

PRINCE CHARMLESS

By Lavinia Roberts

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CAST

(29 Total, 4 Males, 12 Females, 13 Flexible)

MINSTREL 1	Flexible; An aspiring minstrel
MINSTREL 2	Flexible; The leaders of the band of minstrels, wise
MINSTREL 3	Flexible; A joke cracking minstrel
MINSTREL 4	Flexible; A minstrel who likes to dance
MINSTREL 5	Flexible; A very musical minstrel
BAKER	Flexible; An affable, overly jolly baker
SERF	Female; A disgruntled turnip farmer
LORD/LADY POMPSEY	Flexible; Feudal ruler of Pickering-on-Trent
HILDAGARD	Female; Lord/Lady Pompsey's sweet daughter
PRINCESS PENELOPE	Female; Prince Charmless obnoxious little sister.
KING BERTRUM	Male; Prince Charmless' concerned father
QUEEN MILLICANT	Female; Prince Charmless' concerned mother
ROYEL ADVISOR	Flexible; A dour, very proper and somber advisor
PRINCE CHARMLESS	Male; Real name is Percival, a charmless prince
PHYSICIAN 1	Flexible; A quirky doctor
PHYSICIAN 2	Flexible; Another quirky doctor
CHEF	Flexible; Animated French chef
JESTER	Flexible; A fast talking comedian

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SIR WINFRED	Male; A kindly and noble fencing instructor
PAIGE	Female; Brave daughter of Sir Winfred
MADAME MUZETTE	Female; Flamboyant, over-dressed, pageant consultant.
PRINCESS PANSY	Female; Very girly and ditzzy
PRINCESS PORTIA	Female; Very snobbish and loves to brag
PRINCESS PRISCILLA	Female; Believes herself to be allegoric to everything; a whiner
PRINCESS PHILIPPA	Female; A brutish bully
PRINCESS PRUNELLA	Female; Pedantic and prudish
PRINCESS PANDORA	Female; Addle-headed and accident prone
PRINCE CHARMING	Male; Named Cuthbert, a swashbuckling self-absorbed prince
OGRE	Flexible; A not charming, princess-napping ogre
VILLAGERS	Flexible; Possible extras.

Actors can play multiple roles to accommodate a smaller cast. Minimum cast of 21. Possible extras.

SET

Marketplace of Pickering-on-Trent
Castle Throne Room
The Woods
The Ogre's Cave

PROPS

Tambourine
Basket of bread
2 fake swords

Bucket

Purse with dust mask inside.

Cookies

Do Not Copy

PRINCE CHARMLESS

Written by
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ACT 1

SETTING: A market square, the Middle Ages, Britain

AT RISE: *MINSTRELS 2 through 4 are seated contemplatively. MINSTREL 4 is pacing and singing mournfully.*

MINSTREL 4: *(Singing woefully, occasionally shaking tambourine for emphasis.)* Oh woe! Woe is me! To be! A wondering minstrel was folly! Without food I am not jolly! Oh woe! Woe! Woe!

MINSTREL 3: Will you knock that caterwauling off?

MINSTREL 4: Well, I am trying to liven my spirits with a moving serenade!

MINSTREL 3: Well, you're depressing what's left of mine. And besides, it's enough of "The Dark Ages," with the threat of bubonic plague, Saxon invasion, and witch hunts, without you adding your appalling excuse for singing to it.

MINSTREL 4: Perhaps if, instead of sulking about in this pointless manner, you, my dear fellow minstrel, would do a lively jig for us?

MINSTREL 3: Fine. Here's a new dance. It's called "The I'm Starving." Basically, all you do is lie on the ground and moan periodically thinking about when the last time you ate was.

MINSTREL 4: Yeah, I don't like that dance.

MINSTREL 3: Well, too bad. That's all I have in me right now.

MINSTREL 4: How about a joke old chum?

MINSTREL 2: Count me out. I haven't even been able to think up a joke in days. Every time I start to think of something funny, I get distracted by the gnawing emptiness in my stomach. But I'll try... how about, "Why did the chicken cross the road?"

MINSTREL 4: Why did the chicken cross the road?

MINSTREL 2: Huh?

MINSTREL 4: The joke; how does the joke, "Why did the chicken cross the road" end?

MINSTREL 2: I'm sorry. I was just thinking about a nice juicy piece of chicken.

MINSTREL 1: Keep you spirits up, troupe. I'm sure we'll find a gig soon.

MINSTREL 2: Sure we will... How do you think that tambourine would taste if I boiled it up with some rosemary?

MINSTREL 1: You are not eating the tambourine.

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MINSTREL 3: I think I saw some rosemary along the road.

MINSTREL 1: Don't worry: Fortune will favor us soon.

MINSTREL 3: I thought that rosemary was pretty fortuitous.

(MINSTREL 5 enters.)

MINSTREL 5: Excuse me...

MINSTREL 1: See what I mean. Good afternoon my fine fellow! How may we serve you?

MINSTREL 5: Well, I was looking for some minstrels. I heard they were in the city square.

MINSTREL 1: This is your lucky day my fine young fellow! We are the minstrels you seek! Perhaps we might play a song for you or tell you a riddle? For a nominal fee, of course!

MINSTREL 3: You know, a crust of bread, a penny. Maybe your hat; I bet that would taste okay boiled up with some rosemary.

(MINSTREL 1 nudges MINSTREL 3 to be quiet.)

MINSTREL 5: Actually, I don't have any vittles or money. I just wanted to join your band of traveling minstrels! Dedicate my life to the arts! Sleep under the stars! Travel the open roads!

(MINSTRELS 1-4 sit down again, dejected.)

MINSTREL 3: I'll go pick that rosemary for the tambourine.

MINSTREL 4: Can I start singing another poignant serenade? Maybe a blues number...

MINSTREL 1: Look, kid, you don't want to join our band of minstrels.

MINSTREL 5: I certainly do! I've always wanted to be a minstrel.

MINSTREL 1: Business isn't so great right now...

MINSTREL 3: So what is your hat made of? Is it organic?

MINSTREL 2: Why does it matter if it's organic?

MINSTREL 3: I try to eat only organic foods.

MINSTREL 2: You care about whether or not your food is organic when we're starving?

MINSTREL 3: Excuse me for trying to reduce the number of toxins I ingest, okay?

MINSTREL 5: But I've always wanted to be a minstrel! It's my life dream! I've traveled days to find your band!

MINSTREL 1: Look, kid, villagers don't really appreciate minstrels in these parts. Looks like they are arriving at market; you can see what we mean!

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(BAKER enters with basket of rolls.)

BAKER: Rolls! Get you piping hot rolls! Fresh from the oven! A shilling a piece! While they last! Rolls! Rolls! Get your piping hot rolls!

(SERF enters carrying a bucket, as if struggling.)

Rolls! Fluffy, hot! Best rolls in Pickering-on-Trent!

SERF: They are the only rolls sold in Pickering-on-Trent!

BAKER: Now, now, no need to be bitter.

SERF: Bitter? Me? It's not like I'm indentured for life to serve Lord Pompsey as free manual labor, never to leave my serfdom, with no prospects of personal growth or fulfillment!

BAKER: Yes, well, look on the bright side. You... umm... don't seem to have the plague from what I can tell.

SERF: Someone is always trying to defraud me. Merchants with their overpriced goods, my feudal master...

MINSTREL 5: Excuse me...

SERF: Or no good beggars, like minstrels.

MINSTREL 5: But surely you need minstrels.

SERF: About as much as I need the black death.

MINSTREL 5: How do you know about what is happening in the wide world without traveling minstrels, such as this band, to inform you?

SERF: I'm stuck here hauling turnips around for life kid. You think I really care about what wimples all the ladies in court are donning this spring or what feudal lord is fighting another feudal lord over whatever?

BAKER: We're not into minstrels here. Let Lord Pompsey tell you!

(LORD POMPSEY and HILDEGARD enter waving. EVERYONE bows.)

Your Grace, please inform this visitor to our village's new policy on minstrels.

LORD POMPSEY: Certainly. Due to the current recession and the necessary cutting back of public funds the ruling powers here in Pickering-on-Trent...

HILDEGARD: Meaning you, father/mother.

LORD POMPSEY: Yes, meaning me Hildegard, dearest daughter, have decided to cut unnecessary funding to the arts.

BAKER: Meaning no more minstrels of any kind.

MINSTREL 5: But why cut the arts?

LORD POMPSEY: We couldn't cut turnip planting. Serfs have to eat you know. Or the church, to run witch hunting expeditions. Very

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important to public health and safety. Or jousting tournaments.
Very vital.

MINSTREL 5: Okay, witch hunting makes sense, but jousting? You'll still pay exurbanite sums for two guys to come at each other with giant pointed sticks, but you won't pay a penny for a lively tune to lift your spirits?

LORD POMPSEY: That's the general idea, yes.

HILDEGARD: Why are you so clearly upset by this?

MINSTREL 5: Well, you see, I always wanted to be a minstrel! It's a life dream.

LORD POMPSEY: Well you will never be a minstrel in Pickering-on-Trent I'm afraid.

SERF: Perhaps you might consider serfdom as an alternative, more lucrative career. There are several openings digging up turnips.

MINSTREL 5: No thanks!

MINSTREL 1: Look, what kind of skill set do you have?

MINSTREL 5: You mean, I might have what it takes to be a minstrel?

MINSTREL 4: *(Sings following line well)* Well, can you sing, like me?

MINSTREL 5: *(Sings following line, badly)* Not really.

MINSTREL 3: What about dance, like me?

(MINSTREL 3 does a dance, very well. EVERYONE claps. MINSTREL 5 tries and dances badly. EVERYONE groans, etc.)

MINSTREL 5: Two left feet I'm afraid.

BAKER: Two left feet! Get back everyone! He/She might be a witch!

MINSTREL 1: Relax. It's just a colloquialism.

BAKER: What's that? Sounds evil.

MINSTREL 3: Are you sure it's a colloquialism? It sounds like an aphorism!

HILDEGARD: A truism?

SERF: Maybe a spoonerism. But don't listen to me. I'm just a serf.

LORD POMPSEY: Well, I'm the feudal lord, and I say it's a malapropism.

MINSTREL 2: Anyways, can you tell jokes, like me? *(Steps forward)*
How many witch hunters does it take to screw in a light bulb? Any guesses? Light bulbs? There's no light in the dark ages folks? Get it? Thank you, thank you. You've been a great audience! *(Blows kisses and bows)*

MINSTREL 5: I'm not good at jokes either. What do you do?

