

# THE PRINCE WHO COULDN'T DANCE

By Marcia Marsh

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## CHARACTER LIST

NARRATOR 1, 2, 3 (All Females)

KING EGBERT - ruler of the kingdom

QUEEN ETHEL - his royal wife

Her Two Ladies in Waiting

PRINCE HOWARD - heir to the throne

PRINCESS SALLY - second in line

PRINCESS BETTY - third in line

PRINCESS JANEY - fourth in line

LORD CHAMBERLAIN - the King's advisor

WILLIE WIZARD - court magician

LORD PIGEON TOE - the royal dance master

KING JERRY - ruler of neighboring kingdom

QUEEN MYRTLE - his royal wife

PRINCESS JESSIE - heir to their throne

PRINCESS RAMONA - second in line

PRINCESS ALLIE - third in line

WANDA - the pizza delivery girl - delivers pizza to the castle

MIKE - the dancing dude - from the future

JANET - his sister - from the future

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### SCENE ONE

*(Music - stage lights lower - spotlight on three narrators)*

NARRATOR 1: Hello everybody, and welcome to our presentation of "The Prince Who Couldn't Dance."

NARRATOR 2: You may be thinking, "Hey! This sounds like a fairy tale." Well, you're right. This IS a fairy tale.

NARRATOR 3: And since we were all raised on fairy tales, you certainly remember HOW they begin. You know, "once upon a time."

NARRATOR 1: Now, all of you know that fairy tales are a kind of FOLK tale. They aren't true - they never happened. And the characters NEVER really lived.

NARRATOR 2: You know, like BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. Was there really a prince who got turned into a ferocious beast and then back into a prince when he fell in love? I don't think so.

NARRATOR 3: How about CINDERELLA? Was there ever a girl who lost her glass slipper leaving the ball after her fairy godmother turned her rags into a beautiful dress? And so on, and so on? No, I don't think so.

NARRATOR 1: And SNOW WHITE? And THE LITTLE MERMAID? The list goes on and on.

NARRATOR 2: But you have to admit, although these stories aren't true, they were created by incredible writers.

NARRATOR 3: Writers with fantastic imaginations. Hans Christian Andersen, the Brothers Grimm...

NARRATOR 1: William Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson...

NARRATOR 2: What? Those guys didn't write fairy tales.

NARRATOR 3: For real! Those guys wrote plays, short stories, novels, and poetry!

NARRATOR 1: Sorry already! I got a little carried away.

NARRATOR 2: Fairy tales have been around for hundreds of years and you have to admit, childhood just wouldn't have been the same without them.

NARRATOR 3: I used to dream about being a princess who lived in a castle. And I'd fall in love with a handsome prince who would come riding up on a white horse and...

NARRATOR 1: Give it up, sweetie. It's not going to happen.

NARRATOR 2: I know what you mean. I used to have the same fairy tale fantasy. Castles, handsome princes, royal balls, fairy godmothers, living happily ever after...

NARRATOR 3: It works for me! But I guess all that fairy tale stuff is sort of unrealistic.

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NARRATOR 1: Yeah, let's deal with reality here, okay? Those old castles didn't have heat or air conditioning or indoor plumbing...no TVs, microwaves, VCRs, computers or sound systems. You two wouldn't have lasted an hour in that fairy tale world.

NARRATOR 2: You're right. I give up.

NARRATOR 3: Think about it. In almost every fairy tale, if there is a handsome prince, there's got to be a beautiful princess. And they are going to take one look at each other at the big shindig, or ball, fall head over heels in love with each other and dance.

NARRATOR 1: There's a lot of dancing in fairy tales.

NARRATOR 2: So what happens to a prince who can't dance?

NARRATOR 3: He can't dance with the beautiful princess, right?

NARRATOR 1: Which means they won't fall in love.

NARRATOR 2: Well, they could just go out on the balcony and have a Dr. Pepper and talk, couldn't they?

NARRATOR 3: No. they HAVE to dance. Part of falling in love is the dancing thing.

NARRATOR 1: So now, ladies and gentlemen, we take you to the kingdom of King Egbert and Queen Ethel who have one royal son, Prince Howard, and three royal daughters, Princesses Sally, Betty and Janey.

