

# PRINCE UGLY

## By Matt Buchanan

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## CHARACTERS

STORYTELLER	old woman; the narrator
KING BRUCE	PRINCE WILLIAM's father
ROYAL SECRETARY	works for the KING and QUEEN
PRIME MINISTER	also works for the KING and QUEEN
MEGAN	30's; a typical serving wench, has an obvious limp
QUEEN DAISY	PRINCE WILLIAM's mother
ROYAL MIDWIFE*	works for the KING and QUEEN
BUTLER*	works for the KING and QUEEN
LADY BETTY OF PURPLE*	friend of the QUEEN
LORD CHARLES OF PUMPERNICKEL*	friend of the KING
LADY REBECCA OF STEPPINGTON*	sorceress
POSTMAN*	delivers the mail
PRINCE WILLIAM XAVIER HOPKIRK, III	KING and QUEEN's son
CHILDREN*	extras of various ages
MAURICE*	royal cook
FATHER*	A father
MOTHER*	A mother

\*Ensemble roles. Can be doubled. If a larger cast is desired, a few additional servants or courtiers may be added.

## PROPS

2 Large Thrones	Monopoly Game Lid
Rocking Chair	Scuba Mask and Flippers
Small Rug	Several Water Pistols
Several Large Scrolls	Hand Mirror
Pail and Mop	Huge Wire Wisk
Whiskbroom or Feather Duster	Velvet Rope and Stanchions
Cradle or Basinet	Balloons
Large Tricycle	Large Lollipops
Set of Golf Clubs	Wiffle Bat and Ball
Mail Bag full of Letters	Rubber Chicken
Knitting	2 Loaves of Italian Bread
Chicken Leg (preferably actual)	Half a Roast Chicken
Hobby Horse	Meat Pie
Several Brown Paper Bags	Large Sausage

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

As a director I hate it when playwrights write a lot of elaborate instructions for the director. The Theatre is a collaborative art form, and I'm not the director - you are. Still, having directed this piece myself, I can offer some helpful suggestions that you can either adopt or not as you see fit.

First, regarding the set: it can be as simple as necessary or as elaborate as you want to make it. The set for the premiere consisted of little more than the two thrones, the Storyteller's rocker, and some regal-looking banners. The whole play takes place essentially in one room, so apart from a few set pieces that are carried on, such as the velvet rope, that's all you need.

We created most of the visual interest through the costumes. There again, though, there's wide latitude. You can go for a whole-heartedly fairy-tale look, or combine elements of that with more modern dress. If all of your actors are about the same age, it will be important to differentiate adult characters from child characters. (We put our male children in short pants or knickers and our girls in baby-doll dresses and Mary Janes, etc.) There are a lot of "uniforms" called for: various servants, the postman, Maurice the chef, but these can be merely suggested if you like, especially if you're doubling the roles.

The piece is designed to work with a large or small cast, depending on doubling. Only the Storyteller, the Prince, Megan, the King and Queen, and the Royal Secretary and Prime Minister are really on enough of the time that they couldn't double other characters. Lady Rebecca and Maurice could easily double, but they're showy enough roles that you might not want to. The rest of the characters are essentially walk-ons. It is helpful to have at least three or four children available for the playtime scenes, but it doesn't matter whether they're the same children each time or different ones, and most of the scenes would support a lot more than three or four if you've got kids who want to participate. We used dozens in the premier.

Regarding characters' genders: I've used male and female pronouns to designate characters only because our language lacks a neuter one. With a few obvious exceptions, most of the roles could be played male or female.

One fairly important note: because of the episodic nature of this piece, timing is critical. Do not ever allow yourself to put "dead air" on the stage. The Storyteller's narrations are timed to cover any necessary scene changes, and the scenes should fire as rapidly as possible. This can create significant traffic problems backstage, but I've found that young actors will usually work these things out for themselves if you let them. Adults who stepped backstage during our production were flabbergasted by how smoothly the cast moved through the very complicated crosses, entrances and exits.

Anyway, that's more than enough out of me. Good luck with your production!