MINSTREL 1: Me?

MINSTREL 5: Yeah. If they sing, dance, and tell jokes, what does that leave you?

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MINSTREL 1: I'm the ring leader. Their booking agent. I group their tours, barter for their venues; report their earnings to the Doomsday book, that kind of thing.

MINSTREL 5: I don't think I would be good at that either.

HILDEGARD: Surely you must have something special about you?

SERF: I think you would be good at hauling turnips. Want to try? (*Lifts bucket*)

MINSTREL 5: No thanks.

HILDEGARD: Are you charming?

MINSTREL 4: Why is that important?

HILDEGARD: A performer should be charming, charismatic, have a persona, an edge, an angle.

MINSTREL 1: Makes sense.

MINSTREL 5: Actually, you don't need to be charming or charismatic to achieve great things! Let me tell you....

(Lights fade. CAST currently on stage crosses to stage right. Throne room is set up on stage left.)

Once upon a time there was a prince.

HILDEGARD: Was he handsome?

MINSTREL 5: Not really.

LORD POMPSEY: Was he intelligent?

MINSTREL 5: Not particularly.

SERF: Was he brave?

MINSTREL 5: Nope.

MINSTREL 4: Could he sing?

MINSTREL 5: Certainly not.

MINSTREL 3: Dance maybe?

MINSTREL 5: Deplorably.

MINSTREL 2: Tell jokes?

MINSTREL 5: Not in the least.

BAKER: What could he do?

MINSTREL 5: Well, he couldn't joust, ride a horse, whistle, snap his fingers, fight dragons, or even roller blade. He couldn't do just about anything. And that is why, although his real name was Percival, everyone called him Prince Charmless.

(CAST currently on stage exits, except for MINSTREL 5. PRINCESS PENELOPE enters.)

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Prince Charmless! Prince Charmless! Yoo hoo! Get your royal, talentless tunic clad backside in here!

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(QUEEN MILLICENT, KING BERTRUM, and ROYEL ADVISOR enter.)

QUEEN MILLICENT: Really Penelope! Must you call you brother that terrible nickname?

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Why not mother? That's what everyone else calls him. You should hear the little song they sing about him in the town... *(Singing)*

A rock or tree,
Have more charisma then he.
A bush or brook,
Are worth more a look.
As talentless as a rake,
A royal mistake.
Prince Charmless!

QUEEN MILLICENT: How impertinent! You will not sing that dreadful song in my presence Penelope, and certainly not in your brother's. You know how hard it is on Percival being so... well... different.

KING BERTRUM: Quite right Millicent, dearest. Although, that line about being as talentless as a rake is a bit humorous, wouldn't you say Millie?

(QUEEN MILLICENT gives him a disapproving look.)

I mean, never want to hear that rubbish again Penelope. Now, be a good girl and run along and fetch your brother here at once!

(PRINCE CHARMLESS enters.)

PRINCE CHARMLESS: No need Penelope. Here I am.

(PENELOPE begins humming the Prince Charmless song, but stops after a warning look from her MOTHER.)

What is it mom, dad?

KING BERTRUM: Well, you see Percival, we think... perhaps you should tell him Millicent?

QUEEN MILLICENT: Well, you see Percival, your father and I think you are absolutely perfect! Wonderful!

KING BERTRUM: But we can't help wanting you to be more... prince-like... maybe a little more charming?

(PRINCESS PENELOPE begins humming the Prince Charmless song again. SHE is elbowed by QUEEN MILLICENT.)

PENELOPE: Oww!

QUEEN MILLICENT: Really Percival, you don't joust, go on quests...

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Must I?

QUEEN MILLICENT: Most Princes have at the very least found a unicorn or defeated a dragon by your age. You, on the other hand, will barely touch your sword. Why, you seem almost frightened of your fencing master and Sir Winfred really is as gentle as a lamb!

PRINCE CHARMLESS: I am not! It's only his daughter makes me nervous she's so... *(Gets a dreamy look in his eyes. And sighs longingly.)* Never mind! Must I fence? Can't I take up cooking instead?

KING BERTRAM: Certainly not! Prince's fence! I fenced! My father fenced, and I'm not sure, but I'm pretty sure that his father did as well! Princes fence! That's the way things are.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Quite right Bertram. Percival, we aren't only worried about you just because you are err... shall we say, behind in your fencing. Why, you won't go to your dancing lessons and have scarcely been invited to a ball.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: But balls are so dull. You just stand around and talk to people. Or worse. Dance. And the food they serve is rubbish. Usually over-seasoned and undercooked!

KING BERTRAM: You are not cooking and that's final!

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Even a really simple salmon brandished in a dill and yogurt sauce?

KING BERTRAM: Certainly not that! Although, I do like salmon. I mean... no!

QUEEN MILLICENT: It's not only the lack of quests. You lack subtle social graces that are essential to all charming princes.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: I really have been trying to be more charming! Why, just the other day I complimented her Ladyship, the Viscountess Nigella.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Yes, she told me about that. You told the Viscountess that her hair looked like a pile of spaghetti.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Not spaghetti, linguini.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: You told someone their hair looked like pasta?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Well, I like pasta. With pesto, sun dried tomatoes, feta, and a touch of white wine, so the flavors really pop.

KING BERTRAM: Me too... I mean... no more cooking!

QUEEN MILLICENT: Percival, ladies generally don't like to have their hair compared to Italian dishes.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Greek dishes maybe?

QUEEN MILLICENT: Never mind. We wouldn't change you for the world darling... only make you more like other princes.

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PRINCESS PENELOPE: So basically change you completely.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Why don't you tell him royal advisor?

ROYAL ADVISOR: Of course your grace, Queen Millicent. Young Prince Percival. Your parents have charged me with the noble task of helping you to become charming. I have called in several experts to assist in curing... I mean correcting... I mean... improving your current state of charmingness. Shall I bring in our first guest, your majesties?

KING BERTRAM: Do. And quickly. All this talk about pasta is making me hungry.

MINSTREL 3: *(Enters.)* Me too! I haven't eaten in weeks! I mean, sorry! I'm going! I'm going! Don't stop the story! *(Exits.)*

KING BERTRAM: What do you think is for lunch?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: I was thinking of making scallops with sautéed watercress and ginger.

KING BERTRAM: That sounds wonderful... I mean, no more cooking!

QUEEN MILLICENT: Royal Advisor, bring in our first guest!

ROYAL ADVISOR: With the upmost haste your majesty...

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Doesn't it take more time to say you are going to do it with the upmost haste then to actually just do it?

ROYAL ADVISOR: How astute you are Princess Penelope. Enter royal physicians!

(ROYAL ADVISOR claps hands. PHYSICIANS enter.)

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Physicians? Am I sick?

PHYSICIAN 1: Perhaps.

PHYSICIAN 2: You see, my colleague and I believe that perhaps your lack of charm could be caused by an ailment of some kind. Have you encountered any witches lately?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Not that I know of.

PHYSICIAN 1: Kissed any frogs? Eaten any not organic produce?

(MINSTREL 2 enters, followed by SERF.)

MINSTREL 2: See, I told you to watch for toxins in your food!

SERF: Quiet! You are interrupting the story!

MINSTREL 2: Why should I listen to you? You are just a serf!

SERF: Because I have a bucket of turnips that I would hate to accidentally slip and fall on your head!

MINSTREL 5: May I continue?

(General murmur of agreement. SERF and MINSTREL 2 exit.)

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PRINCE CHARMLESS: Not that I know of.

PHYSICIAN 2: Let us examine the patient.

(PHYSICIAN 1 and 2 examine PRINCE CHARMLESS in very silly ways such as listening for his heart beat on his leg, etc.)

PHYSICIAN 1: How many fingers am I holding up? *(Holds up three fingers.)*

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Three?

(PHYSICIANS look at each other and shake their heads in dismay.)

QUEEN MILLICANT: Well, what do you think? Is he curable?

PHYSICIAN 1: Well...

PHYSICIAN 2: Leeches perhaps? They are the latest in medieval science.

PHYSICIAN 1: I fear even leeches could not cure him. Forgive us your graces. Even with our vast medicinal knowledge, we can not cure your son. Good day to you!

(PHYSICIANS bow, then exit.)

ROYAL ADVISOR: Don't fear your majesties! I have summoned others to cure your son! Please enter, royal chef!

(CHEF enters. HE/SHE bows.)

CHEF: Bon jour you're majesties! Pardonez moi, for my tardiness! I was preparing a soufflé and could not be parted! You summoned?

ROYAL ADVISOR: Perfectly fine. This is about Prince Percival.

CHEF: The prince! Wonderful boy! So accomplished! Wasn't his tiramisu the other night to die for! So light, yet substantial! N'est-ce pas?

ROYAL ADVISOR: No, no, this isn't about the tiramisu. Your graces, I can't help thinking that perhaps your son's lack of charm could be a result of poor nutrition, a dietary problem of some kind!

CHEF: Oh la la! His diet! His diet!? Sacre bleu Monsieur! I have prepared every type of diet for his grace! He's been on a pescaterian diet, a whole-foods diet, a low carb diet, a vegan diet, a gluten-free diet, a sugar-free diet!

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Remember when he was on the cabbage soup detox diet?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: I try to forget.

CHEF: There is no diet he hasn't been on! Oh no, no your graces, in my expert culinary opinion there is nothing that Prince Percival here can eat that will make him "charming," well, make him as you want him to be. If my world renowned quiches, crème brulles, bouillabaisse, and madelines have not improved him then nothing will! Sacre bleu! I can not help you! Now, excusez moi, I have soufflé to finish mademoiselles, monsieur. Au revoir!

KING BERTRAM: Of course you are excused. Thank you royal chef.

(CHEF bows again and exits, muttering grumpily in "French.")

ROYAL ADVISOR: Don't fear your majesties. I'm sure we can find a means to assist your son. Why, here comes the court jester.

KING BERTRAM: The court jester?

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Why not? There's a lot of comedic potential with a charmless prince. What?

ROYAL ADVISOR: Well, a jester is an entertainer. Perhaps he could teach Prince Charmless, I mean Prince Percival, a bit about how to hold an audience's attention.

(JESTER enters in with a cart wheel.)