***(They come out as they are introduced and freeze in a pose.)***

NARRATOR 2: King Egbert and Queen Ethel have just bought a time share in the Bahamas and they are really ready to retire. The royal routine is beginning to get on their nerves. They are ready for their son, Howard, to take over.

NARRATOR 3: Now everybody knows that in order for Prince Howard to take over, he's got to fall in love with a princess and get married. Then King Egbert and Queen Ethel can fly the coop and catch some rays in Bahama-land.

NARRATOR 1: But Prince Howard has a big, scary secret: he can't dance. He avoids those balls like the plague because he has NO rhythm.

NARRATOR 2: He can't even snap his fingers to the beat.

NARRATOR 3: The boy has a serious disability when it comes to moving to music. He is an embarrassment to the royal family.

NARRATOR 1: So now you know the problem in this fairy tale. And EVERY fairy tale has a problem that has to be solved.

NARRATOR 2: Prince Howard has a problem with rhythm.

NARRATOR 3: And his parents are ready to retire so that THEY can live "happily ever after."

***(NARRATORS exit as royal family unfreezes.)***

KING EGBERT: All right, royal children, your mother and I have given you the best life we know how to provide. You've had good food, great clothes, devoted servants, wonderful tutors, and the best friends money can buy.

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QUEEN ETHEL: So now it's OUR turn. Your royal father and I are ready to hit the beaches and have a little fun ourselves. But first, our oldest child who is heir to the throne MUST find a mate, fall in love, and get married. That means you, Howard.

TWO LADIES IN WAITING: **(in unison)** That means you, Howard.

PRINCE HOWARD: Yes, mother, I know I'm the oldest. You've reminded me of that every day since I was born.

SALLY: Well, it's not fair! I hate being second oldest! Why can't I be the oldest?

BETTY: Well, I'm third in line to the throne and that stinks! I want to be the number one heir to the throne!

JANEY: I'm the youngest and that's NO fun at all! Nobody asks for my opinion on anything, nobody wants my advice, and people forget my name.

KING EGBERT: Oh, hush up, royal daughters! Stop the whining! You've been born into a life of privilege and most of the peasants in our kingdom would give an arm or a leg to live the life you lead.

QUEEN ETHEL: Your birth order was purely a matter of destiny and fate. Howard is the oldest because.....he was born first. He is the heir to the throne because in all royal families, the oldest child is the one who gets to inherit the crown. I don't know who started that tradition, but it's just the way it is.

TWO LADIES IN WAITING: It's just the way it is.

SALLY: Well, it's no fair! Women don't have any rights in this backward, old-fashioned, prehistoric society!

BETTY: Girls don't have any rights either!

JANEY: I want to live in another century so I can go to college, have a career, and have my own Visa and Mastercard!

KING EGBERT: Royal daughters, for the last time.....either you get quiet, show some respect, or I'll have the guards throw you into the dungeon for a little "chillin' out" time.

SALLY: **(horrified)** You'd throw us into the dungeon? That's child abuse!

BETTY: Yeah, I bet you wouldn't do that to Howard!

JANEY: No fair! We can't even voice our opinions without being threatened with physical punishment! It's no fair!

QUEEN ETHEL: Girls, girls, girls! Why don't you go downstairs to the royal kitchen and have the royal chef mix you up some delicious tortilla chips and dip? Chips and dip always calms you down.

TWO LADIES IN WAITING: They always calm you down.

SALLY: Tortilla chips? Oh, yes! I'm so hungry!

BETTY: Chips and dip! I love it! Last one there is a royal rotten egg!

**(SALLY and BETTY run off right.)**

JANEY: No fair! I want to order a pizza! No fair! I want pizza!

**(Exit.)**

KING EGBERT: **(shaking his head as HE watches girls go off)** Those girls are in need of some serious counseling. Where did we go wrong with those girls, Ethel?

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QUEEN ETHEL: Don't worry, Egbert. When we move to the Bahamas, they'll become Howard's problem. We'll only have to see them on holidays.

TWO LADIES IN WAITING: Only on holidays.

PRINCE HOWARD: Oh, thanks a lot, Mother. I'll NEVER be able to keep my three sisters happy. And WHERE will we find three princes that will want to marry them?

QUEEN ETHEL: First things first, Howard. You seem to have forgotten that YOU have to find a princess to marry before we can marry off your sisters.

TWO LADIES IN WAITING: Before we can marry off your sisters.

