

PRINCESS INCHWORM MEASURES THE OCEAN

By Sean Abley

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PRINCESS INCHWORM MEASURES THE OCEAN

A One Act Youth Play for Young Audiences

By Sean Abley

SYNOPSIS: In the Kingdom of the Overgrown Field, Princess Inchworm is keen to use her inch-by-inch measuring skills to find out just how large the ocean is. But her father, King Inchworm, wants Isabella to give up on her adventures and marry Prince Dandy Longlegs, from the Kingdom of the Dusty Old Barn. “You’re one month old! It’s time to get married and prepare to be the new Queen!” The princess is determined to show her father, and the rest of the world, that she doesn’t have to be married, and definitely doesn’t have to give up adventuring, to be a good queen. With bright, colorful characters, girl power, and tons of audience participation, *Princess Inchworm Measures the Ocean* is the perfect play for young audiences and their parents!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 female, 2 male, 4-6 either, 0-10 extras; gender flexible, doubling possible)

PRINCESS ISABELLA INCHWORM (f) ... Likes to explore, rebels against the traditional princess duties.
(125 lines)

KING INCHWORM (m) Rules over the Kingdom of the Overgrown Field, very traditional, but kind to his family and subjects. *(89 lines)*

GNATALIE GNELSON (m/f)..... Gnat if male. An obnoxious gnat reporter. *(27 lines)*

KATIE, THE LADYBUG (f) Princess Inchworm’s best friend and Ladybug In Waiting.
(62 lines)

VANILLA CATERPILLA (m/f) As a caterpillar, very shy and unsure of him/herself. Also plays *(4 lines)*

FLUTTUH-BY BUTTUH-FLY (m/f) A proud and confident butterfly. *(16 lines)*

- COUNTESS POQUITO MOSQUITO (m/f) A Spanish mosquito countess, very haughty. (7 lines)
- SHOO, THE FLY (m/f) An Italian fly. (8 lines)
- PRINCE DANDY LONGLEGS (m) An arrogant, French spider prince from the Kingdom of the Dusty Old Barn. (29 lines)
- OTTO, THE ROYAL ATTEND-ANT (m/f) Ant servant of the King. Likes to tell people what to do. (18 lines)
- QUEEN LONGLEGS (f) A French queen spider. Unseen, only heard. *Can be played onstage if needed. (2 lines)
- CAMERAMAN (m/f) Grasshopper. (Non-Speaking)
- EXTRAS 0-10, In the royal address scenes, there is the possibility of a crowd of insects. (Non-Speaking)

NOTE ON DOUBLING: Gnatalie Gnelson and Otto may easily double as well as Vanilla Caterpilla and Fluttuh-By Buttuh-Fly.

DURATION: 45 minutes

SETTING

Kingdom of the Overgrown Field, and the ocean. It is suggested that the audience area be the ocean, and a unit set with multiple entrances and levels be the kingdom.

COSTUMES

Let's be honest – no one really knows what an inchworm, or a gnat, looks like. So any sort of vaguely insect-like costuming will work perfectly. Stick with worm-ish stuff for the Inchworm family, and antennae type stuff for the gnat. In general, the characters can be more suggestions of their insect form than actual recreations of bugs.

PROPS

- Brass instrument or horn
- Insect list
- Wallet with photos
- Cell phones
- TV camera
- Microphone
- TV remote
- Life jacket
- Swimming goggles
- Swim cap
- Boat (wearable prop)
- Oar
- Computer or tablet

AUTHOR NOTES

The characters will refer to the audience as subjects of His Royal Majesty King Inchworm during the show, so giving them the chance to participate will make the experience even more fun for the young theatergoers.

Feel free to change all pop culture references and slang to something more current.

Depending on your choices for pre-show and audience interaction activities, you may need additional props and costume pieces for the audience members. There are many audience participation moments in the script, but feel free to create and add as many moments as the production can handle.

