do-wah!

LYNETTE: Well! That was certainly a doo-doo-do-don't!

ROBIN: We're tired!

GAIL: I couldn't doo another wah if my life depended on it!

(DELIA and DAISY enter from the opposite side, pantomiming conversation.)

LYNETTE: Oh, now that's a fine attitude! Need I remind you both that
we are going to be performing in front ...

ROBIN: *(Overlapping, intoning dutifully)* In front of the whole school ...

GAIL: *(Intoning)* ... at the biggest event of the year ...

ROBIN and GAIL: ... with the one and only Johnny Thrush!

LYNETTE: *(Satisfied)* Good! I needn't remind you.

(DELIA has overheard this, SHE rushes to the GIRLS. DAISY follows.)

DELIA: Excuse me, did you just say Johnny Thrush ...?

LYNETTE: Yes.

DELIA: ... is going to be performing here ...?

LYNETTE and ROBIN: Yes.

DELIA: At the Homecoming Dance?!

LYNETTE, ROBIN and GAIL: Yes!

LYNETTE: And what's more, Johnny Thrush has chosen us to sing with
him! See, we've formed a little trio that we call—

DELIA: *(Waving THEM off dismissively)* Yes, yes! I'm thrilled for you!
So sorry that you have rush off!

GAIL: But we don't have to ...

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(DELIA gives THEM a menacing look.)

Oh my ...!

ROBIN: Look at the time ...!

LYNETTE: We must rush off!

(LYNETTE, ROBIN and GAIL exit quickly.)

DELIA: (*Excitedly*) Daisy, did you hear that?

DAISY: Johnny Thrush is going to be here, at the school, to perform at the Homecoming dance!

DELIA: (*Satisfied*) Good! You heard.

DAISY: And those girls have formed a little—

DELIA: (*Annoyed*) Oh, who cares about them? (*Growing more and more excited*) Johnny Thrush is going to be here! *The* Johnny Thrush! I adore him! I worship him! Why, I'd ... crawl over miles of broken glass just to get a glimpse of him!

DAISY: (*Dryly*) Kind of rough on the ol' image, don't you think? Not to mention the knees!

DELIA: Okay, so maybe I got a little carried away.

DAISY: Careful, or that's exactly what will happen to you!

DELIA: (*Sighs dreamily*) Oh, but Daisy! He's so wonderfully mysterious! No one knows his true identity, because he always wears a mask while performing! Why, I'll bet that's the reason that the Dance is going to be a masquerade! Perhaps I shall have the chance to de-mask him ... (*Thinks a moment*) I mean, *dis*-mask him ...

DAISY: (*Helpfully*) Unmask him.

DELIA: (*Annoyed*) I was getting to that one! (*Excited*) Oh, just think of it, Daisy! What a wonderful opportunity for romance to bloom ... an evening with Johnny Thrush! (*Dreamily*) Just the two of us!

DAISY: And Duke.

DELIA: (*Coming out of her revelry*) Duke?

DAISY: Your date for the Dance!

DELIA: Oh, dear! I forgot about Duke!

DAISY: Apparently!

DELIA: Well ... (*Sweetly*) Once we get to the Dance, I'll simply have to find a nice, polite way ... (*Cruelly*) To dump poor Duke like yesterday's fish wrapped in last week's newspaper! Then I will be free to make my move on Johnny Thrush!

DAISY: You're all heart, sis!

(DELIA and DAISY exit. NOBLE enters from one side, as ELLA enters from another. Upon seeing NOBLE, ELLA turns to rush off again.)

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NOBLE: Hey, wait!

ELLA: (*Frightened, looking around*) Who? Me?

NOBLE: Did I see you here yesterday?

ELLA: (*Attempting to appear nonchalant*) Oh, well ... it is possible, of course. It's a pretty small school!

NOBLE: Yeah, I turned and suddenly you were there ... and then, just as suddenly, you were gone! (*Offering his hand*) Oh ... I'm Noble Crown.

ELLA: (*Taking his hand; gushing*) I know! (*Pulling away quickly*) I mean, everyone at Brothers Grimm Memorial High School knows who you are! (*Ticking off on her fingers*) The principal's son ... Captain of the Football team ... Homecoming King ...

NOBLE: (*Shrugging*) Yeah ... I guess.

ELLA: You must be very excited about the Dance.

NOBLE: Not really. I'm not even sure that I'll go.

ELLA: Not go? But you must! I mean, I know this year has been hard for you. But do you really think your mother would want to see you this unhappy all the time?

(*NOBLE turns away.*)

Please forgive me, Noble. I don't know why I said that. I mean, here I am, a perfect stranger, trying to tell you how to ... (*Pause*) It's just that this Dance means so much to so many people! It would be a great disappointment if you weren't there.

NOBLE: (*Turning to ELLA*) What about you?

ELLA: (*Nervously*) What about me?

NOBLE: Would you be disappointed?

ELLA: (*Laughs self-consciously*) Oh, I seriously doubt that I'll be at the Dance!

NOBLE: Why not?

ELLA: I just don't think that—

NOBLE: It would be a great disappointment if you weren't there ... to me!

ELLA: Does that mean that you'll attend?

NOBLE: Yes, I guess it does. And you will too.

ELLA: No, I—

PRINCIPAL CROWN: (*Off*) Noble ...?

ELLA: I better go!

(*ELLA runs off. PRINCIPAL CROWN enters.*)

NOBLE: (*Calling after ELLA*) Wait ...! (*Turns to PRINCIPAL CROWN*) I really wish you would stop doing that!

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PRINCIPAL CROWN: What?

NOBLE: Never mind. I have good news for you! I've decided to attend the Homecoming Dance after all.