*Prince Ugly* was premiered at The Montgomery Academy, Montgomery, AL, in 2003, with the following cast:

<i>Prince William</i>	Robbie Seip
<i>Megan</i>	Caitlin Ackerman
<i>Storyteller</i>	Parker Garrett
<i>King Bruce</i>	Mike Hollabaugh
<i>Queen Daisy</i>	Abigail Smith
<i>Maurice</i>	Seth Douglas
<i>Lady Rebecca of Steppington</i>	Lillian Wilson
<i>Royal Secretary</i>	Sarah Wool
<i>Prime Minister</i>	Liz Laurie
<i>Postman</i>	Tip Powell
<i>Royal Butler</i>	Sam Hobbs
<i>Royal Midwife</i>	Elizabeth Hood
<i>Lady Betty of Purple</i>	Sasha Murchison
<i>Lord Charles of Pumpernickel</i>	Michael Reilly
<i>Boot Boy</i>	Henry Weatherly
<i>Chambermaid</i>	Mary Katherine Fine
<i>Groom</i>	Dustin Weil
<i>Jester</i>	Harry Fitzpatrick
<i>Schoolmistress</i>	Lily McLemore
<i>Moat Minder</i>	Emily Jones

*Children:*

Emily Bailey, Beverly Blount, Elizabeth Bownes, Amanda Curvin, Mike Foxhall, Frannie Jackson, Gracie Kennedy, Martha Lamar, Sally Claire McKenzie, William McLain, Caitlin McRae, Daniel Meadows, William Morris, Emily Olds, Maggie Rickard, Julia Steinhilber, Lanier Walker, Maggie Wedgworth, Anne Miles Wilkerson

*Parents:*

Caroline Lee, Catherine Benton, Maggie Mardre

*Kitchen/Cleaning Staff:*

Laura Bownes, Mary Hendon DeBray, Alec Douglas, Whitney Esdale, Rebecca Hunter, Jeila Martin Kershaw, Mitchell Parrish, May Morgan Poundstone, Wesley Wilson, Jenny Wool

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***At Rise: Lights up on a fairytale throne room with two large thrones - his and hers. STORYTELLER sits in a rocker in the DL corner of the stage where SHE will remain for the entire play. SHE is very well dressed in a fairytale sort of way. No one else is onstage. STORYTELLER addresses the audience.***

STORYTELLER: Once upon a time... fairy tales always begin, "Once upon a time." It's a rule. Once upon a time there was a peaceful little Kingdom. The name of the kingdom was "The Kingdom." Don't look at me like that. I didn't name it. The Kingdom was ruled with great enthusiasm and occasional competence by King Bruce. Everyone in The Kingdom loved Bruce and Daisy, and especially everyone who worked in the palace. Bruce and Daisy were - how shall I put this - very *casual* employers. Old Bruce made it a rule that nobody should ever have to work in the afternoon - except Maurice, the Royal Cook, of course, who had to get dinner. But HE didn't even know HOW to play, so he didn't mind a bit. Yes, life in the palace was usually pretty free and easy, but there was a time, well, of course it was a good thing, but it did make life for those in the palace a little more frantic for a while. I'm talking, of course, about the birth of the new baby. The King had always wanted to be a father, and he was a little, well, excited. Here he comes now.

***(KING BRUCE scurries in. We can tell HE's the king because of his crown, but HE looks anything but royal. HE is in pajamas and a robe, and wears one bedroom slipper. As kings go, HE's a fairly young man. HE's not really looking where HE's going and HE trips over a rug. HE gets up, glares resentfully at the offending rug and scurries off.)***

QUEEN DAISY: ***(off)*** Bruce! Bruce!

STORYTELLER: That's Daisy. She's really sweet usually, honest!

QUEEN DAISY: ***(off)*** Bruce! Pickles and ice cream! Now!

KING BRUCE: ***(off)*** Coming, darling! Right away, sweetness! ***(scurries across in the opposite direction, his crown has slipped over his eyes and HE misses the exit the first time and has to disentangle himself from the curtain)*** Oh, dear! I'm not ready for this! I don't know how to be a father! I... oh, bother! ***(exits successfully)***

STORYTELLER: Can you tell this is his first baby? Hers, too, naturally.

The whole palace was topsy-turvy. Everyone was getting ready. A huge celebration - the biggest The Kingdom had ever seen - was planned for when the baby arrived. The Prime Minister and the Royal Secretary had their hands full with all the planning, let me tell you.

***(ROYAL SECRETARY and PRIME MINISTER enter, deep in conversation. SECRETARY carries an enormous list that overflows his grasp and trails behind.)***

ROYAL SECRETARY: ***(reading)*** Flowers, balloons, tapestries... do we have tapestries? Placemats, invitations... ***(stumbles over the same rug the KING tripped over, does not fall but stops; hollering)***  
Megan! MEGAN!

MEGAN: ***(off)*** Coming! Don't have a cow!