If the production is done for a school class, the children can make insect headpieces in advance and wear them during the performance. Another option would be having the materials necessary to create these headpieces – crayons, construction paper, tape – available during seating so children can create them on the spot. A third option for a production with a budget would be to supply the children with pre-made versions of insect antennae, available at most party supply stores.

PRE-SHOW

AT RISE: OTTO, the Royal Attend-ant, carrying some sort of brass instrument, addresses the crowd directly.

OTTO: Hello everyone! Hello! May I get your attention please? Hello? (*Plays a few loud notes badly on the instrument to silence the crowd.*) There, that's better. People always stop talking when I play my instrument. Not to brag, but the music that comes out is so beautiful, so melodious, so harmonious, that people immediately stop what they're doing whenever I play. Let's just say I have a gift and leave it at that. My name is Otto, and I'm the royal attend-ant to his Royal Highness King Inchworm. We have a few procedural things we need to cover just to make sure you're all on your best behavior when the King arrives. First, I want to find out who's here today. Do we have any ants in attendance? Any bees? How about beetles? (*S/he calls on a list of insects, reacting to the presence or absence of each group. "It's always so nice to see bees in attendance! There's always so much buzz when you're around!" or "No bees today? Guess they're busy making honey for all those plastic bears..." To wrap up, ask if there are any insects in attendance that weren't called, and respond in kind to those as well.*) Well, this is great! Such a nice crowd of bugs! Now, the second topic I want to cover is how to talk to the King when he talks to you. When the King enters, he will say to you, 'Hello, loyal insect subjects!' And you will respond, 'Hello, Your Royal Highness!' Got that? Let's practice. I'll pretend I'm the King, and I'll enter. (*As the KING.*) Hello, loyal insect subjects! (*Reacts to the AUDIENCE'S response, possibly rehearsing several more times.*) Perfect! Now, the next thing is – His Royal Highness King Inchworm loves to tell jokes! And even more than he loves to tell jokes, he loves to laugh at his own jokes. But you have to laugh a very special way to please the King. You can't just giggle, or titter, or guffaw. Regular old laughs just won't do. No, you have to bust out with a laugh like this: (*Laughs a ridiculous, weird laugh.*) Ah HA ha HA ha ha HA! Now, let's practice that laugh. (*Practices laugh with AUDIENCE several times.*) That's very good! I actually believe you find something

funny! And finally, let's try it with a joke. I'll pretend I'm King Inchworm again. Everyone know how to do a "Knock, Knock" joke? Okay. (As the KING.) Knock, knock! (AUDIENCE responds, "Who's there?") I'm wondering! (AUDIENCE responds, "'I'm wondering' who?") If you're wondering, open the door! (Leads the AUDIENCE in the official laugh.) Ah HA ha HA ha ha HA! Very good! Oh, I see the His Royal Highness now! Remember what I told you! (Moves into place as we start the show.)

AT RISE: Lights up on palace. KING INCHWORM enters to the royal music, followed by PRINCESS INCHWORM and KATIE THE LADYBUG in waiting. He sits on his throne, with ISABELLA standing next to him. KATIE adjusts ISABELLA'S dress. OTTO plays his instrument badly, then steps forward to announce their arrival.

OTTO: Please rise for His Royal Highness, King Inchworm, and his daughter, the Princess Isabella Inchworm.

KING INCHWORM: Hello, loyal insect subjects!

OTTO, KATIE and AUDIENCE: Hello, Your Royal Highness!

KING INCHWORM: You may be seated. Now, as you know, I like to start off my royal addresses with a joke. This one was told to me by Sir Herbert Termite at a dinner just two nights ago. It goes something like this. Knock, knock! (Tells a bad, kid-friendly "Knock, knock" joke.)

OTTO, ISABELLA, KATIE and AUDIENCE: (Official laugh.) Ah HA ha HA ha ha HA!

KING INCHWORM: Oh, it's not that funny. You're just trying to make me feel better.

ISABELLA: No, father, it really is that funny! I can't remember ever hearing a joke that funny before.

KING INCHWORM: Really?

ISABELLA: Absolutely really! Am I right? (Encourages the AUDIENCE to agree.)