PRINCIPAL CROWN: That's wonderful, Noble. *(Putting his arm around NOBLE's shoulder)* Ah, just think! Soon I will be able to say what every father longs to say!

NOBLE: What's that?

PRINCIPAL CROWN: My son ... the King!

NOBLE: *(Rolling his eyes)* Dad!

(THEY start off together.)

PRINCIPAL CROWN: Why are you never in class?

NOBLE: *(Shrugs)* It's good to be the King!

(NOBLE and PRINCIPAL CROWN are gone. ELLA re-enters warily. The Lights dim as ELLA is illuminated by a Spotlight.)

ELLA: *(Dreamily)* If only I could attend the Dance! I can just picture it ... the music would swell majestically as I make my entrance. Every head would turn, every eye upon me ... *(Coming out of her revelry quickly)* And then, Delia Stepford would lead the entire student body in a riotous chorus of humiliating laughter! *(Dejected)* Oh, who am I kidding? How could I possibly go to the Dance? What would I wear? I have nothing ... certainly nothing that would be suitable for a masquerade ball! I'd need some sort of elaborate—

(As a light registers in ELLA's head, so too the Lights fade up on stage. MISS FAYE is revealed, standing next to a very large, very old trunk. MISS FAYE is a dramatic, flamboyantly dressed woman.)

Costume! That's it! Perhaps, Miss Faye, the Drama teacher, can help me.

MISS FAYE: *(Joining ELLA CS)* You beckoned, dear child?

ELLA: *(Startled)* Oh! Well, yes ... I guess I did.

MISS FAYE: Come, come child! I am a busy woman with much to do. *(Thinking)* Of course, if I didn't have much to do, then I wouldn't be very busy, would I? But that is neither here ... *(Gestures)* Nor there! *(Gestures)* So tell me, what is this all about?

ELLA: Well, I suppose it's about the Dance.

MISS FAYE: Ah, yes! The dance is the thing, you know. Or is that, the play is the thing? I always get that confused. Of course, some people dance at play and some people play at dance – which is wrong, for dancing should be taken quite seriously. But that is

neither here ... nor there! (*Turning HER attention to ELLA*) You wish to speak with me about the Dance? Is it instruction that you seek? I just so happen to be well-versed in the waltz, foxtrot, polka, rumba, cha-cha and gavotte ... (*Confidentially*) Truth be told, my gavotte is a tad rusty!

ELLA: No, I wish to go to the Dance. The Homecoming Dance, that is. Only ...

MISS FAYE: Well, spit it out, child! What is it that you wish? Ask not, get not ... as I always say. Actually, I don't always say that. As a matter of fact, I believe that is the very first time I have said that! But that is neither here ...

ELLA: (*Impatiently*) Nor there! Yes, I know. Miss Faye, would you happen to have something that I could wear? Some sort of costume...?

MISS FAYE: Costume? Oh, my heavens, yes! Have I got costumes! I am lousy with costumes, my dear! But you are looking for something *special*, aren't you, child?

ELLA: Well, yes.

MISS FAYE: And not just for the Dance ...

ELLA: Well, no.

MISS FAYE: I suspect there's a young man ...

ELLA: Well, yes!

MISS FAYE: So you will need something positively *enchanting*!

ELLA: Well ... (*Curious*) Enchanting?

MISS FAYE: Something that will cast a spell upon all those who behold you! And especially, one person in particular ... no?

ELLA: (*Dreamily*) Yes!

MISS FAYE: Come, my child. Let us see what we can find. (*Leads ELLA to the trunk. SHE raps on it 3 times.*) Yoo-hoo? Anybody home?

(*ELLA watches curiously as the trunk slowly creaks open. ELLEN TERRY emerges, dressed in an elaborate period costume. SHE coughs and brushes a considerable amount of dust from her costume.*)

TERRY: (*British accent*) Oh, what a musty old trunk! All the perfume in Arabia could not sweeten it! (*SHE steps out of the trunk, closing it behind her.*)

MISS FAYE: Ella, may I present Miss Ellen Terry – legendary British stage actress.

ELLA: (*Awed*) How do you do?

TERRY: I do quite nicely, thank you. Of course ... (*Dramatically*) I am the undisputed First Lady of the Theatre

(The trunk springs open. ELEONORA DUSE appears, wearing a period costume reminiscent of Hedda Gabbler. DUSE also coughs and shakes off dust.)

DUSE: *(Italian accent)* Wait! *Un attimo!* I dispute! Who did-a you say was-a da First Lady of da Theatre? *(Dramatically)* Thadda would-a be me! *(SHE steps out of the trunk, closing it behind her.)*

MISS FAYE: Ella, this is Miss Eleonora Duse – famed Italian stage actress!

ELLA: *(Awed)* Hello, Miss Duse.

DUSE: *(Friendly)* Buona sera, Ella. *(Spots TERRY; outraged)* Oh! Is you! So ... you think-a you better'n me, eh?

TERRY: *(Mockingly)* I think-a so, yes!

DUSE: Ha! I, Eleonora Duse am da greatest actress dat ever was lived!

(The trunk springs open again. This time, SARAH BERNHARDT emerges. SHE is costumed as "Joan of Arc". SHE coughs violently, as SHE rids herself of dust.)

BERNHARDT: *(French accent)* Hold it right there, seester! *(Coughs)* Ah! I haven't coughed so much since I play ze *Camille!* *(Spots ELLA)* Who are you? *(Steps out of the trunk, leaving it open.)*

MISS FAYE: This is my friend, Ella. Ella, meet French stage actress, Miss Sarah Bernhardt.

ELLA: *(Awed)* I am honored.

BERNHARDT: But of course you are, my *mon cherie!*

DUSE: *Mama mia!* Who let-a *her* out of the trunk!