JESTER: Hi ya folks! You're a great audience, thank you, thank you! Your graces! King Bertram, looking good! Queen Millicent? You lose weight, you look fabulous? And Princess Penelope! Simply stunning, just stunning... and Prince Percival you are certainly... well... err... your name starts with the letter P right? That's a great letter. Really great letter! So, what can I do for you, your graces?

KING BERTRAM: Royal jester, we were hoping that perhaps you could teach Prince Percival here a thing or two about being charming, you being in the show business industry and all.

JESTER: Teach Prince Percival, how to be charming? *(Looks visibly worried)*

QUEEN MILLICENT: Why yes.

JESTER: That Prince Percival? Seriously folks?

(Laughs nervously. Sees that EVERYONE is serious and becomes nervous again.)

Well, it's been great folks, but I err... gotta go! Bye! *(Cartwheels off stage.)*

KING BERTRAM: Hmm... shame he/she had to be going like that. Isn't like him/her to leave a willing audience.

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QUEEN MILLICENT: Isn't there anyone else who could help Percival?

ROYAL ADVISOR: Yes, well... I thought that perhaps the royal quarter master, Sir Winfred, could assist your son. He trains all the squires in arm to arm combat...

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Percival? Use a sword? I thought we had given up on Percival wielding arms after he kept accidentally flinging the sword out of his hands every time he tried to block a blow? What? It's true!

(Enter SIR WINFRED and PAIGE.)

PAIGE: He just needs practice Princess Penelope. And I'll gullet out anyone who says any differently!

SIR WINFRED: Now Paige, that is no way to talk to her highness, Princess Penelope. Forgive my daughter, your graces, she is a little spirited.

KING BERTRAM: No matter, Sir Winfred, no matter at all.

QUEEN MILLICANT: I'm sure she's very right, that Percival here only needs a little practice.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: All the same, I don't particularly like arm to arm combat. Must I? I am rather a pacifist you know. Make pastries, not war, that's my motto.

PAIGE: I always liked that about you Prince Percival.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Thanks Paige... I mean... you can call me just Percival... if you would like...

PAIGE: Alright, Percival.

QUEEN MILLICANT: Dearest, don't say such drive! The ability to wield a sword is a vital part of being a charming prince.

KING BERTRAM: Quite right! How else are you suppose to go on quests and fight dragons if you don't know how to properly use a sword?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: I can already use sushi knives. Those are kind of like swords.

KING BERTRAM: No more cooking!

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Besides, I don't want to go on quests!

(EVERYONE gasps.)

I'd sooner boil asparagus instead of lightly sautéing it with butter and garlic then go on a quest.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Then what will you do with yourself?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Well, I'm really interested in starting to learn Thai cooking.

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QUEEN MILLICENT: You will do nothing of the kind! Princes go on quests!

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Must I?

PAIGE: I would love to go on a quest with you... I mean on a quest.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Me too, not on a quest, I mean with you... I mean, not with you, I mean... oh dear...

KING BERTRAM: Well, at least try to wield a sword son.

(SIR WINFRED hands PRINCE CHARMLESS a sword. PRINCE CHARMLESS cowers and turns away, eyes closed.)

SIR WINFRED: Now, I'll do a few light hits.

(SIR WINFRED's sword barely touches PRINCE CHARMLESS' sword. PRINCE CHARMLESS drops the sword. EVERYONE groans, except PAIGE.)

PAIGE: Try again Percival!

(PRINCE CHARMLESS picks up the sword and again, looks away, eyes closed.)

SIR WINFRED: Ready?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Sure.

(SIR WINFRED again lightly touches PRINCE CHARMLESS sword. HE again drops it. EVERYONE again groans.)

SIR WINFRED: Perhaps we are going about this all the wrong way. Perhaps you should try attacking me.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Me? Attack you?

(SIR WINFRED gets into a defensive position.)

SIR WINFRED: Well, give me your best shot!

PAIGE: Go on Percival.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Well, if you insist...

(HE swings sword and it flies out of his hands. EVERYONE again groans.)

PRINCESS PENELOPE: See what I mean?

PAIGE: Try again Percival...

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Must I?

KING BERTRAM: I believe that is enough fencing for one day. Thank you Sir Winfred, and to your daughter, Paige, for her encouragement.

PAIGE: I'll help you learn to fence Percival, if you ever want to practice or anything.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Thanks Paige. I would like that. More than crepes suzettes! I mean... a lot. I would like that a lot.

PAIGE: Me too. Bye Percival.

(SIR WINFRED and PAIGE bow, then exit.)

ROYAL ADVISOR: Should I bring out my next guest?

KING BERTRAM: Why bother!

QUEEN MILLICENT: Really Bertram...

KING BERTRAM: Well, it's true Millie! We've tried everything to make Percival here charming! Everything! Everything!

QUEEN MILLICENT: Not everything, surely...

KING BERTRAM: Chakra healers, psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists...

QUEEN MILLICENT: Well, we did try those...

KING BERTRAM: Hypnotherapists, herbalists, acupuncturists...

QUEEN MILLICENT: True enough Bertram...

KING BERTRAM: Neurologists, immunologists, hematologists, microbiologists, art therapists, drama therapists...

QUEEN MILLICENT: I suppose so, but still...

KING BERTRAM: Paleopathologist, parasitologist, radiologists, and pelodectrologists...

QUEEN MILLICENT: Pelodectrologist? You just made that up!

KING BERTRAM: So? If it was real we probably would have seen one of those too!

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Don't forget the shamanic energy healer, holistic healer, and the psychic...

KING BERTRAM: Or the nutritionalists, dietarians, and personal trainers.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Alright! So nothing can make Percival charming! Nothing! No one! Percival will be his usual charmless self at tonight's ball! There! Does that make you happy?

KING BERTRAM: No, not really.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Hey! A ball? What ball?

PRINCESS PENELOPE: No one has told him about the ball yet?

QUEEN MILLICENT: Who cares about the ball! It's hopeless... hopeless!

ROYAL ADVISOR: Not quite your majesty. I have one more guest we haven't tried yet.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Oh?

ROYAL ADVISOR: I didn't want to bring her in unless we had no other choice. And with the princesses due to arrive any minute, we are in dire need of her services.

PRINCE PERCIVAL: Princesses? What's going on around here?

ROYAL ADVISOR: Well... she isn't shall we say "reasonably priced," and a little unorthodox, but her results are guaranteed.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Call her in!

ROYAL ADVISOR: Presenting the best pageant consultant in the entire kingdom! Madame Muzette!

(MADAME MUZETTE flamboyantly dressed, blowing kisses to everyone.)

MADAME MUZETTE: Good afternoon everyone! Looking fabulous? Me? I know I look fabulous, thank you! *(SHE laughs a little high pitch laugh.)* And no, I haven't won a beauty pageant in ten years, if you can believe it.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: I can.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Penelope, really. Welcome Madame Muzette to our gracious castle. We wish...

MADAME MUZETTE: *(Interrupting)* I will make myself at home here naturally, don't you worry Queenie! I can call you Queenie, right? A castle! How quaint! But all the flying buttresses. So middle ages. Those will have to go! I brought a teensy bit of luggage. It's in the carriages. I needed five to fit all my luggage. About fifteen footman should do the trick! *(Again does her high pitch laugh.)* But we can figure that out later! I can already see that we are going to be fabulous friends! *(Again does her high pitch laugh.)* Although, you should let me show you how to do your hair Queenie. Really, I could make you look ten years younger! Curls and back are the new now in hairdos for, shall we say, a more matronly chic! And you, Princess Penelope, right? Mind if I call you Penny?

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Yes.

MADAME MUZETTE: *(Again does her high pitch laugh.)* Funny little thing, aren't you? Two syllable names are the new now! You ever think about being in beauty pageants Penny honey? You are just the sweetest little thing sugar! Reminds me of myself when I was young! *(Again does her high pitch laugh.)*

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Please don't say that.

QUEEN MILLICENT: We can't tell you how excited we are that...

MADAME MUZETTE: Don't thank me yet! Thank me after you see the bill! *(Again does her high pitch laugh.)* And you! You must be Percy.

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PRINCE CHARMLESS: Percival actually.

MADAME MUZETTE: Whatever Peter! (*Circles him, inspecting him.*)

PRINCE CHARMLESS: I said my name was Percival.

MADAME MUZETTE: Uh huh. Uh huh. Oh dear me. Worse then I thought.

QUEEN MILLICET: Well, do you think you can help him?

MADAME MUZETTE: Paul here is a very bad case.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Percival!

MADAME MUZETTE: Queenie, honey, I'm sure I can help him.

Madame Muzette could make an ogre a pageant winner. I could turn a serf into Prince Charming!

(*SERF enters.*)

SERF: Hey! I resent that! Just because I'm a serf and I lug turnips around doesn't mean that I'm uncouth and not charming! Turnip farming is a very sophisticated science and noble profession!

(*BAKER enters, with MINSTRELS and LORD POMPSEY.*)

MINSTREL 2: Yeah! I'm hungry enough that even turnips sound pretty attractive.

BAKER: You are interrupting the story!

MINSTREL 5: That's okay. I don't think I can finish.

BAKER: Why not?

MINSTREL 5: Actually, you know, I'm kind of peckish. My friends and I really should go get something to eat...

BAKER: Don't stop!

LORD POMPSEY: Yes! As feudal lord of Pickering-on-Trent I order you to keep telling your story!

MINSTREL 2: Order him/her to or not. He's/She's right. We could use a nibble.

MINSTREL 3: He/ she can't very well tell a story on an empty stomach.

SERF: Care for a raw turnip?

MINSTREL 1: What about your rolls?

BAKER: My rolls?

LORD POMPSEY: Certainly. As feudal ruler of Pickering-on-Trent I order you to give them some of your rolls.

BAKER: Happy to oblige. Now continue? What happened next?

SERF: Can I throw a turnip at that Madame Muzette?

MINSTRAL 5: No, you can't. Well, if you will let me continue.

(*BAKER hands out rolls and other MINSTRELS, SERF, BAKER, and LORD POMPSEY exit.*)

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So the queen replied...

QUEEN MILLICENT: But can you make him charming in time for tonight's ball?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: What ball? What's going on here?

MADAME MUZETTE: I'm a pageant consultant, not a miracle worker!

But don't you worry, I'll get him charming enough that at least one of those princesses will consent to marry him!

PRINCE CHARMLESS: What! Marry who? Me?

KING BERTRAM: Well Percival, it's high time you got married. And tonight you will be meeting eligible princesses from the surrounding kingdoms.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: But dad!