KING INCHWORM: Well, that's very nice of you to say. Thank you very much!

KATIE: I don't get it.

OTTO shoos KATIE away by playing his instrument pointedly and poorly at her.

KING INCHWORM: Now, on to business.

OTTO: (*Plays his instrument badly, then.*) Official business!

KING INCHWORM: Er, yes. Anyway, send me Vanilla Caterpilla!
Approach the King!

OTTO: (*Plays his instrument badly.*) Presenting Vanilla Caterpilla!

VANILLA CATERPILLA enters hesitantly.

VANILLA CATERPILLA: Um, hello. Hi.

KING INCHWORM: Vanilla Caterpilla, it is spring, which means the Great Transformation is upon us! Soon you will transform into the butterfly you were meant to be. And as your beautiful wings carry you over the Kingdom of the Overgrown Field, all will rejoice for the winter is over and all will be renewed!

ALL: (*Cheer.*)

VANILLA CATERPILLA: Um, that's a lot of pressure. I don't deal well with stress. Maybe I could just stay a caterpillar and crawl around instead of fly?

KING INCHWORM: Nonsense! Caterpillars must turn into butterflies. Get to work!

ISABELLA: When you fly around, everyone will appreciate your beauty, and it will make them smile and feel happy.

VANILLA CATERPILLA: But isn't that just showing off?

KING INCHWORM: It isn't showing off if you're not doing it to make people feel bad that they can't do it, too. Now go and get ready to transform into a butterfly immediately! That's a royal edict!

VANILLA CATERPILLA: Yes, Your Royal Highness. (*Exits.*)

KING INCHWORM: Now, who requests council with the king?

OTTO: Shoo, The Fly, Your Royal Highness! (*Plays his instrument badly.*)

SHOO, THE FLY enters and approaches KING INCHWORM.

SHOO: Your Royal Highness, my wife and I just had bambinos!

KING INCHWORM: Congratulations, Signore Fly.

SHOO: *Grazie, Your Highness! Here, I have pictures of them! Octuplets! (Pulls out wallet and shows everyone photos.)*

ALL: *(Trying to sound positive.) Those are some good photos...Man, you don't see maggots like that very often...Wow, those are some interesting kids...etc.*

SHOO: Aren't they the cutest maggots you ever saw?

KATIE: *(Aside to ISABELLA.) Everybody thinks their kids are the cutest, but... (Shudders.)*

ISABELLA: *(Aside to KATIE.) They say "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder."*

KATIE: *(Aside to ISABELLA.) I don't think "they" beheld those maggots.*

KING INCHWORM: So, Signore Fly, for what reason do you need royal council?

SHOO: There used to be delicious garbage to eat in the dumpster at the edge of the Kingdom of the Overgrown Field. But now the dumpster has disappeared, and there's no more garbage! No *mangiare!* My wife and my beautiful maggots will starve without that garbage!

KING INCHWORM: Do not worry, Signore Fly. The dumpster will come back! There will be garbage again! Spring is just around the corner. Who is next?

OTTO: The Countess Poquito Mosquito, Your Royal Highness!
(Plays his instrument badly.)

The COUNTESS POQUITO MOSQUITO enters and approaches KING INCHWORM.

COUNTESS: Your Royal Highness, the situation at Stagnant Water Lake has grown increasingly dire. *Esto es muy horrible!*

KING INCHWORM: What is the problem, Countess?

COUNTESS: As you know, mosquitoes drink the blood of the giants for food. But now that the dumpster is gone, the giants have stopped coming! With no giants, my *niños* will starve! *Mis bebés se mueran! Vamos todos mueren de hambre!*

ISABELLA: Oh, father, do something!

KING INCHWORM: Countess, I have heard your concern, and I sympathize. But just as the dumpster will come back, with spring comes the giants and their nutritious blood. Do not fear! *No tengas miedo!*

COUNTESS: *Gracias, su alteza real.*

KING INCHWORM: And now, if that is the final request for royal council, I have one final announcement.