BERNHARDT: Ha! *(To ELLA)* These ladies ... and I use ze term, how you say, loosely ...!

TERRY: *(To DUSE)* She uses *everything* how you say, loosely!

BERNHARDT: *(Ignoring her)* As I say, they are jealous of ze the great Sarah Bernhardt!

DUSE: Ha! At least-a we act!

TERRY: Creating memorable characters with charm and grace.

DUSE: And not just leap-a 'round da stage like-a da Tilt-a-Whirl!

BERNHARDT: *(Overacting)* Are you ... are you accusing me of overacting?!

DUSE and TERRY: If the shoe fits ...

BERNHARDT: How dare you speak like so to me!

(The ACTRESSES quarrel simultaneously.)

BERNHARDT: *De l'audace! Encore de l'audace! Et tou-jours de l'audace!*

TERRY: The saying is true— the empty vessel makes the greatest sound!

DUSE: Actors! Dey should-a all die of da plague!

MISS FAYE: (*Shouting over the din*) Ladies, please!

ACTRESSES: (*Stopping abruptly*) What?!

MISS FAYE: You have all been summoned here for a purpose! Young Ella here wishes to attend a dance ...

SARAH BERNHARDT: Dance! *Oui*, I love ze dance! Had I not been ze most famous of actresses of all time, I would have surely been the most of famous of ze the ballerinas!

MISS FAYE: Yes, well. That is neither here ... nor there! We must keep our minds on the task at hand.

TERRY: Which is?

MISS FAYE: You have all enchanted your audiences with your captivating performances ...

TERRY: Some of us more than others.

DUSE and BERNHARDT: Ha!

MISS FAYE: You have all cast your spells, winning the hearts of many.

BERNHARDT: *Oui* ...?

DUSE: So ...?

MISS FAYE: Surely then, you must have something to impart to this hopeful young lady. Something that she may wear in order to cast a spell of her own!

(*The ACTRESSES re-act with simultaneous reluctance.*)

BERNHARDT: How could I possibly ...?

TERRY: Well, I don't know ...

DUSE: I'm not-a so sure ...

MISS FAYE: Please, ladies! I beseech you. Isn't it obvious that the girl is in love?

(*This strikes a chord, the ACTRESSES suddenly become impassioned.*)

TERRY: Ah ... love!

BERNHARDT: *Amour!*

DUSE: *Amoré!*

BERNHARDT: How often I, myself, have played ze poor young girl in love!

TERRY: Too often! You should have stopped at forty!

MISS FAHEY: But can you ... *will* you help?

BERNHARDT: But of course!

(SARAH BERNHARDT produces a beautiful gown from the trunk. SHE offers it to ELLA.)

Zis, *mon sweet petite*, zis is ze very dress I wear on ze night I open in *Paree!* May it bring to you all you heart desires.

(ELLEN TERRY produces an exquisitely embroidered cape from the trunk.)

TERRY: This is the cape that I wore the night the world beheld my performance as "Lady Macbeth". (*Examining the cape closely*) Never did get out that darn spot! (*Handing it to ELLA*) Nevertheless, it shall bring you luck at the Dance.

(ELEONORA DUSE produces a pair of ornate opera gloves from the trunk.)

DUSE: Dese are da very gloves dat I wear da night I play for da Queen!

ELLA: (*Awed*) Which Queen?

DUSE: (*Shrugs*) Eh ... a queen is a queen! (*SHE gives the gloves to ELLA.*)

ELLA: These are all such lovely gifts. Thank you, ladies. (*Curtsies*)

TERRY: You're welcome.

BERNHARDT: *De rein.*

DUSE: *Prego!*

MISS FAYE: Yes, thank you so much for all your help. And now, ladies ...

BERNHARDT: Ah, yes!

TERRY: We know ...

DUSE: Back into da trunk!

MISS FAYE: If you don't mind?

TERRY: (*A wistful*) Sometimes, it seems as if I were born in a trunk!

DUSE: You look-a more like you was born *with* a trunk!

(*The ACTRESSES squabble as THEY each step into the trunk and disappear. MISS FAYE closes the lid.*)

MISS FAYE: There now. Rest assured, child, in such a costume you are certain to cast your spell upon young Noble Crown!

ELLA: (*Hugging the articles of clothing to her*) Oh, yes! This costume is exactly what I— (*Taken aback*) How did you know?

MISS FAYE: I have my ways, Ella. But that is neither here ... nor there! What a time you're going to have at the Dance! How I would love to be in your— (*Aghast*) Shoes! Good heavens, we've forgotten all

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about shoes! *(Moving to the trunk)* Never fear! *(Raps on the trunk 3 times)* Margot Fonteyn ...? Are you there, dear?

(MISS FAYE lifts the lid. A hand reaches out, proffering a pair of bright red ballet slippers. MISS FAYE accepts the shoes.)

Thank you, love!

(The hand waves "goodbye". MISS FAYE closes the lid. SHE hands the shoes to ELLA.)

ELLA: *(Delighted)* Red shoes!

MISS FAYE: Oh, not just red shoes, child. *The red shoes ...* from the ballet! With these, you shall dance and glide your way into Noble's heart.

ELLA: Thanks so much for everything, Miss Faye! How can I ever thank you enough?

MISS FAYE: *(Mulling it over)* Well ... you can't! So just go to the Dance and have a ball ...or should that be go to the Ball and have a dance? No matter! In any case, you must remember this, child. The magic only lasts from "Curtain Up" to "Final Curtain" – which is roughly eight to midnight, give or take an encore or two! After that, you're on your own. Don't forget that, dear.

ELLA: I won't! Thanks again, Miss Faye.