***(MEGAN enters. SHE carries a pail and mop, and has a whiskbroom in her apron.)***

ROYAL SECRETARY: Megan, get rid of this rug! And clean this place up. It looks like a sty.

STORYTELLER: Stop! ***(Everyone but STORYTELLER freezes. SHE enjoys this power enormously.)*** Do you see any dirt? I never liked that one. By the way, keep your eye on Megan. She's the Maid-of-all-Work. She doesn't look like much, but she's important. Trust me. Go!

***(The action resumes as if nothing has happened.)***

MEGAN: Yes, Your Secretaryness. Right away. ***(SECRETARY and MINISTER exit L.)*** Mercy! You'd think it was the first time anybody ever had a baby!

***(SHE sweeps up imaginary dust with her whiskbroom, sweeps it under the rug and then SHE picks up the rug and exits with it.)***

STORYTELLER: I hope that baby comes soon. Everyone's losing their heads.

***(QUEEN DAISY enters, enormously pregnant, supported on one side by KING and on the other by PRIME MINISTER. SECRETARY follows behind, still trailing the list. They move as quickly as the QUEEN's condition will allow across the stage.)***

BRUCE: Hold on, my angel! Almost there, sugar dumpling!

ROYAL SECRETARY: Your Majesty, about those invitations...

QUEEN DAISY: Wait! (*The procession stops. SHE points a finger at SECRETARY*) You. Come here. (*SECRETARY approaches. DAISY, still clinging to KING for support, grabs a big handful of SECRETARY's shirt and pulls his face to hers.*) Say that again.

ROYAL SECRETARY: (*in considerable pain*) Your Majesty? Er... invitations...

QUEEN DAISY: Invitations? INVITATIONS? I'm standing here about to deliver what I'm sure is at least a forty-pound baby and you talk to me about INVITATIONS?!?!?

ROYAL SECRETARY: Er...

QUEEN DAISY: Bruce!

(*SHE releases SECRETARY, who falls gasping to the floor. KING and PRIME MINISTER help her off. SECRETARY straightens himself out as best HE can, musters what dignity HE can find and exits in the opposite direction. A moment later HE re-enters and retrieves the list HE left behind. HE exits. A moment later KING BRUCE enters, pacing furiously. HE has lost his crown, and one tail of his bathrobe is tucked into his pajama trousers. HE sits on his throne, but can't sit still. HE paces some more. HE casts pointed glances offstage. HE paces some more. Finally, after an agonizing wait, we hear the wail of a newborn. Almost instantly, ROYAL MIDWIFE charges on.*)

ROYAL MIDWIFE: It's a girl! It's a girl!

KING BRUCE: A girl! A daughter! I have a daughter!

(*KING leaps up and dances a furious jig, pulling ROYAL MIDWIFE into a spin with him.*)

STORYTELLER: Stop! (*Everyone but STORYTELLER freezes.*) You know, I think the infant-princess-under-a-curse motif has been done to death in fairy tales, don't you? I mean, come on... Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel... I've had it with helpless females. BACK UP!

(*KING BRUCE and ROYAL MIDWIFE reverse their dance.*)

KING BRUCE: (*sits down*) Retaud a vah !! Retaud a! Lrig a!

ROYAL MIDWIFE: Lrig a stih! Lrig a stih! (*rushes off backwards*)

STORYTELLER: STOP! FORWARD!

PRIME MINISTER: (*rushes on again*) It's a boy! It's a boy!

KING BRUCE: *(leaps up and dances a furious jig, pulling the ROYAL MIDWIFE into a spin with him and is about to dip her when HE realizes what HE's doing)* Oh. Excuse me. Oh, what the heck! I have a son!

*(KING dips her then plants a big kiss on her cheek and lets her go. SHE blushes and exits.)*

QUEEN DAISY: *(off)* Bruce! Come meet your son!

*(KING rushes off. As STORYTELLER speaks, ROYAL SECRETARY, PRIME MINISTER and MEGAN, along with other servants if desired, enter and begin decorating the throne room for a gala party. They exit when finished.)*

STORYTELLER: Joy reigned throughout The Kingdom. They named the baby Prince William Xavier Hopkirk the Third, but he was the first one ever to have that name. The King proclaimed a national holiday and everybody had a whole week off. Preparations were completed for the big celebration. Important guests from all over The Kingdom would soon arrive with gifts for the new prince...