KING BERTRAM: No buts, our minds are made up. Aren't they Millie?

QUEEN MILLICENT: Yes, they are Bertram.

KING BERTRAM: Although, I will miss not having you around to make crepe suzettes.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Bertram!

KING BERTRAM: What? He makes a great crepe suzette?

MADAME MUZETTE: Listen, Kingy-poo and Queenie. Those princesses will be scrambling to marry Pete here by the time I'm done with him.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Percival!

ROYAL ADVISOR: Well, the princesses have arrived and are waiting outside now for a quick introduction. Would you mind, perhaps giving him a quick lesson on charm? Just to get him through introductions. And fast. As in the next five minutes.

MADAME MUZETTE: Sure thing! Now listen up Parry...

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Percival!

MADAME MUZETTE: Whatever! Look, honey, when those princesses come through that door, give them your best charming smile!

Everybody loves a good smile! Show them those teeth Paxton.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Percival!

MADAME MUZETTE: Whatever! Let me see that smile!

(PRINCE CHARMLESS smiles awkwardly.)

Well, that will just have to work. We can't all have a smile like mine, now can we? *(Laughs her little high pitch laugh and smiles.)* Now, for your posture! Straight up! Shoulders thrust back! *(Physically moves PRINCE CHARMLESS until HE is straight and shoulders are back.)* You stopped smiling! Never stop smiling!

PRINCE CHARMLESS: But smiling like this hurts.

MADAME MUZETTE: Being charming hurts Pablo.

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PRINCE CHARMLESS: Not Pablo, Percival! Can't you get my name right even once?

MADAME MUZETTE: Whatever kid. As long as you are smiling. That's better. Now for the wave.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: A wave?

MADAME MUZETTE: That's right kid. All charming people wave. Let me show you. *(Does a pageant walk and wave, smiling broadly.)*

PRINCE CHARMLESS: That's charming?

MADAME MUZETTE: I know, it is, isn't it? *(Does her awkward laugh.)* Now you try?

(PRINCE CHARMLESS walks, smiles, and waves awkwardly.)

MADAME MUZETTE: That will have to do, for now Parker.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Percival.

MADAME MUZETTE: Make sure not to talk. Charming people don't need to talk. Brevity is the soul of wit.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Then you must be the least charming person I know.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Really Penelope.

MADAME MUZETTE: I've done all I can, for now. Send in the princesses. Remember, smile, standing straight, shoulders back, and wave, wave, wave.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: How many princesses are there? Will this take long? I was making a batch of sour dough bread, that is probably about ready to go in the oven.

MADAME MUZETTE: You are not smiling Patton.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Percival! Percival! Percival! You know what, never mind.

ROYAL ADVISOR: There are six my liege.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Only six princesses?

PRINCESS PENELOPE: That's funny. You think everyone would be clamoring to marry Prince Charmless over there.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Hey, at least I can tell a pâté from a terrine.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Whatever. You are not smiling Patton.

MADAME MUZETTE: Quite right Penny! Smile, smile, smile! Show off those pearly whites Peter!

QUEEN MILLICENT: Really? So few princesses? And I ordered chef to prepare all those party sized quiches too!

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Quiches? So that's where all the tarragon went. I bet chef used the last of the Roquefort cheese too!

ROYAL ADVISOR: I'm afraid there is currently a shortage of princesses in the surrounding kingdoms. An evil ogre has been abducting them as of late. I was lucky to find these six.

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QUEEN MILLICENT: An ogre abducting princesses? Oh dear. Well, send in these six princesses, one at a time please, for a formal introduction before lunch.

ROYAL ADVISOR: Very good your majesty! Send in the princesses! You there!

MINSTREL 5: Me? Announce the princesses?

ROYAL ADVISOR: Why not? You've just been standing there this whole time.

MINSTREL 5: Yeah, but I'm the one telling the story.

ROYAL ADVISOR: Bah! No excuses! Send out the first princess!

MINSTREL 5: Alright. Presenting, her royal highness, Princess Pansy!

(PRINCESS PANSY enters with large pink handbag and curtsies. SHE pulls lip gloss from purse and proceeds to apply lip gloss generously, making loud smacking noises and admiring herself in a handheld mirror.)

KING BERTRAM: Welcome Princess Pansy. We hope you will enjoy your stay in our kingdom.

PRINCESS PANSY: Like, how can I? I broke a nail getting out of the carriage. Major bummer, right? *(Pulls nail file from purse and proceeds to file nails.)*

KING BERTRAM: Errr... sure is... a... umm... major bummer. Next princess please.

MINSTREL 5: Presenting, her royal highness, Princess Portia.

MADAME MUZETTE: Keep smiling Patrick.

PRINCESS PANSY: That's, like, funny. Because, I like, so thought his name was, like, Percival or whatever! *(Laughs a ditzy laugh.)*

PRINCE CHARMLESS: It is.

PRINCESS PANSY: *(Pulls out two bottles of pink nail polish.)* So, like, do you think enchanted sunset or evening rose? Because I'm thinking evening rose is more fashionable for spring, but the enchanted sunset has sparkles in it.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Maybe you should stay away from nail polish. I think the fumes might have gone to your head.

QUEEN MILLICENT: *(Warningly)* Penelope!

PRINCESS PENELOPE: *(Shutters)* Like, don't even talk like that. I shiver to think of a world without nail polish. How does that saying go? Life, liberty, and the pursuit of nail polish.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: I don't think it goes quite like that.

(PRINCESS PORTIA enters. SHE does not look pleased with her surroundings.)

KING BERTRAM: How do you do Princess Portia?

PRINCESS PORTIA: As well as can be expected. Considering... well, all of you can bow to me if you like.

(EVERYONE bows awkwardly.)

QUEEN MILLICENT: Well, you certainly look nice young lady.

PRINCESS PORTIA: I am rather ravishing, aren't I? I'm not one to brag, but my acquaintances do tell me that I am the most beautiful princess to ever live and the fairest of them all.

PRINCESS PANSY: You do have, like, super small pores.

PRINCESS PORTIA: All of you can bow again if you like.

(EVERYONE bows awkwardly.)

I don't wish for others to worship me, but my friends do remind me that beauty and intelligence, such as mine, are meant to be worshipped.

KING BERTRAM: Yes, well, shall we bring out the next princess?

PRINCESS PORTIA: Really? Must you bother? I am not one to brag, but many princes have told me that all other princesses pale in comparison to myself.

MINSTREL 5: Presenting Princess Priscilla to your royal graces.

(PRINCESS PRISCILLA enters. SHE is sneezing into a handkerchief. SHE curtsies, followed by a huge sneeze.)

QUEEN MILLICENT: Excuse you!

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: I'm sorry. I'm allergic to dust. Must be this old castle. *(Sneezes again.)* Or it could be your perfume. Or pollen from that open window. Or mold. Hey, any of you use fabric softener?

QUEEN MILLICENT: Exactly what are you allergic to Princess Priscilla?

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: *(Sneezes again)* Oh just bee stings, wheat products, dairy products, cats, dogs, peanuts, and a few other things.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Maybe we should have asked what she isn't allergic too.

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: Don't worry about me. I'll just put this dust mask on. To block all the allergens. *(SHE puts on dust mask.)*

MINSTREL 5: Shall I call out the next princess?

QUEEN MILLICENT: Do.

MINSTREL 5: Presenting her royal highness, Princess Philippa.

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(PRINCESS PHILIPPA enters. SHE pushes MINSTREL 5 rudely.)

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: Get out of the way squirt!

KING BERTRAM: Welcome to our...

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: Yeah, yeah, whatever! So where is this Prince Percival?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: That's me!

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: Hi there runt. Get out of my way pipsqueak!

(Pushes PRINCESS PANSY to stand in her spot.)

PRINCESS PANSY: Stop it! You might, like, break my other nail! I don't think that I could, like, take the stress of breaking two nails in one day!

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: Stop whining pipsqueak or I'll give you something real to whine about, understand?

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: *(Removes dust mask when speaking.)* I'm allergic to bullies.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: How can you be allergic to bullies?

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: I don't know. They make my stomach feel funny.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Let's bring out the next princess, shall we?

MINSTREL 5: Presenting her royal highness...

(SERF enters.)

Get back there!

SERF: But I want a chance to marry a prince, even if he is charmless!

MINSTREL 5: You aren't even in the story! Now go! Or I won't finish.

SERF: Fine! *(Exits.)*

MINSTREL 5: Now, presenting her royal grace, Princess Prunella!

(PRINCESS PRUNELLA enters reading a thick book.)

QUEEN MILLICENT: Princess Prunella, welcome!

PRINCESS PRUNELLA: Do excuse me. I am currently working on my Latin.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Latin... how commendable! Welcome to our humble home Princess Prunella.

PRINCESS PRUNELLA: My sincere gratitude for your amiable and cordial salutation.

PRINCESS PANSY: Wow, you, like, use a lot of big words. The biggest word I know is memorizing and that's because my favorite lipstick shade is memorizing mauve.

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QUEEN MILLICENT: My, that is certainly interesting Princess Pansy and you are very welcome Princess Prunella.

PRINCESS PRUNELLA: Now, if you are not wholly affronted, I would appreciate returning to my enthralling studies forthwith.

KING BERTRAM: Of course Prunella!

(PRINCESS PRUNELLA goes back to reading her book.)

Next princess please!

MINSTREL 5: Presenting her royal highness, Princess Pandora!

(PRINCESS PANDORA enters. SHE stumbles into MINSTREL 5.)

PRINCESS PANDORA: Sorry! *(SHE keeps walking and stumbles again.)* Oppsie! I'm alright! Don't worry! Hello everyone! *(SHE drops her purse clumsily.)* Silly me! I'm a little clumsy!

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Only a little?

(PRINCE CHARMING enters, smiling and waving.)

PRINCE CHARMING: Allow me!

PRINCESSES: Prince Charming!

(ALL FEMALE CAST on stage sigh.)

MADAME MUZETTE: *(Aside to PRINCE CHARMLESS.)* Did you see his smile and wave Pierce? Perfect! So charming!

PRINCE CHARMING: Here you go. *(Hands PRINCESS PANDORA her purse.)*

PRINCESS PANDORA: Thank you. Oh thank you, Prince Charming.

PRINCE CHARMING: Only too happy to be of assistance. To such a lovely princess as yourself.