MISS FAYE: *(Embracing ELLA)* You're welcome, Ella. Now, off you go!

(ELLA exits excitedly. MISS FAYE looks around, somewhat bewildered.)

Now then ... I'm certain that I was smack-dap in the middle of something!

(The Lights fade on MISS FAYE, as another area is revealed. HARLEY stands, arranging his books at his locker. DAISY enters and joins HARLEY.)

DAISY: Hi, Harley!

HARLEY: *(Dropping his books nervously)* Hi!

(HARLEY kneels to retrieve his books, DAISY kneels to assist him.)

DAISY: I must say, I am really looking forward to being at the Dance with you.

HARLEY: I thought ... *(Looks around cautiously, then whispers)* I thought that was a secret!

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DAISY: Oh, that's just in front of Delia. You know, she's only going to the Dance with Duke so she can get to see Johnny Thrush.

HARLEY: *(Getting to his feet with his books)* Yeah, I know. And that's a shame, 'cause Duke really likes her.

DAISY: *(Getting to her feet, coyly)* And I really like you.

HARLEY: *(Excited)* You ... you do!

(HARLEY drops the books again. DAISY starts to kneel.)

Don't bother, I'll get them. *(Kneels and retrieves his books again)*

DAISY: Of course I ... *(Looks off)* Oh! Someone's coming!

(Just as HARLEY gets to his feet again, DAISY shoves him and the books fall out of his arms. HARLEY retrieves the books again, a little miffed this time. DAISY strikes a casual pose as LYNETTE, ROBIN and GAIL enter. LYNETTE conducts as the Trio sings, moving across the stage.)

LYNETTE, ROBIN and GAIL: *Doo-doo-do-wah ... [etc.]*

(The GIRLS exit. DAISY watches THEM go, then helps HARLEY to his feet.)

DAISY: Of course I like you, Harley. We simply have to be careful in front of Delia. She'd try to ruin things between us. You're beneath me, you know.

HARLEY: Yes, I know.

DAISY: *(Sighs sadly)* If only Delia would fall for someone like Duke! Someone is also beneath us. Then she'd have nothing say about us being together. And then, we could finally— *(Looking off)* Someone's coming!

(HARLEY gives DAISY a look and lets the books drop to the floor. As HE retrieves them, DAISY poses casually. MARKY and DONNY enter, THEY waltz awkwardly together across the stage.)

MARKY: And one-two-three ... ouch! And one-two-three ...ouch!
Watch my feet!

DONNY: Sorry, I'm too busy watching mine!

MARKY: And one-two-three ... ouch!

(MARKY and DONNY are gone. DAISY watches THEM go and then turns to HARLEY.)

HARLEY: (*Getting to feet, anxiously*) We could finally *what?!*

DAISY: We could finally let *everyone* know how we feel about each other!

HARLEY: Oh. (*Pause*) How do we feel?

DAISY: Well, I don't know about you ...

(*DAISY moves in, as if to kiss HARLEY. HE closes his eyes and stands ready.*)

But I really ...

DELIA: (*Off*) Daisy ...!

DAISY: I really have to go!

(*DAISY rushes off. HARLEY opens HIS eyes and realizes that SHE is gone. HE throws down HIS books and storms off as the Lights ...*)

BLACK OUT

SCENE 3: EVENING

AT RISE: PRINCIPAL CROWN and MISS NEWCASTLE are revealed on a high platform, USC. THEY are dressed for the Dance. PRINCIPAL CROWN stands in front of a microphone stand. MISS NEWCASTLE holds her ever-present clipboard.

PRINCIPAL CROWN: Good evening students, faculty and guests.
Welcome to Brothers Grimm Memorial High School's Annual Homecoming Dance ...

MISS NEWCASTLE: (*Beaming*) Held every year!

PRINCIPAL CROWN: (*Covering the microphone with his hand*) Yes ... that is what "annual" means, Miss Newcastle.

MISS NEWCASTLE: (*Embarrassed*) Well, of course I knew that!

PRINCIPAL CROWN: (*Into the microphone*) This year's entertainment will be provided by local celebrity and teen singing idol – Johnny Thrush!

(*Applause is heard.*)

MISS NEWCASTLE: (*Taking over the microphone*) Joined by our own musical trio, the Songbirds!

(*Applause.*)

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PRINCIPAL CROWN: *(Taking over the microphone)* Let's bring out Johnny to help us kick things off tonight. Johnny ...?

(JOHNNY THRUSH enters with a confident swagger. Applause and screaming GIRLS can be heard. JOHNNY wears a white Elvis-like pantsuit, trimmed with gold. HE also wears a shimmering cape, an elaborate black wig and a black domino masque.)

JOHNNY: Hey, hey, hey! How is everybody doin' tonight? You ready for some Homecoming fun?

(Applause, cheering, screaming, etc.)

Well, I guess I better get tuned up then!

(JOHNNY starts to exit. MISS NEWCASTLE holds out her clipboard and a pen.)

MISS NEWCASTLE: Oh, Mr. Thrush! Could I trouble you for an autograph? *(Embarrassed)* For my niece, of course.

JOHNNY: Sure thing, sweetheart.

MISS NEWCASTLE: *(Melting)* Just make it out to Miss Newcastle!

(JOHNNY signs the clipboard and turns out front.)

JOHNNY: Hey, hey, hey! See everyone later!

(JOHNNY swaggers off. Applause.)

PRINCIPAL CROWN: *(Into the microphone)* That's right. Johnny will be back a little later. And don't forget, at Midnight, the Homecoming King ... *(Proudly)* And my son, Noble Crown ... *(Back to business)* ... will select from the three elected Princesses!