*(KING and QUEEN enter, SHE with the BABY in her arms. KING, while still a little sloppy, is dressed in proper kingly fashion, and the QUEEN is positively radiant. PRINCE is placed in a cradle between the thrones. PRIME MINISTER and ROYAL SECRETARY enter and stand at KING's left. BUTLER enters and stands SR to announce the guests.)*

STORYTELLER: The first guest to arrive was Lady Betty of Purple, Her Majesty's oldest friend.

BUTLER: *(in his most pompous voice)* Lady Betty of Purple!

*(LADY BETTY enters R and approaches the ROYALTY. SHE is impeccably dressed, which makes the huge tricycle SHE is carrying all the more incongruous.)*

LADY BETTY: Daisy! *(SHE tries to embrace the QUEEN, and they both become hopelessly entangled in the tricycle. PRIME MINISTER rushes forward to rescue the gift, puts it to one side, and the pair embrace properly. LADY BETTY absently kisses KING.)* Bruce.

KING BRUCE: *(not especially enthusiastic)* Betty.

LADY BETTY: Now, where is the little Prince? Oh, how precious! Goo! Goo!

QUEEN DAISY: Come away, Betty, dear, before you wake him.

KING BRUCE: (*under his breath*) And give him the fright of his life!

*(QUEEN punches KING on the arm, but SHE doesn't really mean it.)*

LADY BETTY: Now, lead me to the buffet!

*(PRIME MINISTER escorts her off L, then returns to her place at KING's side.)*

STORYTELLER: The next guest to arrive... well, he'll tell you.

ROYAL SECRETARY: Lord Charles of Pumpnickel!

*(LORD CHARLES strides on R, slapping the astonished SECRETARY on the back as HE passes him. HE is a big, boisterous man in hunting tweeds. HE carries a gift wrapped bag of golf clubs.)*

LORD CHARLES: (*much louder than necessary*) Bruce, you old dog! Well done! (*HE rushes KING and drops the golf clubs unceremoniously in front of the cradle. KING leaps to his feet, and the pair engages in an incredibly elaborate secret handshake.*) How's he treating you, Daisy?

QUEEN DAISY: (*dryly*) Hello, Charles. Interesting gift for an infant.

LORD CHARLES: Oh, he'll use 'em one day. I see this charming person is trying to hurry me along. See you at the reception, Chuck.

*(Indeed, PRIME MINISTER is trying to hurry him along. SHE escorts him off L. As BUTLER is speaking, ROYAL SECRETARY moves the golf clubs aside.)*

BUTLER: The Honorable Francis...

STORYTELLER: Stop! (*Everyone but the STORYTELLER freezes.*)

You don't need to see all this, do you? Anyway, it's really not so important who came. What's important is who DIDN'T come. At least at first. Lady Rebecca of Steppington. The sorceress. The queen's SECOND oldest friend. Lights!

*(The lights go down on the throne room and come up on a corner of the stage. Lights stay up on STORYTELLER. LADY REBECCA enters, dragging POSTMAN by the ear. SHE is dressed like a traditional fairytale sorceress, but SHE is not unattractive.)*

LADY REBECCA: Look harder! I know it's there!

POSTMAN: I'm telling you, lady, there's nothing for you today.

LADY REBECCA: There has to be. I know Daisy sent me an invitation.

*(darkly)* She wouldn't dare not to.

POSTMAN: I'm telling you...

LADY REBECCA: Shut your trap or I'll turn you into a turnip!

STORYTELLER: She would, too.

LADY REBECCA: Give me that bag! *(SHE seizes POSTMAN's mailbag and empties it on the floor. SHE drops to her knees and begins going through the letters. SHE picks them up one at a time, checks the address, and throws them over her shoulder. POSTMAN scurries around gathering them up as they fall.)* No... not this one... nope...

STORYTELLER: Don't blame the queen. They met at school.

*(LADY REBECCA comes to the last letter. It's not for her either. SHE crumples it in her hand as smoke comes out of her ears. POSTMAN tries unsuccessfully to get the letter away from her throughout the following.)*

LADY REBECCA: It's not here. IT'S NOT HERE! I can't believe it! How dare they leave me out! I'll tear them apart! *(to POSTMAN)* Are you still here?

POSTMAN: Er... the letter...

LADY REBECCA: Here! Now GET OUT! Before I feed you to my wolverine!

*(POSTMAN exits hastily. LADY REBECCA builds herself a raging head of steam.)*

LADY REBECCA: They won't get away with this! Nobody snubs Lady Rebecca of Steppington! NOBODY! I MAKE the rules! THEY'LL RUE THE DAY THEY EVER CROSSED ME! I'LL TURN THEM ALL INTO FRUIT FLIES! I'LL SQUASH THEM LIKE BUGS! I'LL DESTROY THE WHOLE LOT OF...