(HE bows. PRINCESS PANDORA swoons, dropping her purse again. MINSTREL 5 catches her, and then gives her back her purse. SHE takes out a fan and begins fanning herself.)

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: *(Aside to other PRINCESSES threateningly.)* Stay back! Prince Charming is mine!

PRINCESS PORTIA: I wouldn't bother setting your eye on Prince Charming, Princess Philippa. I'm not one to boast, but my friends do tell me that I am rather ravishing and I'm sure they would agree with me, when I say that it is very unlikely that he would even notice you in my presence.

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: You want to see how ravishing you would be with a broken nose?

PRINCESS PANSY: Eek! That would be even worse than a broken nail! At least, I like, think it would be?

QUEEN MILLICENT: Prince Charming! What do we owe the pleasure of your visit?

PRINCE CHARMING: Well, I was just defeating an evil giant in the neighborhood and I thought I might pop by before my afternoon fencing practice to be of service. That's what charming princes do best, right?

(HE laughs. PRINCESSES all laugh with him. THEY keep laughing even when HE's done.)

You can stop now.

(THEY stop laughing. Except for PRINCESS PANSY. PRINCESS PHILIPPA nudges her and SHE stops.)

I hear there was a charmless princess in dire need of my assistance. But I have trouble believing that your lovely daughter here? Penelope, isn't it?

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Yes...

PRINCE CHARMING: I have trouble believing that this enchanting creature could possibly be uncharming!

(Takes PRINCESS PENELOPE's hand and lightly kisses it.)

Can I call you Penny, Penelope? Two syllable names are the new now.

MADAME MUZETTE: Told you so.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Of course.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Oh really? I thought that you didn't want to be called Penny?

PRINCESS PENELOPE: I thought you were suppose to be smiling, smiling, smiling!

QUEEN MILLICENT: Well, actually Prince Charming...

PRINCE CHARMING: That's my nickname. But you can call me Cuthbert, your grace.

QUEEN MILLICENT: I can... Cuthbert.

(KING BERTRAM clears his throat, looking displeased.)

I mean, Prince Cuthbert, if you heard about a charmless monarch you must have heard about... well, never mind.

ROYAL ADVISOR: (*Aside to QUEEN MILLICENT and KING BERTRAM.*) Might I, in my capacity as royal advisor, advise that Prince Charming stay? He is a wonderful example of a charming prince.

QUEEN MILLICENT: I think that's a wonderful idea! (*To PRINCE CHARMING.*) Prince Cuthbert! You must stay for tonight's ball!

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Must he?

QUEEN MILLICENT: (*Aside, to PRINCE CHARMLESS.*) Yes, he must. And take notes.

PRINCE CHARMING: Well, I have to get up early tomorrow morning to defeat a dragon, but I suppose I could manage to squeeze in a little ball. As long as I can get a little fencing practice in before then. That is, if you think I should stay for the ball ladies?

PRINCESSES: Yes, Prince charming, etc.

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: So when is lunch? I'm getting hungry. You don't want to see me when I'm hungry. I get mean. You wouldn't want to see me mean. (*SHE pounds her fists a few times menacingly.*)

QUEEN MILLICENT: Certainly not. Shall we all go to lunch?

(*MINSTREL 2 and 3 enter.*)

MINSTREL 2: What's on the menu? Can we come to lunch?

MINSTREL 3: I'm starving!

(*BAKER enters.*)

BAKER: Come on you two! I'll give you another roll! You're interrupting the story!

(*BAKER escorts MINSTREL 2 and 3 off stage.*)

PRINCESS PORTIA: I warn you, that although I don't claim to be a gourmet, my acquaintances tell me that I have exquisite taste when it comes to food.

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: I'll be fine. As long as you are not serving anything with gluten, dairy, or nuts. Or most fruits, vegetables, and meat. They give me trouble with my digestion.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: No carbohydrates, no dairy, no meat, no fruits, no vegetables. What do you eat?

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PRINCESS PRISCILLA: Mostly turnips. Believe me, it gets really boring after awhile.
(SERF enters.)

SERF: Hey! What's wrong with turnips! Turnips are a nutritious and delicious root vegetable!

(HILDAGARD enters and drags SERF offstage.)

HILDEGARD: Come along! We want to hear the story!

SERF: How dare you slight turnips! The greatest of root vegetables!

(SERF and HILDAGARD exit.)

PRINCESS PRUNELLA: Perhaps you might be so amiable as to escort me to the library to conclude my studies prior to receiving my midday sustenance? I still haven't practiced my Greek.

KING BERTRAM: Of course Princess Prunella! Come everyone! To the library. And to lunch!

(PRINCESSES, KING BERTRAM, QUEEN MILLICENT, ROYAL ADVISOR exit stage left. MINSTRELS 1-4, SERF, BAKER, LORD POMPSEY, and HILDAGARD enter stage right.)

MINSTREL 5: And so they went and ate lunch.

HILDEGARD: Poor Prince Charmless!

BAKER: I know! I really hope Prince Charmless got to make his sour dough bread that was rising. Nothing is worse then trying to make a batch of bread and being interrupted!

HILDEGARD: No, I mean poor Prince Charmless because of all those dreadful princesses! I wouldn't want to marry any of them!

SERF: Me either! He would be better off with a hardworking serf, like me.

MINSTREL 5: You can't marry Prince Charmless in the story serf.

SERF: Why not? I'm just saying if you wanted a non-traditional, post modernist ending, Prince Charmless marrying a serf would be a good twist.

MINSTREL 5: Well, I suppose if you guys don't want to know how the story really ends...

LORD POMPSEY: But we do! Quiet serf and let the minstrel tell the story.

SERF: Just like a feudal lord. Has to repress me in a story as well as real life. I need a new profession.

MINSTREL 1: Ever considered being a minstrel?

SERF: And the benefits are?

MINSTREL 3: Well, let's see, no pay, near starvation, no shelter, no dental, and no retirement plan.

SERF: I'll stick to being a serf. At least we have a decent health care plan.

BAKER: Serf, really? You know very well there is no health care in the Middle Ages.

SERF: No health care? This really is the dark ages. I can't wait for the Renaissance.

LORD POMPSEY: Come now! Let's finish this story, shall we? What happened next?

MINSTREL 5: Well, after lunch the princesses gathered in the courtyard in the hopes of watching charming Prince Cuthbert at his fencing practice.

(MINSTRELS 1-4, SERF, BAKER, LORD POMPSEY, and HILDEGARD exit stage right. PRINCESSES, enter stage left.)

PRINCESS PANDORA: I'm so sorry for spilling that water on you at lunch Princess Portia. I'm a little bit accident prone.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: *(Sarcastically.)* Really? Only a little bit accident prone Princess Pandora?

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: Good thing you didn't spill any water on me. I'm allergic to water. At least I think I am.

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: Yeah, and good thing you didn't spill anything on me at lunch. Would be the last thing you ever did, pipsqueak, if you had.

PRINCESS PORTIA: I do not feel that I am particularly forgiving, but my associates do tell me that I am of a very noble nature. That said, really, it's one thing to only accidentally spill water, but you managed at lunch to shatter your plate, two crystal goblets, break the salad tongs, and drop the strawberry shortcake.

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: You are real lucky I don't like strawberry shortcake squirt.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Like I said. Only a bit accident prone Princess Pandora?

PRINCESS PANSY: At least she didn't chip the top coat of her nail polish! That would be really tragic.

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: So where is this Prince Charming, huh? I hate waiting for anything. Waiting makes me bored, and being bored makes me want to punch something. *(Makes a fist and pounds fist into other hand menacingly.)*

PRINCESS PANSY: Yeah, he needs to hurry out here. I, like, so need to get my pedicure in before tonight's big ball.

(PRINCESS PANSY begins applying make up from her purse. PAIGE enters and bows.)

PAIGE: Greetings princesses. Can I be of any assistance? Or let me guess? You're here waiting for Prince Charming to come out for fencing practice?

(PRINCESSES sigh.)

PRINCESS PANDORA: Even his name sounds dreamy! Just thinking about him!

(PRINCESS PANDORA starts to swoon. PRINCESS PENELOPE shakes her.)

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Hey! Don't faint on me. But you do have a point. He's everything a prince should be.

PRINCESS PORTIA: I'm not one to boast...

PRINCESS PENELOPE: *(Sarcastically)* Oh certainly not.

PRINCESS PORTIA: But my acquaintances do tell me that I am the epitome of a princess. Just as prince charming is the epitome of a prince. Wouldn't you say?

PRINCESS PANSY: I hope he didn't notice my broken nail.

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: He will certainly notice a broken arm if you don't stop talking about your stupid nail pipsqueak.

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: I'm actually allergic to a lot of princes, but not Prince Charming. He's dreamy!

PRINCESS PANDORA: Do you think he noticed me?

PAIGE: I'm sure he did Princess Pandora. You're hard to miss.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Yeah, I mean, you spilled the soup course all down his tunic at lunch.

PRINCESS PANDORA: I was just trying to give him another ladle of soup. It's the thought that counts.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: I don't know. Steaming hot tomato bisque landing on your lap counts for something I would say.

PRINCESS PRUNELLA: Will you please keep your talking down to a minimum? I am trying to do my afternoon math lesson, and believe me calculus is challenging enough without being distracted by all your yakking.

PAIGE: Don't worry Princess Pandora. Accidents happen.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Unless you are Princess Pandora. Then you are perpetually an accident waiting to happen.

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PAIGE: Actually, that's why Prince Cuthbert isn't out yet. He's changing his tunic now. But I'm sure he'll be down in a second your highnesses.

(OGRE enters.)

OGRE: Prince Charming not down yet? A pity. I would have liked a little nibble of prince al fresco before the journey back.

PAIGE: Pardon me, Sir, but can we be of assistance to you? What did you say your name was?

OGRE: Og Er.

PAIGE: You're an ogre?

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: I'm allergic to ogres.

OGRE: No, my first name is Og and my last name is Er. But coincidentally I am also an ogre. Listen ladies, I'm looking for some princesses.

PAIGE: Sorry, but I don't think there are any princesses around here, right Penelope?

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Nope, none.

PRINCESS PORTIA: Nonsense Princess Penelope, Paige! I am not one to toot my own horn, but my many suitors have told me that there is no mistaking my royal lineage.

PRINCESS PANSY: So, like, why would you tell Mr. Og Er here that we are not, like, princesses, Princess Penelope? Wait a minute. Og Er. Sounds like ogre. Kind of like that terrible, evil monster that has been kidnapping all the princesses in the surrounding kingdoms, huh?