MISS NEWCASTLE: *(Taking over the microphone; reading from her clipboard)* Delja Stepford, Daisy Stepford and Odette Swan.

PRINCIPAL CROWN: In the meantime, let's have some music!

(Music is heard in the background. PRINCIPAL CROWN turns to MISS NEWCASTLE.)

Shall we get some punch, Miss Newcastle?

MISS NEWCASTLE: I'd love some. *(Taking his arm)* And just for tonight, call me Amelia.

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(THEY exit as the Lights fade up full and the Dance is revealed. The music grows in volume as STUDENTS mill about excitedly in bright, festive costumes. LYNETTE, ROBIN and GAIL emerge from the crowd.)

LYNETTE: Well, girls! This is it, the big night!

GAIL: Isn't it exciting?

ROBIN: *(Looking around longingly)* If only we had time for one little spin around the dance floor!

(DONNY and MARKY emerge from the crowd.)

DONNY: Hi, girls.

MARKY: Robin, would you like to dance? I'll bet you'll be lighter on my feet than Donny!

ROBIN: I'd love to dance with you, Marky.

DONNY: What about you, Gail?

GAIL: Sure!

LYNETTE: Girls! We must rehearse! Remember, we have to be—

(EARL emerges from the crowd.)

Earl!

DONNY: Look out!

MARKY: Here it comes!

EARL: *(Awkwardly)* Hi, Lynette. Would you ... I mean, do you wanna...?

MARKY: *(Moving LYNETTE toward EARL)* Why don't you dance with Earl, Lynette?

LYNETTE: Well, you know, the Songbirds should really ...

DONNY: *(Moving EARL toward LYNETTE)* See? She'd love to!

(EARL leads LYNETTE off by the arm.)

EARL: Shall we? *(Turning back to DONNY and MARKY)* Thanks, guys. I owe you one!

MARKY and DONNY: *(Each offering an arm to ROBIN and GAIL)* Shall we, ladies?

(THEY exit. DAISY, HARLEY and DELIA emerge from the crowd.)

DELIA: Did you see Johnny Thrush? *(Sighs)* Isn't he just amazing!

DAISY: Where did Duke go?

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DELIA: Who? (*Annoyed*) Oh ... *him*. Who knows and who cares! He disappeared just before Johnny took the stage! I can't wait until Johnny ...

HARLEY: Here comes Duke now.

(*DUKE enters and joins DELIA, DAISY and HARLEY.*)

DELIA: Where have you been? You missed Johnny Thrush!

DUKE: Did I? Sorry. So ... would you like to dance?

DELIA: I suppose so.

(*THEY exit.*)

HARLEY: Well, so far, Duke hasn't been around long enough to keep Delia's mind off of Johnny Thrush.

DAISY: I know! And that's not good for us.

HARLEY: "Us", huh? I like the sound of that.

(*HARLEY and DAISY disappear into the crowd, hand-in-hand.*

PRINCIPAL CROWN and MISS NEWCASTLE emerge from the crowd.)

PRINCIPAL CROWN: I wonder where Noble is. I just hope he hasn't changed his mind about attending tonight.

MISS NEWCASTLE: If he said that he'll be here, then he'll be here. Noble's a good boy.

PRINCIPAL CROWN: You're right. Of course, you're right, Miss ... Amelia. I would just feel better if I knew—

NOBLE: (*Entering*) Hi, Dad. Boy, Miss Newcastle ... you look beautiful!

MISS NEWCASTLE: (*Giddy*) Oh, Noble!

PRINCIPAL CROWN: I'm very glad that you came, son.

NOBLE: Me too. I almost didn't, you know. But then, I ran into this girl. We talked and ... I was hoping that she'd be here too. But I don't see her.

MISS NEWCASTLE: How can you tell? Everyone is in some sort of costume.

NOBLE: Trust me, Miss Newcastle. I'd know it if she was here.

PRINCIPAL CROWN: Who is this girl, son?

NOBLE: I wish I knew, dad. I wish I knew!

(*ELLA enters – a vision in her theatrical costume. SHE wears a half-mask to conceal her face. The CROWD parts as ELLA makes her way to CS.*)

Who is *she*?!

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PRINCIPAL CROWN: I don't believe I've ever seen that student before.

MISS NEWCASTLE: She certainly is a pretty little thing, isn't she?

NOBLE: (*Smitten*) She sure is ... (*Snapping to*) Uh ... excuse me, will you?

CROWN and NEWCASTLE: Of course.

(*NOBLE moves to ELLA. EVERYONE watches with interest.*)

NOBLE: Good evening.

ELLA: (*Nervously*) Oh ... hello.

NOBLE: (*Bows*) I'm Noble Crown.

ELLA: (*Curtsies*) Yes.

NOBLE: And you are ...?

ELLA: Oh! Me? I'm ... uh ... well, just call me "Cinderella".

NOBLE: Cinderella, huh? I like that. You're not from this school are you?

ELLA: Oh, yes.

NOBLE: Really? I don't think that I've seen you around. You're so ... I mean ... well, trust me – I would have remembered you!

ELLA: Thank you, Noble. That's very sweet of you to say.

NOBLE: Oh, I'm not so sweet. Truth is, I was hoping to see someone here tonight. Another girl. But now ... well, you've made me forget all about her. Would you care to dance with me, Cinderella?

ELLA: (*Looks around*) Who? (*Laughs nervously*) Oh, right ... that's me! I'm sorry, what was the question?

NOBLE: I want to dance with you.

ELLA: Dance ...? Now?!

NOBLE: Well, we could do it later ... but the music's playing now so it might be easier this way!

ELLA: Oh, yes ... of course! How silly of me. I'd love to dance ... now.