STORYTELLER: Stop! Before you hurt yourself. *(LADY REBECCA freezes.)* Lady Rebecca was in Theatre at school. Meanwhile, the queen was wondering what happened to her second oldest friend. Wondering and worrying. Lights!

*(The lights go out on a frozen LADY REBECCA and come up on the throne room where PRIME MINISTER is playing with BABY in the cradle and KING has gone to sleep, and snores loudly. BUTLER still*

**stands in his place, but HE has grown bored and is knitting. ROYAL SECRETARY has gone, as have all the guests.)**

QUEEN DAISY: Dear? Dear! BRUCE!

KING BRUCE: **(starting awake)** Off with his head! Er... what?

QUEEN DAISY: Did you see Becky?

KING BRUCE: No. And believe me, I'd remember. Why? Did you invite her?

QUEEN DAISY: Yes, I'm sure I did. I hope I did. Stephen!

ROYAL SECRETARY: **(enters, munching on a chicken leg, his mouth full)** Your Majesty? **(tries frantically to hide the chicken leg)**

QUEEN DAISY: Did you send an invitation to Lady Rebecca?

ROYAL SECRETARY: Lady who?

QUEEN DAISY: Lady Rebecca of Steppington. Pay attention.

ROYAL SECRETARY: Sorry. Er. . . I think so. If your Majesty had been more attentive when I tried to check the list with you...

QUEEN DAISY: I wouldn't finish that sentence if I were you.

ROYAL SECRETARY: I mean... I'm not sure.

QUEEN DAISY: Oh, dear!

PRIME MINISTER: Your Majesty, don't panic. Maybe she got the invitation and just couldn't come.

QUEEN DAISY: **(becomes increasingly alarmed)** No. Becky wouldn't miss the chance to show off in front of the peasants. She didn't get it. What are we going to do?

STORYTELLER: You know, I bet he did send it. The post office around here has never been too swift.

KING BRUCE: Why do anything? So she wasn't invited. I never liked her anyway.

QUEEN DAISY: **(grabs his face and speaks directly into it)** Have you taken leave of your tiny mind? We're talking about Lady Rebecca of Steppington! Don't you know what that means?

KING BRUCE: Oh. **(suddenly in a full panic)** OH NO! What are we going to do? HIDE THE BABY! Never mind that - HIDE ME!

**(KING dives behind his throne. QUEEN drags him out. Meanwhile PRIME MINISTER and ROYAL SECRETARY are running around like headless chickens.)**

QUEEN DAISY: Pull yourself together! We have to be ready for her! What are we going to tell her?

KING BRUCE: Tell her? You don't actually imagine I'm staying around 'til she gets here, do you?

*(An enormous thunderclap shakes the throne room, knocking everyone off their feet. KING and QUEEN hastily assume their thrones as LADY REBECCA enters R. SHE waits, staring at BUTLER, until HE realizes SHE's waiting for him.)*

BUTLER: Oooh! Er... Lady Rebecca of Steppington!

LADY REBECCA: **(sweeps forward)** Daisy! Bruce! My sincere congratulations. Is this the young Prince? Charming!

*(Everyone instinctively shrinks back as SHE peers into the cradle, but her smile appears perfectly sincere.)*

QUEEN DAISY: Becky! How wonderful to see you. Thank you so much for coming.

LADY REBECCA: Would I miss the opportunity to pay my respects to my oldest friend's first child?

STORYTELLER: This is starting to sound familiar.

QUEEN DAISY: **(relaxes)** Well, we appreciate it. The reception is right through there...

LADY REBECCA: Wait! I haven't given my gift to the young Prince!

STORYTELLER: Here we go!

QUEEN DAISY: **(nervous again)** Don't be silly, dear. Your presence is gift enough.

LADY REBECCA: Nonsense. I *will* give the little darling a gift. **(a wicked smile)** I'll give him a gift he'll never forget! **(LADY REBECCA raises her arms and begins to spell. Low rumblings of thunder, eerie lighting, smoke. Perhaps an echo effect is added to LADY REBECCA's voice.)** My gift to the young Prince is this: From this day forward he will be the ugliest, most hideous child on the face of the earth. **(Everyone gasps.)** So ugly that people will shrink from him as from dead animals trapped in the drains! So ugly that other children will run from him and strong men will turn their head, and sometimes their stomachs. This is my gift to the young Prince. **(The special effects cease.)** Snub Rebecca of Steppington, will you? That'll teach you all!