OGRE: Terrible, evil monster? I prefer malevolent, malicious monster myself. Better alliteration

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Nice going Princess Pansy, Princess Portia.

OGRE: Alright Princesses. Let's not make this anymore unpleasant then it needs to be. Single file.

PRINCESS PRUNELLA: Oh bother. This kidnapping is most inconvenient. This means I'll never finish my mid afternoon calculus now!

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: Can I be excused from being kidnapped? I already told you I'm allergic to ogres. Look, I'm breaking out in hives!

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: Don't worry Princess Priscilla, Princess Prunella. I'd like to know what this ogre is going to do to us if we don't go! (*Punches her fists into her hands menacingly.*)

OGRE: Well, let's see. I'll most likely suck your blood and crush your bones to dust.

(OGRE laughs evilly. PRINCESS PHILIPPA gulps in fear.)

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: Alright. Get into a line runts. Get a move on.
Do as the ogre says.

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: Does anyone have any calamine lotion?
Princess Pandora, Princess Portia? Anyone?

PRINCESS PRUNELLA: Do you think I might be allowed to go get my
books? This whole kidnapping fiasco will really put me behind in
my studies if I don't!

OGRE: Get into a line. Now!

(PRINCESSES begin forming a line.)

PRINCESS PANSY: Don't worry Princess Prunella. I brought along
plenty of nail files. If you, like, get bored you can always file your
nails.

PRINCESS PRUNELLA: I don't think I am going to greatly enjoy being
kidnapped.

OGRE: I get that comment a lot. Which is surprising since I try to make
the kidnapping process as easy and pleasant as possible for
everyone. Now into a line! All of you!

PRINCESS PORTIA: I, for one, am not surprised. I am not one to brag,
but many of my admirers have told me that if ever there was a
beautiful princess worthy of capture by some terrible, evil, monster
then I was she!

OGRE: I already told you I prefer malevolent, malicious monster. And
stop your yakking and get into line ladies. Or you could scream for
help. Although, if you did that, I suppose I would have to kill and eat
all of you right now!

*(OGRE laughs evilly. PRINCESSES form line quickly. PRINCESS
PANDORA trips and falls on PRINCESS PHILIPPA.)*

PRINCESS PANDORA: Sorry Princess Philippa!

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: Watch it Princess Pandora, or you'll have more
then an ogre to worry about!

PRINCESS PORTIA: I am not one to brag, but my friends do inform me
that I am quite the leader. Shouldn't I be at the head of the line?

OGRE: I said, all of you, into a line!

(OGRE looks at PAIGE.)

PAIGE: What? Me too?

OGRE: I said all the princesses.

PAIGE: But I'm not a princess!

OGRE: (*Disbelievingly*) Oh really?

PRINCESS PENELOPE: No, Mr. Ogre, sir, Paige really isn't a princess.

OGRE: Quiet Princess Penelope. You've already lied once today!

PRINCESS PANDORA: Princess Penelope isn't lying. Can't you tell that Paige isn't endowed with the grace or poise to be a princess?
(*Trips and falls on PRINCESS PHILIPPA.*)

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: Hey! Watch it pipsqueak!

PRINCESS PANDORA: Sorry.

OGRE: Don't take me for some dim-witted troll. Her name is Paige. Which alliterates with princess. Meaning clearly that she is a princess.

PAIGE: It's just a coincidence that my name alliterates with princess. I'm just the daughter of Sir Winfred, the palace fencing teacher.

OGRE: You're pretty, sensible, and a charming liar. You're the best princess out of all of them!

(*Following dialogue can be over lapping.*)

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: Yeah right. I bet she doesn't speak five languages. Or do scientific notion in her head!

PRINCESS PORTIA: I am not one to crow, but I am told that I am a very fair princess indeed.

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: Princess! Ha! I could bench press that runt with one arm.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Yeah, I admit Paige is cool, but she really isn't a princess.

OGRE: Quiet! All of you! You know, the other princesses never gave me this much trouble! Now single file. All of you. Including Princess Paige.

(*PAIGE joins the line of PRINCESSES.*)

PAIGE: Very well. But I really am not a Princess.

OGRE: No talking. Any of you! Not one word. Or I'll knock all of you unconscious and carry you back in a burlap sack! Which believe me I don't want to do. It's hard to keep princesses "well-preserved" if you transport them that way. (*Again laughs sinisterly.*)

PRINCESS PANSY: Oh dear! That would so smudge my lipstick. Not to mention what it might do to my hair!

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: I'm allergic to being knocked unconscious.

PRINCESS PORTIA: I am not one to brag, but my friends do tell me, "Princess Portia the perfect," that's what they call me, "Princess Portia the Perfect" they say...

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PRINCESS PENELOPE: (*Aside to PAIGE.*) Sure it isn't Princess Portia the Pestilence?

PRINCESS PORTIA: "Princess Portia the perfect you can be quiet unlike any other. As silent as the grave. Some princesses needlessly prattle but you Princess Portia can keep silent, yes sirreee." You see ogre, I don't go on, and on, and on about nothing. Oh yes, Princess Portia can hold her tongue. She is as quiet as a...

OGRE: Will you be quiet! Now come on!

(*PRINCESSES exit, followed by OGRE.*)

MINSTREL 5: Soon Prince Charming came out to practice fencing. Followed closely by Queen Millicent, King Bertram, the royal advisor, pageant consultant Madame Muzette, and a reluctant Prince Charmless.

(*Enter PRINCE CHARMING, QUEEN MILLICENT, KING BERTRAM, MADAME MUZETTE, and PRINCE CHARMLESS.*)

QUEEN MILLICENT: We can't tell you how delighted we are that you are staying for the ball Prince Charming!

PRINCE CHARMING: No, no Queen Millicent, it's a pleasure to be a guest of so gracious and lovely a hostess as yourself. And you can call me Cuthbert, remember?

QUEEN MILLICENT: Of course I do, Cuthbert.

(*SHE giggles. KING BERTRAM does not look pleased.*)

KING BERTRAM: Yes, well, shouldn't you start fencing or something?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Yeah, although I don't think we have any helmets big enough for your massively oversized head Prince Cuthbert.

PRINCE CHARMING: Don't you have some potatoes you should be peeling in the kitchen along with the staff Prince Charmless?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: I never peel potatoes. I usually just scratch the skin off with a brush. Your point Prince Cuthbert?

MADAME MUZETTE: Listen Peabody...

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Percival.

MADAME MUZETTE: Whatever. You could learn a lot from this Prince Charming. Starting with his fashion sense. Listen Cuthbert, I love that tunic on you.

PRINCE CHARMING: It's the new now, isn't it?

MADAME MUZETTE: Took the words right out of my mouth kid. I bet Prince Charming here could also teach you a thing or two about fencing.

PRINCE CHARMING: Such as how to not drop a sword for starters.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: I'd sooner intentionally overcook oatmeal than learn to fence from him!

QUEEN MILLICENT: Really Percival!

PRINCE CHARMING: Naturally I'd love to assist Prince Charmless here. Part of being charming is assisting the less fortunate and needy.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: I think you are in need of popping that over inflated head of yours.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Really Percival!

MADAME MUZETTE: Ready to get started Paine?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Percival.

PRINCE CHARMING: Shouldn't we wait for the princesses to arrive?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Yeah, what is the point of showing off if there isn't anyone to show off too, eh Charming?

PRINCE CHARMING: Since you have nothing to show off, I wouldn't expect you to understand, Charmless. Now, where are the adoring masses?

(PAIGE enters, out of breath.)

QUEEN MILLICENT: Paige. There you are! Prince Cuthbert and my son are ready to practice fencing.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Are you alright Paige?

QUEEN MILLICENT: Why Paige, you are as white as a sheet!

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Dilated pupils. Trouble breathing. Increased heart palpitations. She has the classic symptoms of D. I. D.

KING BERTRAM: What's that?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: D. I. D. You know, damsel in distress.

PAIGE: Princesses... kidnapped by ogre... barely escaped...

KING BERTRAM: What was that Paige?

PAIGE: Princesses were in the courtyard waiting for Prince Charming.

PRINCE CHARMING: Sounds credible.

PAIGE: Then an ogre came. He told them to line up and follow him.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Whatever for?

PAIGE: To kidnap them!

QUEEN MILLICENT: Which princesses?

PAIGE: All of them!

QUEEN MILLICENT: All of them?

KING BERTRAM: But some of them were so irritating. I mean, by jove, that's dreadful!

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PAIGE: Princess Pansy, Princess Portia, Princess Priscilla, Princess Philippa, Princess Prunella, Princess Pandora, and even your sister Percival, Princess Penelope!

QUEEN MILLICENT: Penelope! My baby!

ROYEL ADVISOR: This is indeed dreadful news majesties. Most tragic.

MADAME MUZETTE: I'll say. This will make tonight's ball a complete bore if there are no princesses.

PAIGE: I ran away when the ogre was distracted.

QUEEN MILLICENT: How was he distracted?

PAIGE: Well, Princess Pandora tripped and fell on Princess Pansy, who broke a nail and whined so much that Princess Philippa started threatening her. A complete fiasco. Those princesses were almost better to escape from than the ogre. I mean, yes, well, I was very lucky.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: I think you were very brave Paige.

PAIGE: Thanks my Percival, I mean my majesty, I mean, your majesty.

ROYEL ADVISOR: Did the ogre explain what he planned to do with the princesses?

PAIGE: He plans to eat them.

(EVERYONE gasps, except MADAME MUZETTE.)

QUEEN MILLICENT: How dastardly!

KING BERTRAM: Horrendous!

ROYEL ADVISOR: Most inconvenient.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Worse than an improperly poached egg!

MADAME MUZETTE: Absolutely perfect!

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Huh?

MADAME MUZETTE: Don't you see? This is a perfect opportunity for Paco here to go on a little quest.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Percival.

ROYEL ADVISOR: Your graces, Madame Muzette has made a valid proposal.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Me? Go on a quest?

MADAME MUZETTE: What could be more heroic than saving princesses and defeating ogres, eh Prince Charming? *(SHE laughs her high pitched, girlish laugh.)*

PRINCE CHARMING: Yeah, sure. Great. A quest.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Well, someone has to rescue Penelope. And the other Princesses too.