(*As NOBLE and ELLA begin to dance, EVERYONE else begins to fade off – as though no one else exists for NOBLE and ELLA.*)

LYNETTE: (*Whispering to ROBIN*) Who is that girl dancing with Noble?

MARKY: (*Whispering to DONNY*) I wish I knew!

ROBIN: (*Whispering to GAIL*) She's so beautiful!

DONNY: (*Whispering to EARL*) I'll say!

DELIA: (*Whispering to DAISY*) She's not *that* beautiful!

DAISY, HARLEY and DUKE: Yes, she is!

ELLA: (*Embarrassed*) Everyone is watching us!

NOBLE: (*Smitten*) Are they? I haven't noticed anyone but you.

ELLA: Oh, Noble. That's very— (*Quickly*) Do you know what time it is?

NOBLE: Sorry, time holds no meaning for me on a night like this?

ELLA: A night like this?

NOBLE: Just think about it. It was on a night just like this one that Romeo first wooed Juliet from her balcony.

ELLA: (*Dreamily*) Yes ... (*Snapping to*) I mean, I see what you mean. Lancelot gazed into Guinevere's eyes underneath the very moon that we share tonight.

NOBLE: That's exactly what I'm saying. Throughout history, the sky, the moon and the stars have been just as constant as the love they've inspired! (*Moving in closer*) So how could we ...?

ELLA: (*Moving in closer*) Two insignificant people ...

NOBLE: (*Closer*) Hope to fight the influence of such a night as this?

(*NOBLE moves in for a kiss. ELLA dodges him nervously.*)

ELLA: Are you sure you don't know what time it is?

(*NOBLE holds ELLA in his arms and kisses her.*)

Oh, dear! Is it *that* late?

(*EVERYONE else fades back on into view. DUKE is now missing.*)

HARLEY: Noble's still dancing with that girl – whoever she is!

DAISY: It's been hours!

DELIA: Duke, I want you to march yourself right on over there and find out ... (*Looks around*) Duke? Oh, great. He's gone again! (*To DAISY*) I knew it was a mistake to come here with him.

DAISY: I'm sorry that you feel that way, Delia.

HARLEY: Yeah, me too.

(*PRINCIPAL CROWN and MISS NEWCASTLE appear on a high platform. PRINCIPAL CROWN addresses the STUDENTS.*)

PRINCIPAL CROWN: Students, may I have your attention please?

(*The MUSIC fades out.*)

It is time to present the three Princesses hoping to become this year's Homecoming Queen. The decision will be made by Noble Crown, the Homecoming King. Noble ...?

(*The STUDENTS applaud.*)

NOBLE: (*To ELLA*) I'm sorry, you'll have to excuse me.

ELLA: Of course.

(NOBLE makes HIS way to the platform.)

MISS NEWCASTLE: And now, for the presentation of the Homecoming Princesses. Miss Delia Stepford ...

(The STUDENTS applaud. DELIA moves haughtily to CS. ELLA moves to DSR, watching.)

Miss Daisy Stepford ...

(The STUDENTS applaud. DAISY joins DELIA.)

And Miss Odette Swann.

(The STUDENTS applaud. ODETTE SWANN, an excited and giggly girl emerges from the crowd. SHE joins DELIA and DAISY.)

ODETTE: *(Giggling throughout)* Ohmigosh!! I can't believe that I'm actually up here as a Princess! I mean, I just can't believe it! Oh, sure ... I hoped ... I dreamed! And yet, I never dared to allow myself to believe that I would actually ... but ohmigosh! Here I am! It's all just so exciting! *(To DELIA and DAISY)* Don't you think this is all just so exciting? I think this is all just so exciting! *(To the STUDENTS)* This is a night that my memory will treasure for all of the rest of my life. I mean, even if I don't get to be the Homecoming Queen ... and let's face it, what are my chances, huh? But to come this far! To be able to someday look back and say that I was a Princess! That I once came even this close to being Queen. Well, I just can't tell you how that feels. I'm speechless, I tell you. Absolutely speechless! Except to say this ... I think this whole night has been simply thrilling! *(To DELIA and DAISY)* Don't you think this whole night has been simply thrilling? I think this whole night has been simply thrilling!

PRINCIPAL CROWN: And now, at the stroke of midnight, Noble Crown will choose his Homecoming Queen.

ELLA: *(Panicked)* Midnight?! *(Rushes off, leave behind one of her red shoes.)*

NOBLE: Fellow students ...

(The STUDENTS applaud.)

No, no. Please listen to me. Although these three Princesses are all very lovely in their own right, tonight I must break with tradition. I

have to listen to my heart. Therefore, as my Homecoming Queen, I must choose a girl who I only know as “Cinderella”. Please allow her to make her way to the platform.

(NOBLE scans the crowd as the STUDENTS look around and murmur amongst each other.)

Where ... where is she?

(NOBLE rushes off the platform, in search of ELLA. PRINCIPAL CROWN and MISS NEWCASTLE leave the platform as JOHNNY THRUSH appears with LYNETTE, ROBIN and GAIL. DAISY leads DELIA to HARLEY.)

ODETTE: *(Suddenly angry and bitter)* Wait a minute! Hold on just one second here! Are you tryin’ to tell me that I lost to a girl who doesn’t even have a real name? A girl who isn’t even here? Well, isn’t that just peachy?! I mean, you hope and you dream ... and you powder and fluff and primp ... you squeeze into a dress two sizes too small ... and for what?! Just so some mysterious little tootsie can come out of nowhere and take the crown? The crown that shoulda been mine! Mine, do you hear me? Mine!! *(Stops abruptly, sweetly)* I guess this lets me out of “Miss Congeniality” too, huh?