KING EGBERT: Which brings us to the point of this family conversation, Howard. Your mother and I have planned to throw a ball tomorrow night in YOUR honor...

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: (*entering left wing*) Excuse me, your royal highness! I believe you sent for me.

KING EGBERT: Did I? I don't remember sending for you.

QUEEN ETHEL: I sent for you, Lord Chamberlain. I want you to be in on this conversation - so that you can give us some advice if we need it.

TWO LADIES IN WAITING: Give us advice if we need it.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: My pleasure, milady, my pleasure. I am always here to serve.

KING EGBERT: I was just telling Prince Howard that we are going to throw a ball for the entire kingdom tomorrow night in his honor...

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Oh, is it tomorrow night? I thought you said next week...

KING EGBERT: Tomorrow night, Lord Chamberlain. You got a problem with that?

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Oh, no, your highness. Whatever you say. You want the ball tomorrow night, it'll be tomorrow night.

QUEEN ETHEL: Now we want the usual food and drink, lots of good decorations and balloons, a good band, and a special appearance by Regis and Kelly, if you can get them on short notice.

TWO LADIES IN WAITING: We want Regis and Kelly.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: (*pulling out pad, writing all this down*) If I can't get them, would Rocky and Bullwinkle be okay?

QUEEN ETHEL: Certainly. Now...Howard, your father and I know that you don't exactly love to attend these balls. But tomorrow night might be the most important night of your life. Why? Because we have invited the royal family from the neighboring kingdom to attend this ball. They have three lovely daughters and certainly, you could force yourself to fall in love with one of them.

TWO LADIES IN WAITING: With one of them.

KING EGBERT: That way we can have a wedding in a month and your mother and I could be hitting the surf by May. Do you understand, son?

PRINCE HOWARD: You're making yourself very clear, father. You want me to fall in love with one of the princesses tomorrow night.

QUEEN ETHEL: And even though we know you don't like to dance...well, you're going to HAVE to dance. Because that's the way princes and princesses fall in love. It's tradition.

TWO LADIES IN WAITING: It's tradition.

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PRINCE HOWARD: (*to his mother*) Can you get them to shut up? Why do you always have to have those two ladies around? They're annoying!

QUEEN ETHEL: Now you know, Howard, that they are my two ladies in waiting. And EVERY Queen has to have two ladies in waiting.

TWO LADIES IN WAITING: We're her ladies in waiting.

PRINCE HOWARD: Well, they're irritating! Mother, I told you that it's not a matter of if I like to dance...I CAN'T DANCE! I don't have any rhythm. I can't move to the beat!

QUEEN ETHEL: Now, I won't hear of this, Howard. EVERYBODY can dance. Even your father learned to dance at that awkward age of eighteen. And he captured my heart, didn't he? And where did he capture it? That's right...on the dance floor!

TWO LADIES IN WAITING: On the dance floor!

KING EGBERT: I remember it well, Ethel. Our eyes locked in a romantic gaze, I took you in my arms, and we twirled around the floor for hours...

PRINCE HOWARD: Please, Mother and Dad, I don't need to hear that story again.

QUEEN ETHEL: Of course you don't. You know what you have to do. Lord Chamberlain, deal with Howard's problem and have it all cleared up by tomorrow night. If you can't deal with it, put your letter of resignation under my door in the morning. Got it?

TWO LADIES IN WAITING: Got it?

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Yes, milady. I'll deal with it. We'll take care of this matter immediately.

QUEEN ETHEL: Excellent! I love it when the employment agency sends me good people. (*exits*) Good day, Howard. Good day, Lord Chamberlain. Come along, Egbert.

TWO LADIES IN WAITING: Come along, Egbert.

KING EGBERT: Yes, my dear. Check you guys later.

***(They all exit - QUEEN ETHEL followed by TWO LADIES, followed by EGBERT.)***

PRINCE HOWARD: (*upset, to LORD CHAMBERLAIN*) I thought you were going to talk them out of a ball. I don't want to go to the ball! I don't want to dance. I can't stand it when everyone is watching me, waiting for me to dance like a regular prince! I can't do it!

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Calm down, my lord. There's no sense in getting yourself all stressed out about this. We'll have to call in the royal shrink if you stress out.