PRINCE CHARMING: Great! It's settled. Prince Charmless is rescuing the princesses. Good bye everyone.

KING BERTRAM: Good bye? But where are you going Prince Cuthbert?

PRINCE CHARMING: I err... have other pressing engagements.

KING BERTRAM: Surely you must want to go along with my son, Percival here. You wouldn't want him to get all the glory, now would you?

PRINCE CHARMING: I... errr... of course not... I mean, I have every intention of going.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Does he have to come?

QUEEN MILLICENT: You should feel grateful to have the assistance of Prince Charming.

PAIGE: And I'm coming too.

PRINCE CHARMING: I will not have some helpless damsel obstructing our likely arduous journey.

PAIGE: Well, do you know where the princesses are being held hostage?

PRINCE CHARMING: No.

PAIGE: So how did you plan on rescuing them if you didn't even know where to look?

PRINCE CHARMING: I err...

PAIGE: This "helpless damsel," escaped from the ogre's cave. I'm the only one who can show you where the princesses are being held prisoner. And as for the "helpless" part, my dad, Sir Winfred, taught me how to fence. I can take care of myself. In fact, I'm probably better with a blade than Prince Charmless here is, no offense Percival.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: None taken.

PAIGE: And probably even you. If you would care to fight a duel with me to find out?

(PAIGE pulls sword from sheath and stands as if ready to duel.

PRINCE CHARMING gulps.)

PRINCE CHARMING: That won't be necessary maiden. I can concede the necessity of having you tag along on this rescue mission.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: I'm sorry that you have to come along Paige. I wouldn't want you in any danger.

PAIGE: Really?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: I mean...

MADAME MUZETTE: Then it's settled. Prince Charming, Prince Charmless, Paige, and myself will embark on a rescue mission.

QUEEN MILLICENT: Are you sure you want to go on this quest Madame Muzette?

MADAME MUZETTE: I'm still teaching Pedro here how to be charming, remember?

QUEEN MILLICENT: That's very good of you.

ROYEL ADVISOR: Your contract states that your fee triples when consulting clients during a quest.

MADAME MUZETTE: Yes, and there's that tinsey, little, aspect too.

Besides, Prince Charming here will keep me from harms way, won't you darling? (*SHE boisterously cackles annoying laugh.*)

PRINCE CHARMING: (*Nervously*) Me? Of course I will. Naturally.

PAIGE: Well then, come along! To the ogre's lair!

(PAIGE exits, followed by PRINCE CHARMING, PRINCE CHARMLESS, MADAME MUZETTE. QUEEN MILLICENT, KING BERTRAM, and ROYEL ADVISOR exit shortly afterwards. Lights fade. End of ACT 1.)

ACT 2

SETTING: Somewhere in a market square, the Middle Ages, Britain

AT RISE: *MINSTRELS 5 is center stage, surrounded by HILDAGARD, LORD POMPSEY, MINSTRELS 1-4, BAKER, and SERF.*

MINSTREL 5: And so they set off on a quest to save the princesses.

MINSTREL 2: More like a suicide mission.

MINSTREL 4: It would make a memorable heroic ballad. Prince Charmless, bravely marching off to his certain demise.

SERF: I know I said I liked post-modernist, non-traditional endings, but I always hate when the main character dies at the end of the story. I farm turnips for a living and live in a novel. My real life is depressing enough.

MINSTREL 5: So he's as good as dead, huh?

MINSTREL 3: Well, you saw for yourself! Prince Charmless can't even pick up a sword! Much less fight an ogre!

BAKER: He can make sour dough bread.

MINSTREL 3: So what?

BAKER: Well, that has to count for something.

MINSTREL 3: Maybe that he'll already be pre-floured when the ogre goes to fry him up!

HILDAGARD: Perhaps Prince Charming will save the princesses. He is one of the rescue party after all.

SERF: That's a good point your ladyship. Prince Charming is there.

(HILDAGARD and SERF sigh longingly and speak at the same time.)

SERF / HILDAGARD: Prince Charming!

MINSTREL 5: Well, all of you seem to already have this story figured out.

MINSTREL 3: Yes, yes. Prince Charmless is killed horribly by the ogre in a fool hardy attempt to save the day and Prince Charming comes in and defeats the ogre and rescues the princesses. The end.

MINSTREL 2: It's so tragic I don't even want to make a joke about it.

MINSTREL 4: Well, I composed a song for the soon-to-be-deceased Prince Charmless. *(Sings mournfully, occasionally hitting tambourine for emphasis.)*

Don't go, don't go oh Charmless Prince;
For your fate does make me wince;
To fall into a ghastly demise surely are ye;
And be served at an ogre's afternoon tea;

Oh woe, oh woe, poor Prince Charmless.

LORD POMPSEY: As the feudal lord of Pickering-on-Trent can I order you to have a happy ending?

MINSTREL 5: You villagers can have whatever ending you wish.

MINSTREL 1: But we want to hear how the story really ends!

HILDAGARD: What happens to Paige and Prince Charmless?

SERF: Yeah, and Prince Charming. (*Sighs in adoration.*)

MINSTREL 5: So you would like to hear how the story really ends?

(*General murmur of agreement.*)

Very well. Now, let's see, where were we?

MINSTREL 2: Prince Charmless, Prince Charming, Paige, and Madame Muzette were heading to the ogre's lair to rescue the princesses.

MINSTREL 5: Well, let's go back to the princesses.

(*MINSTRELS 1-4, BAKER, SERF, HILDEGARD, and LORD POMPSEY exit. MINSTREL 5 crosses to stage right.*)

Now, all the princesses were... serf? What are you still doing here?

SERF: Can I please smack that Madame Muzette with a turnip?

MINSTREL 5: Well, she isn't here. Currently we are at the ogre's cave.

And you aren't allowed to hit her with a turnip even if she were here.

SERF: Well, my turnips are too good to waste on the likes of her.

Never mind. Please continue. (*Exits.*)

MINSTREL 5: Back at the ogre's cave the princesses anxiously awaited their fates.

(*PRINCESSES enter, except PRINCESS PANDORA.*)

PRINCESS PORTIA: I am not one to expect too fine of surroundings, being of a humble nature, but my friends do tell me that I deserve to be surrounded purely by all the fineries of life and the most thoughtfully decorated abode. Really, although he does have quite a treasure trove, this ogre should have adequately redecorated his accommodations to suitably house a princess such as myself. My acquaintances would not be pleased if they could see me in such squalor.

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: And all the allergens here. Mold, dirt, dust, not to mention pollen. Anyone have any Claritin?

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Princess Portia, Princess Priscilla, we have a bigger problem here than the lack of interior decorating and various allergens.

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PRINCESS PANSY: I'll say Princess Penelope! I've, like, totally didn't bring any blue eye shadow! And what am I going to do if it comes back into fashion, huh?

PRINCESS PRUNELLA: I do believe Princess Penelope is referring to our current crisis of there not being a library in the near vicinity. I've almost concluded reading my book.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Actually Princess Pansy, Princess Prunella, I was referring to the blood thirsty ogre plotting how to cook us, as we speak.

PRINCESS PHILLIPA: Will you guys quit whining? I hate whining. Whining makes me mad. You don't want to see me mad! (*Starts pounding fist into hand menacingly.*)

PRINCESS PENELOPE: You're not the only one that's mad...

(*PRINCESS PANDORA enters, followed by the OGRE with a broom and dustpan.*)

PRINCESS PANDORA: I'm so sorry about that.

OGRE: (*Irritably*) Oh, that's fine. It was a priceless, early baroque helmet. You might as well have broken it.

PRINCESS PRUNELLA: It's an enigma really how you've managed to break bronze helmets Princess Pandora, but congratulations, you've done it.

PRINCESS PANSY: What's an enigma is how you can stand having your nails look like that Princess Prunella.

PRINCESS PRUNELLA: I can't turn pages if I had long nails Princess Pansy. And there are more important things in life than manicures.

PRINCESS PANSY: Like what? Pedicures?

OGRE: Oh, it's not only bronze helmets Princess Pandora has managed to destroy, its denting gold goblets, smashing vases, not to mention that chest of gold deplumes she scattered everywhere, and the bear skin rug she spilled tea all over. I think a cyclone would have caused my treasure trove less damage. And wait, let me guess Princess Portia, (*Impersonating PRINCESS PORTIA*) You are not one to brag about how refined you are, but your friends do tell you that you are a far too superior and graceful to ever break anything.

PRINCESS PORTIA: Why, as a matter of fact, they do.

OGRE: And you Princess Pansy, you are going to say...

(*Impersonating PRINCESS PANSY*) Well, like, at least she didn't break a nail! That would, like, really be, like, tragic!

PRINCESS PANSY: Like! Wow! I was, like, so thinking that!

OGRE: And you Princess Penelope, you are the only one here that it would be a shame to eat.

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PRINCESS PENELOPE: I'm not sure if that is a compliment, but thanks.

OGRE: I'll make sure to eat you last. Perhaps as dessert. You would be tasty at the bottom of an ice cream sundae I wager.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: That's comforting. At least my final moments will be drizzled in chocolate sauce and topped with a cherry.

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: I'm allergic to chocolate sauce. And cherries.

(PAIGE enters tip toeing stage right, followed by PRINCE CHARMLESS, MADAME MUZETTE, and a reluctant PRINCE CHARMING.)

PAIGE: *(Stage whispering)* Quiet everyone! Look! The princesses are still alive!

PRINCE CHARMING: Great. Now let's go report back to the castle.

(PRINCE CHARMING starts to exit. MADAME MUZETTE grabs him and pats him on the back.)

MADAME MUZETTE: How droll of you Prince Charming! To tell a joke at a time like this! Take note of that Philbert. *(Does high pitched laugh)*

PAIGE: It's Percival.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Thanks Paige.

PAIGE: Don't mention it.

MADAME MUZETTE: Whatever. What's happening?

PAIGE: Let's listen.

OGRE: Actually, I have a confession to make to all of you.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: What is that ogre?

OGRE: I don't actually eat princesses.

PRINCE CHARMING: That's a relief.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Then why do you kidnap princesses?

OGRE: Why? To attract my all time favorite food! The most delicious delicacy out there! Charming princes!

PRINCE CHARMING: Good bye.

(Again HE is grabbed by MADAME MUZETTE.)

MADAME MUZETTE: You are such a joker kid.

PRINCE CHARMING: Yeah. I'm a joker. How about I run away from here? That would a funny joke, right?