(ODETTE lets out a shriek of frustration and storms off. NOBLE has reached DSR. HE picks up the red slipper as the Lights begin to fade around him.)

NOBLE: She’s gone ... poof!

(NOBLE stands in a Spotlight, holding the shoe. JOHNNY THRUSH can be heard from the darkness.)

JOHNNY: Hey, hey, hey! How ‘bout a little music from yours truly, kids?

(The STUDENTS scream and applaud. The MUSIC starts as the Light fades on NOBLE ...)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE 1: TWO DAYS LATER, MORNING

AT RISE: A Spotlight reveals MISS NEWCASTLE, DSC. SHE stands in front of the microphone stand, holding her clipboard.

MISS NEWCASTLE: Good morning, students of Brothers Grimm Memorial high school. This is Miss Newcastle with the announcements. (*Proudly*) Hey, I think I'm really getting the hang of this microphone thing-a-mibob! (*Businesslike*) The prize for last week's Mystery Lunch contest goes to Paige Squires, who correctly identified the lunch as meatloaf. Paige wants everyone to know that she is doing just fine and should be released from the hospital by the end of the week. The Homecoming Committee reports that this year's Dance was an undisputed success! (*Excitedly*) Oh, my! I'll say so. Wasn't everything just lovely? The music ... the atmosphere ... dancing in the powerful arms of Rex ... uh, I mean, Principal Crown ... I mean ... oh, dear! (*Quickly*) And just who was that beautiful girl of mystery? Everyone wants to know ... especially the Homecoming King, Noble Crown! No sooner had he chosen her as his Queen when she just up and disappeared ... just as mysterious as she had arrived. Very strange, very strange indeed. Oh, well. Enjoy your day, students. This is Miss Newcastle, signing off.

(*MISS NEWCASTLE exits R, with the microphone stand. The Lights fade up and LYNETTE, ROBIN and GAIL are discovered in another area.*)

LYNETTE: (*Dreamily*) Wasn't the Dance just wonderful?

ROBIN: Wonderful?

GAIL: All that rehearsing and Johnny Thrush only let us sing *one* song with him!

ROBIN: *And* he stood in front of us the whole time!

GAIL: *And* he turned off our mikes, so that only he could be heard!

LYNETTE: Oh, who cares about Johnny Thrush? Really, girls.

Someday you're going to realize that there is more to life than singing in a silly little trio! I am talking about Earl.

ROBIN and GAIL: Earl?

LYNETTE: (*Sighs*) Yes, Earl! I must admit that I used to think he was nothing but a big bully. But at the dance, he was so ... so different!

ROBIN: Earl's different all right ...

GAIL: Like from another planet!

(The GIRLS exit R, as DONNY and MARKY enter from L.)

DONNY: Hey, there's Gail.

MARKY: And Robin.

DONNY: Boy, I sure had a good time at the Dance. I'll tell you, dancing with a girl is definitely better than dancing by yourself.

MARKY: Or with you!

DONNY: *(Looks off, panicked)* Oh, great! Here comes Earl.

MARKY: Good! I was hoping he'd come around.

DONNY: *(Leading MARKY off)* Maybe if we're lucky, we can sneak away before he— *(Realizes what MARKY has said)* You were *what*?

MARKY: That's right. You know being with Robin the other night has suddenly filled me with new-found courage. I think it's about time I stood up to that big, lunch money-stealin' bully!

DONNY: *(Claps MARKY on the back)* Great, I'm right behind you, pal. Just try not to bleed all over my new shirt!

EARL: *(Entering with 2 large brown paper sacks)* Hiya, guys.

MARKY: *(Summoning up his courage)* Now, you listen here, Earl! You're not getting our lunch money today ... or any day for that matter. This has gone on long enough. It's time to—

EARL: Hey relax, buddy. I am not here to take your lunch money. I just wanna thank you two for helping me out with Lynette at the Dance. Matter of fact, I *made* you lunch today!

(EARL hands out the sacks. DONNY and MARKY accept them tentatively.)

Ham and cheese on rye with crisp lettuce, fresh tomatoes, a tangy mustard spread and pickle spears. A side of homemade potato salad and for desert ... I baked you a cherry pie! *(Menacingly)* You won't tell nobody that I bake, willya?!

DONNY: No, no ...

MARKY: Cross our ... *(Peaks into his sack)* Hungry hearts!

EARL: *(Good-naturedly)* Good. Well, I gotta go. If you need anything else, just let me know. *Bon appétit*, my friends.

DONNY: Right.

MARKY: Sure.

(EARL exits. DONNY and MARKY exchange a shrug and look into their sacks.)

DONNY: Wow, this sure beats the school's meatloaf.

MARKY: Yeah. It's a good thing I decided to stand up to him, huh?

(MARKY swaggers off. DONNY rolls his eyes and follows. DELIA and DAISY enter.)

DELIA: (*Miffed*) Boy! Some dance, huh?

DAISY: (*Dreamily*) Yeah ...

DELIA: I mean, I never got a chance to talk to Johnny Thrush, let alone dance with him. Duke kept disappearing on me ... and then, to top it all off, some girl comes out of nowhere and takes *my* crown!

DAISY: Or *mine*, as the case may be. But you know, she didn't actually take it. She was gone before Noble had the chance to crown her.

DELIA: (*Angrily*) Boy, I'd like to crown her—! (*A thought*) Wait a minute! He didn't crown her!

DAISY: Isn't that what I just said?

DELIA: (*Excited*) Don't you see? He didn't crown her!

DAISY: You can keep saying it, but it doesn't make you seem any saner.

DELIA: (*Pacing*) He didn't crown her because he *couldn't* crown her. And he couldn't crown her because he doesn't know who she is. So who's to say she isn't *me*?