OTTO: *(Plays his instrument badly.)* One final, royal announcement!

KING INCHWORM: As you know, my daughter, Isabella, is now of the age where she must prepare to be married.

ISABELLA: I must?

KING INCHWORM: And so we've chosen one perfect husband for her from all the surrounding kingdoms.

ISABELLA: We have?

KING INCHWORM: Let's have a big, royal round of applause for...Prince Dandy Longlegs!

KATIE: Yes!

ISABELLA: What?!

OTTO: *(Plays his instrument badly.)* Presenting His Royal Highness, Prince Dandy Longlegs!

Leads the AUDIENCE in a round of applause. PRINCE DANDY LONGLEGS enters.

PRINCE LONGLEGS: Greetings my soon-to-be subjects! *Bonjour!*
Bonjour!

ISABELLA: Daddy, we did not agree to this!

KING INCHWORM: Quiet, darling. We're in front of the royal subjects! Prince Longlegs! Welcome to the Kingdom of the Overgrown Field!

PRINCE LONGLEGS: *Merci,* Your Royal Highness! It is your pleasure that I am here! *(To ISABELLA.)* *Vous êtes belle,* Mademoiselle Inchworm! It is your pleasure to meet me! *(Takes her hand and kisses it.)*

ISABELLA: *(Pulling her hand away.)* Okay, gross.

KING INCHWORM: Isabella!

ISABELLA: *(Wiping off her hand.)* Seriously, his lips are really wet.

PRINCE LONGLEGS: *(Takes KATIE'S hand.)* Miss Katie, the Ladybug in Waiting. You are crushing on me, no? *(Kisses her hand.)*

KATIE: No. *(Faints.)*

ISABELLA: Katie! *(Helps KATIE off the ground.)*

KING INCHWORM: Prince Longlegs, we are so happy that your kingdom and our kingdom will be joined together, just as you and the Princess will be joined in matrimony. Please, come into the castle and let us all get better acquainted. *(To the crowd.)* If you will excuse us, we will now retire to the castle. Good day, loyal insect subjects!

OTTO: *(Leads the crowd.)* Good day, Your Royal Highness! *(Plays his instrument badly.)*

Lights change to indicate the royal address is over. OTTO pulls out a cell phone, points it at ISABELLA and PRINCE LONGLEGS, and starts taking photos.

ISABELLA: Daddy, we really need to talk about this!

OTTO: I'm totally going put this on my blog. *(Exits, playing his instrument badly.)*

KING INCHWORM: Isabella, a word. *(Motions for ISABELLA to come to him.)*

ISABELLA: Fine.

KING INCHWORM: *(To PRINCE LONGLEGS.)* You'll excuse us for a moment.

PRINCE LONGLEGS: I'll think about it.

ISABELLA lets go of KATIE, who sees PRINCE LONGLEGS and immediately faints again. PRINCE LONGLEGS just stares at the fainted girl.

PRINCE LONGLEGS: *(Re: KATIE.)* You are the laziest girl I have ever seen.

KING INCHWORM: Young lady, we had a conversation about this. You are to be married, and Prince Longlegs is a wonderful choice for a husband.

ISABELLA: We didn't have a conversation. You just talked at me. What if I don't want to get married to Prince Longlegs? What if I don't want to get married at all?

KING INCHWORM: That's just silly talk.

ISABELLA: There's so many things I want to do. I want to explore and have adventures! I'm not ready for all the responsibilities of marriage yet. Or maybe ever!

KING INCHWORM: You are going to get married to someone, and that's final! The kingdom expects if of you, I expect it of you, and it's your royal duty!

GNATALIE GNELSON enters with a CAMERAMAN.

GNATALIE: Yoo hoo! Mr. King Inchworm!

ISABELLA: How did she get in here?

KING INCHWORM: Where's Otto? He's supposed to keep those gnat reporters out of the castle!

GNATALIE: I'm Gnatalie Gnelson, from the Number One syndicated entertainment program in all of the kingdom, "Insect Hollywood."