PRINCE HOWARD: I don't understand WHY I have to dance. I can fall in love with a girl without having to dance.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Look, your highness, it's royal tradition. Your parents expect you to dance at the ball, at your engagement party, at your wedding...

PRINCE HOWARD: I give up then! Okay, teach me to dance!

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: That's more like it! I like a positive attitude. All right, your highness, let's start with basic rhythm. Let me see you snap your fingers to a beat. I'll give you the beat and you snap your finger to it.

PRINCE HOWARD: Oh, this is ridiculous!

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LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Your highness, I need a positive attitude. Here goes. Listen to this beat. (**claps hands to beat and speaks**) A one and a two, and a three, and a four.... (**HOWARD snaps fingers with a jerk body movement and cannot keep the beat. LORD CHAMBERLAIN watches, appalled.**) Oh, my goodness. That's terrible. That's pathetic. You really DON'T have any rhythm, do you?

PRINCE HOWARD: (**humiliated**) I told you I didn't! And I don't like making a fool of myself by trying to keep the beat when I can't do it!

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: (**pacings**) Oh, dear. We need help here. I'm going to have to call in the court magician. It's going to take magic to make this happen.

WANDA: (**entering wings left**) Pizza delivery! Mama John's pizza!

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: What in the kingdom? Who are you? You're interrupting a private royal conversation, if you don't mind!

PRINCE HOWARD: (**happy to see her**) Wanda! How are you? I haven't seen you in a week.

WANDA: (**moving to shake HOWARD's hand**) Prince Howard! Hi! I'm so glad to see you! You're right, it's been since last Monday, when I delivered a pepperoni special to you!

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Excuse me! You two know each other?

PRINCE HOWARD: Yes, Lord Chamberlain, this is Wanda. She delivers pizza for Mama John's Pizza, right outside the castle walls.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Pizza? What's pizza? This is the fifteenth century. We don't have pizza yet.

PRINCE HOWARD: A brilliant peasant named Mama John invented it last year. We've been having it delivered to the castle for months. You must be too involved with this royal business to pay attention to important food discoveries, Lord Chamberlain. (**pause**) Wanda, who ordered this pizza? Or is this just an excuse to see me?

WANDA: (**embarrassed**) Well, Howard, of course I love seeing you, but your sisters ordered this pizza. They called from the royal kitchen.

PRINCE HOWARD: Those sisters of mine are running up quite a bill at Mama John's. When I'm king, I'm going to put them on a tight budget.

WANDA: They said they had a coupon. At least they're trying to save a little money.

PRINCE HOWARD: It doesn't matter. If they're hungry, they've got to eat. Even if we do have a royal chef who sits around eating donuts all day. Gosh, Wanda, it's so good to see you. Do you think you could stay around for a few minutes after you deliver the pizza? Maybe we could take a walk around the palace courtyard and have a talk.

WANDA: I can't think of anything I'd rather do, Howard...

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: (**clearing throat**) Excuse me, your highness, but we were in the middle of some VERY important business.

PRINCE HOWARD: (**remembering**) Oh, that's right. (**pause**) I'd rather take a walk with Wanda, Lord Chamberlain, than attend to that particular business...

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Your highness, you DID promise the King and Queen that you would...

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WANDA: It's okay, Howard, I understand. I know that the heir to the throne...I mean, a prince like you must be VERY busy. You don't have a lot of time to take walks with the pizza delivery girls...

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: (**quickly**) Thank you, young lady. Why don't you go along now and deliver the pizza to the royal princesses... (**pointing to wings right door**) They are that-a way!

SALLY: (**running in with PRINCESSES BETTY and JANEY from wings right**) Hey! I thought I smelled the pizza! What took you so long?

BETTY: (**looking at watch**) Yeah! We called you fifteen minutes ago. You're supposed to deliver it in ten minutes!

JANEY: And if you don't deliver it in ten minutes flat, we get it free! Move it, delivery girl! We're hungry! (**They go off wings right**)

WANDA: (**rolling eyes**) Goodbye, Howard. It was great seeing you. Hope to see you again real soon.

PRINCE HOWARD: (**watching her go**) See ya, Wanda. I promise, that I'll order a pizza tomorrow. That way we will definitely get to see each other soon.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: I believe you are going to be QUITE busy tomorrow, your highness. No time for pizza.