DAISY: (*Incredulous*) What?

DELIA: (*Off-handedly*) Okay, okay ... or you, as the case may be.

DAISY: No, I think you're alone in this one, Sis.

DELIA: (*Pacing again*) All I have to do is find that shoe. And if the shoe fits ... (*Stops pacing, beaming*) The crown will too! (*Turn to DAISY*) I've got to find Noble!

(DELIA rushes off. HARLEY enters warily.)

HARLEY: Is she gone?

DAISY: (*Look off where DELIA exited*) She's gone all right, real gone!

HARLEY: (*Joining DAISY*) I hate sneaking around like this.

DAISY: I know. If only Delia could fall for someone like Duke, instead of someone like Johnny Thrush. Then she'd have to allow me to be with someone like you.

HARLEY: (*Getting an idea*) What if ... what if we asked Johnny Thrush to come back to the school to meet Delia?

DAISY: Harley, have you gone crazy? How could that possibly help us?

HARLEY: Well, suppose we asked Johnny to be mean to Delia? And suppose that Duke was there ...

DAISY: (*Catching on*) To defend her! Then Delia would hate Johnny ...

HARLEY: And love Duke!

DAISY: And we'd all live happily ever after. Oh Harley, you're a genius! I could just—! (*Looking off*) Delia's coming back. Get out of here!

HARLEY: I'll find Duke.

(HARLEY rushes off L, as DELIA enters from R. SHE hops on one foot, holding her shoe in HER hand. DELIA joins DAISY.)

DELIA: Has Noble been this way?

DAISY: No. *(Nervously)* And neither has Harley. If you're thinking that he was. And that we were sneaking around together ... well, he wasn't and we weren't. So ... no luck with the shoe?

DELIA: *(Putting on her shoe)* No! I've been hopping all over the place looking for Noble! I must find him before he finds someone who fits into that shoe! The Homecoming Crown is rightfully mine and I will have it! I certainly do not intend to surrender it to some mysterious little ...

(ELLA enters. DELIA turns her anger and frustration on her.)

Well, well, well! Look who it is, Daisy. Our little friend, Ella. Too bad you missed the dance, dear.

DAISY: *(Good-naturedly)* It was very exciting! Some strange and beautiful—

DELIA: *(Correcting)* Somewhat beautiful ...

DAISY: *(Continuing undaunted)* ... girl was there!

DELIA: And she stole my crown!

ELLA: That does sound exciting. But what makes you think I wasn't there? As a matter of fact, I was there.

DAISY: You were there? So then, you saw this girl?

ELLA: Well ... yes.

DELIA: Do you know who she was?

ELLA: Well ...no.

DAISY: But you *did* see her?

ELLA: Well ...

DELIA: *(Cruelly)* Then you must have seen her dancing with Noble. It seems that this girl not only stole the Homecoming Crown, she has stolen Noble's heart as well.

ELLA: *(Hopeful)* Do you really think so?

DAISY: *(Comfortingly)* I'm afraid so, Ella. He seemed positively bewitched!

ELLA: Bewitched?

DELIA: *(Snidely)* More's the pity for you, poor thing. *(To DAISY)* Come along, sister dear. We'll be late for a *fitting!*

(DELIA and DAISY exit, leaving ELLA alone.)

ELLA: *(Elated)* It worked! The costume was magic! He's in love with me. I must find and tell him who I am. *(Starts off and then stops*

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short) Who I am? Who am I? What if Noble didn't fall for who I am, but for who I was? The mysterious girl I was for just one night. How could I hope to compete with that girl in the light of day? What if he...

NOBLE: (*Off*) I'm telling you, we have to keep looking.

(*ELLA looks around, panic-stricken. SHE finds a place to hide US. NOBLE enters with DUKE. NOBLE carries the red shoe.*)

DUKE: (*Exasperated*) Noble, by my count, you have tried that shoe on half the girls in the school. You'd think it would've fit at least one of them!

NOBLE: That just proves that it's a very special shoe ... belonging to a very special girl. I've just got to find her, Duke. She's all that I can think about. All that I dream about. It's like ... it's like she's cast some sort of spell over my heart!

ELLA: (*To herself, distraught*) It wasn't me ...

NOBLE: (*Elated*) How could I feel so much ...

ELLA: It was never me ...

NOBLE: For someone I know so little about?

ELLA: It was just a little magic! (*Rushes off, sobbing.*)

DUKE: Don't ask me, man. I don't know. But I do know that it's good to see you excited about something again.

NOBLE: Thanks. I ... I better to get to class.

DUKE: I'll catch you later. And don't worry, Noble. I'll help you find her.

(*NOBLE exits. HARLEY enters. HE joins DUKE excitedly.*)

HARLEY: Duke, there you are. Where've you been?

DUKE: Wandering all over the school with Noble and his red shoe.

HARLEY: Oh. Well listen, Daisy and I have a plan ...

DUKE: (*Teasing playfully*) So you and Daisy are plotting together now?

HARLEY: (*Sheepishly*) Well, yeah. (*Clears his throat, back to business*) We have a way to get you and Delia together ... so that Daisy and I can be together.

DUKE: Me and Delia, huh? I like the sound of that. I'm all ears.

HARLEY: The plan is to get Johnny Thrush here and have him—

DUKE: Johnny Thrush? What do we need with him?

HARLEY: Delia is in love with Johnny. So Daisy and I thought that—

DUKE: She is?

HARLEY: (*Annoyed*) Yes, she is! Now do you want to hear the plan or not?

DUKE: Of course, I want to hear the plan. I told you, I'm all ears ...

(HARLEY rolls his eyes.)

But first, Harley, I think there's something you should know about Johnny Thrush ...

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