*(LADY REBECCA is about to leave. QUEEN cries out. KING is in shock.)*

QUEEN DAISY: Becky! Please! You can't! It was an accident! I'm your oldest friend! WE WERE AT SCHOOL TOGETHER!

LADY REBECCA: I'll give you one chance. One SLIM chance.

QUEEN DAISY: Anything! Anything!

LADY REBECCA: The spell will only be broken if the young prince can show TRUE FRIENDSHIP to another human being.

QUEEN DAISY: But, Becky! How will he make a true friend if children run from his face? Give me something more!

LADY REBECCA: Tough turnips! Take it or leave it!

QUEEN DAISY: I'll take it! I'll take it!

LADY REBECCA: **(dryly)** Don't be a stranger.

***(There is another thunderclap and SHE is gone. KING takes one look into the cradle and stumbles back in horror. QUEEN picks up the baby and cradles him, but even SHE averts her eyes. PRIME MINISTER and ROYAL SECRETARY solicitously lead the stunned ROYALS offstage, carefully avoiding looking at BABY. MEGAN, along with other servants if desired, limps on with her cleaning paraphernalia and begins to clean up the detritus from the party, under the watchful eye of BUTLER. They exit when finished.)***

STORYTELLER: Let this be a lesson to you: Never cross an old school friend. The baby might have been a prince, but it was true - he was the ugliest baby in the world. The shock nearly killed his poor parents, but they gradually got used to it. After a while Queen Daisy could look at her son's face without wincing at all, and as for King Bruce, well, he figured most of his hunting buddies were no prizes either, especially Frank, after the duck decoy incident, and if he could stand them he could stand his own son. Over the years, the baby grew into a little boy, as many babies do. His parents gave him everything a little boy could want. He had his own swimming pool. He had a private circus. He had more toys than he could ever play with. But he didn't get any prettier. His name was Prince William Xavier Hopkirk the Third, but most everyone called him Prince Ugly. Even his parents sometimes called him that. No one told him about Lady Rebecca's curse. Still, he tried his best to make friends. Here he comes now. **(shudders)** Oooohh!

***(PRINCE WILLIAM enters. HE is a young boy about nine or ten. While not necessarily classically handsome, HE is certainly not ugly, but nearly everyone who sees him reacts as if HE were completely repulsive. HE leads a hobby horse on wheels. We hear CHILDREN laughing offstage.)***

PRINCE WILLIAM: **(calling)** Hey! Guys! Over here! Come and play with me! **(No one comes.)** I've got TOYS!

***(Several CHILDREN run on stage. One goes straight for the hobby horse and mounts up. Another finds a tricycle at the edge of the***

**stage and begins riding around the stage. A third begins running around the stage, bucking like a mad bull. At first none of them really see the PRINCE.)**

FIRST CHILD: Look out for me! Honk! Honk!

SECOND CHILD: **(chases FIRST CHILD and making siren noises)**  
Pull over! Do you have any idea how fast you're galloping?

PRINCE WILLIAM: **(thrilled, tries to join the fun)** All RIGHT! Let's play cops and robbers! I'll be the robber!

SECOND CHILD: **(still hasn't really looked at PRINCE)** Then look out, because I'm taking you in! You there! Stop where you are! **(PRINCE turns to face SECOND CHILD and puts his hand in the air. HE is positively beaming.)** Put 'em up! **(sees his face)** Augh! Get away! Aaauggghhh! Mommy! Help! **(runs away screaming, leaving the tricycle on the floor)**

FIRST CHILD: I'm a mounted policeman! Look out or my horse will stomp you! Don't move! **(sees PRINCE)** Whoa! What is it? Get me outta here! **(to THIRD CHILD)** Come on! Let's get out of here before it eats us!

THIRD CHILD: Why? What is it? **(sees PRINCE)** Whoah, baby!

**(CHILDREN run away screaming. PRINCE is crushed. HE sits on the tricycle and just stares.)**

PRINCE WILLIAM: Naturally. Why should today be any different?  
**(MEGAN limps on with her cleaning supplies and begins to clear away the toys left behind by CHILDREN and mop the floor.)** Hey, Megan.

MEGAN: It's a beautiful day, isn't it?

PRINCE WILLIAM: I guess.

MEGAN: Great day for playing outside. Especially a lucky little boy with his own baseball field.