**(WANDA exits as HOWARD watches her go.)**

PRINCE HOWARD: Now that's what I call a very nice girl. I feel so comfortable with her. She's easy to talk to. And I bet she doesn't give a HOOT about dancing!

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Your highness, please don't avoid the issue. We have work to do. And after seeing your miserable attempt to snap your fingers to the beat, I'm going to have to call in some serious help. (**reaching in pocket for cell phone**) I sure hope he has his cell on. (**punches in numbers and puts ear to phone**) All right, Lord Pigeon Toe, answer your cell! Hey! Pigeon Toe! Where are you? How quick can you get to the throne room? How about in fifteen seconds! I have a big project for you to work on. I need you right now! Move it over here in a jiffy! (**cuts off cell phone, puts in pocket**) All right, the royal dance master is on his way over.

PRINCE HOWARD: Lord Pigeon Toe? Why do we need him? He's the worst dance master I've ever seen!

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Your highness, we are in NEED of some help here! You've got to learn how to dance in 24 hours. You've got to capture a princess' heart at the ball with your romantic dancing! Lord Pigeon Toe is the court dance master. He's the one to call at a time like this!

PRINCE HOWARD: He can't turn me into a dancing machine. He's one hundred and five years old! He can hardly move himself! And he DOESN'T know the latest dances!

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: You don't need to know the latest dances. You just need to know ONE dance. If he can't help us, we'll call the court magician!

PRINCE HOWARD: And what would the court magician do? Put me under a dancing spell? This whole thing is ridiculous!

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Your highness, do you want to become king or not? You are the heir to the throne, you're the next in line, you would be a much better ruler than one of your nitwit sisters.....

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LORD PIGEON TOE: (**entering stage from offstage right, yelling, using cane to help him walk**) Lord Chamberlain! Lord Chamberlain! I'm here! Where are you? I can't seem to see you!

(**raises hand to eyes**)

PRINCE HOWARD: (**to LORD CHAMBERLAIN**) See what I mean? He's so old he can't even see us! How is he going to teach me to dance?

LORD PIGEON TOE: (**looking around**) Yoo-hoo!! Anybody here?

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Yes, Lord Pigeon Toe, we're right over here! Keep walking toward my voice! We're over here?

LORD PIGEON TOE: (**moving to them**) Ah, yes! There you are! I see you now! So.....how are you, Lord Chamberlain? I was thrilled to get your call. You haven't consulted me on a project in years! (**looking at HOWARD**) Who are you?

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Lord Pigeon Toe, this is Prince Howard, heir to the throne.

LORD PIGEON TOE: Prince Howard! Of course, of course! How are you, my boy? I haven't seen you in years. My, how you've grown. Why, you're a young man now. When was the last time we saw each other?

PRINCE HOWARD: (**rolling eyes**) I saw you last week at my sisters' dance lesson.

LORD PIGEON TOE: Last week? Is that right? Were you there?

PRINCE HOWARD: I came in to watch for a little while, but we DID see each other.

LORD PIGEON TOE: Well, how nice. So glad I got to see you last week. Now, what can I do for you?

PRINCE HOWARD: Well, I don't think there's anything you can do for me, but Lord Chamberlain here thinks we need to consult you about my problem.

LORD PIGEON TOE: And what problem would that be?

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Lord Pigeon Toe, Prince Howard here has reached the age where the King and Queen, his parents, want him to marry. They have invited the royal family from the neighboring kingdom over for a ball tomorrow night. And at a ball, people dance. Even royal people. So.....Prince Howard has a problem with dancing. He doesn't have any rhythm. And if he doesn't dance, he can't win the heart of the lovely princess. HE HAS TO LEARN TO DANCE BY TOMORROW NIGHT!

LORD PIGEON TOE: Oh, dear. You don't like to dance, eh? You don't have any rhythm? Well, that presents a definite problem.

PRINCE HOWARD: You can't help me, right? It's hopeless, right? Thank you, Lord Pigeon Toe, you may go now.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Wait one minute, your highness! Let Lord Pigeon Toe watch you snap and move to the beat. He hasn't even seen how bad it is. Maybe he won't think it's so bad.

PRINCE HOWARD: This is getting annoying. Why do I have to try to snap and move to the beat? I DON'T WANT to snap and move to the beat!!

LORD CHAMBERLAIN: Prince Howard.....

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