(MADAME MUZETTE does irritating laugh and again holds firmly to PRINCE CHARMING while patting him on the back affectionately.)

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MADAME MUZETTE: What a kidder, eh, Pericles?

PAIGE: Quiet! Or they'll hear you! And his name is Percival, Madame Muzette!

OGRE: You see Princess Penelope, hunting for charming princes can be such a bother. Kidnapping princesses is much simpler. Now, I don't have to search for charming princes from dawn until dusk. They come to me in droves to rescue you damsels in distress. I can just sit around here waiting for them to come to me.

PAIGE: Alright, so here's the plan. Prince Charmless and I will make a lot of noise in the bushes a ways off to create a distraction to lure the ogre away, while Prince Charming, you and Madame Muzette will usher the princesses to safety.

PRINCE CHARMING: Yeah, you think we might need some reinforcements from the castle? That's one big ogre.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: I thought you fought dragons?

OGRE: Ah, fresh prince, and only the most charming, that is a decidedly delectable delicacy. Charming prince finely diced in quiche, charming prince burgers, charming prince pot pie, charming prince stew, charming prince chops, charming prince freshly grilled with rosemary...

PRINCE CHARMING: Fought dragons? Me? Yeah... I mean... I said that?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Yeah, you did Prince Cuthbert

PRINCE CHARMING: Then, I mean, I did, of course I did. Although, a lot of being charming is just acting like you are charming. You know, coloring the truth on err... your accomplishments.

PAIGE: What is that suppose to mean?

OGRE: Charming prince steaks, charming prince kebabs, charming prince slowly roasted, charming prince fried up golden...

PRINCE CHARMING: I actually never wanted to be a charming prince. I always wanted to garden. Maybe do some sustainable farming.

PAIGE: Huh?

PRINCE CHARMING: That is one big ogre.

PAIGE: Back to the plan...

MADAME MUZETTE: Yes, back to the plan. Paige, hun, that is a terrible plan! So uncharismatic! So unromantic! So charmless!

PAIGE: Don't you mean so logical?

MADAME MUZETTE: Precisely! It's not what you do, but how you do it that makes you charming! Philbert here shouldn't even bother a rescue mission if he is going to be sneaking around in the woods!

PRINCE CHARMING: One really, really, really, big, mean ogre.

MADAME MUZETTE: You should be bold, daring, charismatic! Have a little style and pizzazz, right Prince Charming?

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PRINCE CHARMING: One really, really, really, really, big mean hungry ogre. Huh? Yeah, right, sure. Can I go now?

MADAME MUZETTE: Come on Prince Charming. Let's show Prince Charmless how a rescue mission should be conducted, with charm! Onward!

PRINCE CHARMING: Now just a minute Madame Muzette... isn't being charming more about... err... how you present yourself to others... not actually...

OGRE: What I wouldn't give for a tasty, charming prince right about now!

(MADAME MUZETTE drags PRINCE CHARMING out into the open.)

MADAME MUZETTE: It's your lucky day ogre! This is Prince Charming! The most handsome, talented, and all around most charming prince ever! Hand over the princesses you troll headed dolt! Or he'll slice you and dice you to ogre pate!

OGRE: Charming prince, eh?

MADAME MUZETTE: He can fence better, fight better, and dance better than any other prince. The one, the only, Prince Charming!

PRINCESSES: Hi Prince Charming! *(THEY sigh dramatically.)*

PRINCE CHARMING: This is him! This is him! *(Points to MADAME MUZETTE.)* So long!

(PRINCE CHARMING runs off stage. MADAME MUZETTE laughs nervously.)

MADAME MUZETTE: Alright Prince Charming. Enough kidding around. You can come back now. *(SHE again laughs nervously.)* Prince Charming. A great sense of humor. All part of his charm.

OGRE: Sure, sure. Get with the other damsels in distress. Or maybe I should eat you now!

(PRINCE CHARMLESS enters into opening.)

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Stop! Don't touch her!

OGRE: Well, well, what do we have here? A charming prince come to rescue fair damsels?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Well, a prince at any rate.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Is that you Percival?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Sure is little sis.

(PRINCESSES groan.)

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PRINCESS PENELOPE: Figures. For a split second, I thought it really was a charming prince, and I felt hopeful, like I wasn't going to end up as princess a la mode.

PRINCESS PRISCILLA: I should have known it was Prince Percival. He makes my allergies act up.

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: If I have to hear about your allergies one more time. *(Mimes slitting her throat.)*

OGRE: You shall never rescue these princesses...

MADAME MUZETTE: Excuse me Ogre, hun, mind if I call you hun? *(Does high pith laugh, nervously)* Fabulous, thanks hun, but I'm not technically a princess, so, if you don't mind ogre baby, I really should get going, let you and errr... Prince Pasha here...

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Percival.

MADAME MUZETTE: Whatever, sort this little Princess-napping out.

OGRE: You certainly ooze charm. Which is pretty princess-like.

MADAME MUZETTE: I do, don't I? *(Laughs high pitched laugh.)*

OGRE: Although, you are kind of old to be a princess.

MADAME MUZETTE: Old? Excuse me, did my ears hear correctly? Did you say old?

OGRE: Still, you'll certainly attract handsome princes... so make yourself comfortable.

MADAME MUZETTE: Old? Do I really look old?

OGRE: Or I'll make you comfortable, snugly cooked in the center of a soufflé!

(OGRE laughs evilly. MADAME MUZETTE lets out high pitch squeal of fear.)

PRINCESS PORTIA: I am not one to prattle on about myself, but my many admirers do continually remind me that I should only be rescued by the most charming and heroic of knights. Prince Charmless here, simply wouldn't, I'm sure, be suitable for such an illustrious privilege as rescuing such a fair and beauteous damsel as myself.

PRINCESS PANSY: I don't want Prince Charmless to rescue me either, and like, I'm out of nail polish remover.

OGRE: Princess Charmless? A prince without charm, really?

PRINCESS PRUNELLA: The statistical likelihood of a prince completely devoid of charm, is, as you noted, astronomically impossible. But Princess Charmless here defies all laws of science.

OGRE: Huh?

PRINCESS PENELOPE: I think she is trying to say in nerd, yeah it is super weird that my brother is about as charming as a serf.

OGRE: I don't believe it!

(SERF enters angrily, followed by LORD/LADY POMPSEY, HILDEGARD, MINSTRAL 2, and 4.)

SERF: Just a minute here! I am much more charming than Prince Percival! Yeah, I may smell of dung, but that doesn't mean I'm uncouth you bourgeois...

LORD POMPSEY: Come away serf! I command you.

SERF: Just like a feudal lord. I dig your turnips for you and you won't even let me defend myself against such allegations.

HILDEGARD: Well, it's only, that err... those allegations about you being charmless serf are so utterly ridiculous. You are super charming serf, right everyone?

LORD POMPSEY: Huh? What I mean is... yes, sure you are. Really charming!

SERF: Really?

MINSTREL 2: Serfs are certainly charming. And that's no joke.

MINSTREL 4: See, listen to this ballad... *(Sings, occasionally strategically shaking or hitting tambourine.)*

Oh serfs have charm, hear ye, hear ye!

To dig up turnips is sophisticated, sincerely!

Serfs work night and day

For little, no, make that no pay

Yet still, are super cool, quite clearly!

LORD POMPSEY: Why my good serf, you haul manure for the turnips with such poise, shovel mulch with such refined bearing, cart straw with only the upmost elegance and noble fortitude.

SERF: Awww, I'm speechless, really.

HILDEGARD: Good! That means we can finely get back to the story. I mean, let's get back to the story, that is, if you want to oh charming serf?

SERF: *(Tearfully)* It's just... so... you know... nice to know I am appreciated. Not anybody can grow a turnip, you know?

HILDAGARD: Yes, quite. Of we go, offstage, that's right.

(HILDEGARD leads a still tearful SERF offstage, followed by LORD POMPSEY, and MINSTREL 2 and MINSTREL 4.)

MINSTREL 5: Let's see, where we are...

OGRE: I believe that I just declared incredulously "I don't believe it."

MINSTREL 5: That's right. Thanks.

OGRE: Don't mention it. Even ogres have their moments.

MINSTREL 5: The ogre declared incredulously...

OGRE: I don't believe it!

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PRINCESS PHILIPPA: It's true! That puny runt is completely without charm.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Go on, show him Percival.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Must I?

PRINCESS PENELOPE: Dance for us!

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Well, if you insist. (*PRINCE CHARMLESS dances terribly.*)

OGRE: Please stop, stop! I don't need to see anymore.

PRINCESS PHILIPPA: Anyone who dances that badly deserves to be pulverized. May I?

PRINCESS PANDORA: That's not all, you should see how clumsy he is with a sword, I mean, it's worse than me!

OGRE: Surely not.

PRINCESS PANSY: Oh yeah, I mean, like, he couldn't even fight a duel with you if our lives depended on it.

PRINCESS PENELOPE: They do depend on it.

PRINCESS PANSY: Oh right. (*Does ditzzy laugh.*) Like, total bummer, huh?

MADAME MUZETTE: I'm too the new now to die! I have so many hair tips on how to style your locks to make you look five pounds slimmer to give! It's not fair. (*Cries, high pitched wailing, etc.*)

PRINCESS PANSY: I know, and my nails are too fabulous for me to die.

PRINCESS CHARMLESS: Look, I'll try my best guys. Alright?

(*PRINCESS CHARMLESS goes to charge at OGRE but ends up throwing sword out of hands. PRINCESSES and MADAME MUZETTE groan.*)

OGRE: Wow, you are pretty charmless. Can you tell a joke at least?

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Well, let's see... so why did the road cross the chicken, no wait, that's not right. Why did the cross roads get to the other side of the chicken, no, no, still not right. Wait, wait, let me try one more time...

OGRE: He is hopeless.

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Why did the cross-eyed chicken get to the other side of the crossroads? Is that right? I hope not because I can't remember the rest!

(*MINSTREL 2 enters.*)

MINSTREL 2: Why did the chicken cross the road? To get to the other side! Come on, that's the oldest joke in the book.

MINSTREL 5: It's the middle ages now, so it's technically still pretty new.

MINSTREL 2: Oh, right. (*Exits thoughtfully.*)

PRINCE CHARMLESS: Well, I guess you can eat all of us now, starting with me.

OGRE: You can't dance, fight with a sword, or even tell a joke. You are completely charmless!

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