PRINCE WILLIAM: I guess.

MEGAN: Do you think a dragon will eat my tulips this year?

PRINCE WILLIAM: I guess.

MEGAN: **(stops cleaning and looks at him with concern)** Willie, you haven't listened to one word I've been saying have you? What's the matter?

PRINCE WILLIAM: Nothing.

MEGAN: Don't give me that. I know you. What happened?

PRINCE WILLIAM: Oh, Megan, it's always the same thing. Didn't you see those kids running away?

MEGAN: So what? Why do you care what a bunch of scamps like that say anyway?

PRINCE WILLIAM: But it's not just them, it's everyone! Every day I try to make friends and every time it's the same thing.

MEGAN: Give it time.

PRINCE WILLIAM: **(losing it)** Time! That's all I give it! And every day Dad says, "So, did you make any new friends today?" What does he care anyway? I'm tired of trying to make friends! What do I need them for anyway? I can play by myself. I quit.

**(PRINCE runs off. MEGAN gathers up her things and follows him.)**

MEGAN: **(on her way out)** Oh, dear.

STORYTELLER: The poor kid really was ready to give up. Megan figured it was time the little prince knew the whole story of Rebecca's curse, but she knew it wasn't her place to tell him. Trouble was, kings and queens don't usually listen to the cleaning wench.

**(KING BRUCE scuttles on. HE is dressed in soiled trousers, bedroom slippers and a comfortably shabby sweater. QUEEN DAISY elegantly attired, pursues him.)**

QUEEN DAISY: Dear, just listen...

KING BRUCE: No, no, no! Sweetness, Honey Blossom, no! I absolutely refuse!

QUEEN DAISY: But you look like a slug!

KING BRUCE: Well, thank you very much! I look comfortable.

QUEEN DAISY: You look like you slept in those clothes.

**(SHE tries to straighten his clothes with little success.)**

KING BRUCE: Well...it was only a nap.

QUEEN DAISY: These state dinners only happen a few times a year. Can't you pull yourself together and look respectable at least that often? You can go back to looking like a gardener tomorrow.

KING BRUCE: But, love of my life...

QUEEN DAISY: Lord Cumberbund will be insulted if you show up to dinner looking like that.

**(MEGAN limps on unobtrusively and busies herself dusting.)**

KING BRUCE: But, sunshine...

QUEEN DAISY: You remember what happened last time you insulted Lord Cumberbund, don't you?

KING BRUCE: That was my favorite horse, too.

QUEEN DAISY: You see?

KING BRUCE: But do I have to wear a tie? I have trouble swallowing.

**(MEGAN clears her throat.)** Yes, just like that.

MEGAN: No, I mean... **(clears her throat louder)** er, Your Majesties?

QUEEN DAISY: What is it, Megan?

MEGAN: Well, it's difficult...

KING BRUCE: Spit it out, woman. We're all friends here.

MEGAN: Friends. That's just it.

QUEEN DAISY: What, if anything, are you talking about?

MEGAN: It's the young prince, Ma'am.

QUEEN DAISY: The prince? What about him?

KING BRUCE: Has that little scamp been digging in the kitchen garden again? Boys! There's no telling 'em.

MEGAN: No, no! Well, yes, but that's not it.

QUEEN DAISY: You know we do have a dinner party tonight, dear.

MEGAN: Well, ma'am, it's about his face, ma'am.

KING BRUCE: Now wait just a minute! The boy's just at an awkward stage.

QUEEN DAISY: Bruce! I don't think that's...

KING BRUCE: My son is not ugly. Anyone who says he is better hold onto his head.

MEGAN: **(shouts)** WOULD YOU JUST LISTEN A MINUTE!?!? **(Deathly quiet. QUEEN looks shocked. KING stands with his mouth hanging open. The enormity of what SHE has just done sinks into MEGAN's consciousness.)** I mean...um...

QUEEN DAISY: **(dangerously)** Go on.

MEGAN: **(once SHE gets going, SHE really goes)** Well, I'm sorry, but I mean, here you are worrying about dinner parties and what will people say, and all the time your own son is in pain, and don't you think it was time he knew the truth, I mean it's only fair? Don't you think you ought to talk to him, because I really think you ought to talk to him, and I'm sure if it was me, why, I'd just sit him down and say it to him straight. "Son," I'd say, "It's time you knew. . .

**(SHE stops because QUEEN has stopped breathing. KING fans her face. Maybe HE takes out a paper bag for her to breathe into. MEGAN stands there waiting for the blow.)**

QUEEN DAISY: WHAT?

KING BRUCE: Just calm down, flowerbud. Take a deep breath.

QUEEN DAISY: How dare you tell me how to raise my child?! We give that boy everything he could ever want!

KING BRUCE: Breathe, dear.

QUEEN DAISY: Who are you? A cleaning wench! What do you know about raising children?

MEGAN: Well, I do have seven of my own...

QUEEN DAISY: Of all the colossal nerve!

KING BRUCE: It's all over now, dear. **(to MEGAN)** Quick! You'd better go!

***(MEGAN gets while the getting's good. QUEEN sits down on the tricycle which still sits onstage. KING says nothing. Pause.)***

QUEEN DAISY: Dear?

KING BRUCE: Honeybunch?

QUEEN DAISY: You don't suppose she's right, do you?

STORYTELLER: She acts tough, but the old queen's really a pretty good sort. So's he, in his way.

KING BRUCE: Well, I...

QUEEN DAISY: I mean, she does have seven children of her own.

KING BRUCE: That's true...

QUEEN DAISY: And we just have the one.

KING BRUCE: Yes, I suppose that's...

QUEEN DAISY: He is almost ten years old. And he's always been very mature.

KING BRUCE: He's a prince.

QUEEN DAISY: Then it's settled. You'll tell him about the curse. It's only fair.

KING BRUCE: Absolutely. Right away. Only thing to... **(horried)** ME?

QUEEN DAISY: Of course. You're the boy's father, after all.

KING BRUCE: But sugar dumpling...

QUEEN DAISY: Now come on. You can talk to him right now, before you change your clothes. **(to someone offstage)** Oh, Stephen! Have you seen Prince Ugly?

***(QUEEN exits decisively. KING follows her off, still protesting.)***

KING BRUCE: But you're so good with him, darling...

STORYTELLER: In the end they both told him. He took it pretty well.

***(PRINCE WILLIAM runs across the stage R to L, screaming.)***

PRINCE WILLIAM: Nooooooooooooooooo!

STORYTELLER: **(shrugs)** After he got used to the idea, Prince William realized that, as horrible as it was, it actually meant hope. If he could just make one real friendship, he could break the curse. It was just the kick-in-the-pants he needed.

***(MEGAN mops her way on R. PRINCE WILLIAM runs on L.)***

PRINCE WILLIAM: Megan! Megan!

MEGAN: Willie! What is it?

PRINCE WILLIAM: I found out why I'm so ugly! It's a curse! See, stupid Stephen forgot to send this invitation, and then this sorceress was mad, and then she cast this spell and then...

MEGAN: (**puts her finger on the PRINCE's lips**) I know, Willie, I know.

PRINCE WILLIAM: How do you know?

MEGAN: I was there.

PRINCE WILLIAM: (**momentarily hurt**) And you didn't tell me?

MEGAN: That wasn't my place, Willie. It had to be your mother and father who told you.

PRINCE WILLIAM: I guess. (**excited again**) But isn't it great?

MEGAN: I'm not sure I see what's so wonderful.

PRINCE WILLIAM: It means I'm not stuck like this! All I have to do is show true friendship to someone and I won't be ugly any more. People won't call me Prince Ugly ever again!

MEGAN: I hope so, Willie. But you know, it's not always so easy to be a true friend.

STORYTELLER: Especially if you're prince.

PRINCE WILLIAM: Nonsense! I'm a prince! Everyone will be dying to be my friend.

MEGAN: If you say so.

PRINCE WILLIAM: (**suddenly serious**) Hey, Megan? How come you never call me Prince Ugly?

MEGAN: (**matter of factly**) It's not your name.

PRINCE WILLIAM: Even my parents call me that. You never do.

MEGAN: To tell you the truth, you never seemed all that ugly to me. I've got seven kids of my own, and what I always say is, every child is beautiful.

PRINCE WILLIAM: Really?

MEGAN: 'Course I don't see so well.

PRINCE WILLIAM: Oh.

MEGAN: After all, Willie, it's what's inside a person that makes them special. It's their heart. And yours is one of the most beautiful I've ever seen. Besides, I know what it's like to be stared at. Folks are always staring at me, too.

WILLIAM: Because of your leg?

MEGAN: (**nodding**) You never really get used to it.

PRINCE WILLIAM: Tell me about it. (**brightening**) But not any more. See ya, Megan!

MEAGAN: Where are you going?

PRINCE WILLIAM: I'm going to find a friend!

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