KING INCHWORM: I know who you are, Gnatalie. You don't have to introduce yourself every time we meet.

KATIE: Gnatalie Gnelson! OMG! I watch you on TV every night!

GNATALIE: *(To KATIE.)* Well aren't you a doll? I just love meeting my fans! I really, really appreciate your support. Keep watching! *(To CAMERAMAN.)* Keep her off camera. Okay, nice three shot with the King and the Princess and me, and widen out when we bring the Prince in.

KING INCHWORM: Ms. Gnelson, we're not going to speak to the press at this time –

GNATALIE: *(Suddenly insane.)* You can't keep me out of here!! You can't silence the media!! Freedom of the press!! Roll camera! *(Sweetly.)* So, King Inchworm, rumor has it that your daughter, Princess Isabella, has refused to marry the Prince you've chosen for her. Comment?

ISABELLA: Absolutely true –

KING INCHWORM: *(Puts his hand over ISABELLA's mouth.)* – that that is just a rumor! Silly talk! The Princess will absolutely be getting married.

GNATALIE: *(Pulling PRINCE LONGLEGS into the shot.)* Prince Longlegs – *(To CAMERAMAN.)* Widen out! Widen out! Prince Longlegs, you've been chosen to marry Princess Inchworm. Are you excited about your upcoming wedding?

PRINCE LONGLEGS: *Oui!* I'm am very excited for her to be marrying me!

GNATALIE: Oooh, you're French! Say something in French to our viewers!

PRINCE LONGLEGS: *(Taking GNATALIE'S hand.)* *Tout le monde devrait savoir que cette femme, Gnatalie Gnelson, est l'insecte le plus ridicule de la planète. Jeter des pierres sur elle!* *(Kisses GNATALIE'S hand.)*

KATIE faints. Everyone ignores her falling to the ground.

GNATALIE: Oooh, my goodness! How romantic. Careful, Princess, I might steal this one away from you!

ISABELLA: *(Sarcasm.)* No. Don't. Stop.

GNATALIE: Well viewers, this sure seems like a match made in Heaven! But don't worry – I'll be there with the scoop when it all falls apart because of his fear of intimacy and her shopping addiction. This is Gnatalie Gnelson for "Insect Hollywood," at the Royal Palace. Back to you in the studio. *(Holds a fake smile for a beat, then.)* And we're out. Go upload that footage to the studio, stat!

CAMERAMAN exits.

ISABELLA: Why do I have to have a shopping addiction? That's totally sexist!

GNATALIE: You're right – that's totally a stereotypical, girlie thing to do. Shame on you! Just FYI, "Insect Hollywood" is willing to pay big bucks for an exclusive sit-down with the happy couple after the wedding. Think about it. Later! *(Exits.)*

KATIE: What did you say to her in French?

PRINCE LONGLEGS: I said, "Everyone should know that this woman, Gnatalie Gnelson, is the most ridiculous insect on the planet. Throw rocks at her!"

ISABELLA: Wow, that's actually kind of cool. But I'm still not marrying you!

KING INCHWORM: Isabella, stop being rude to your fiancée! You are one month old! It's time to get married and start preparing to be queen of two kingdoms! Prince, would you like a tour of the castle?

PRINCE LONGLEGS: *Ou!* It would be a pleasure for you to show me around!

KING INCHWORM and PRINCE LONGLEGS exit.

ISABELLA: Ugh, this is the worst! I'm going for a walk.

ISABELLA and KATIE make their way through the AUDIENCE and then back on stage during their walk.

KATIE: What? Are you kidding me? You live in an amazing castle with, like, servants and free cable TV and a bowling alley...*in your room*. You're totally going to be queen someday. And all your father asks is that you marry a totally handsome, charming French spider with his own kingdom. Yeah, tough life!

ISABELLA: But what if I don't want to marry him? When you're a princess, getting married is for life. As in, forever.

KATIE: I know!

ISABELLA: I want to be an adventurer and...adventure places. Climb things and jump off things and battle things. I'm pretty sure you can't do that when you're a queen of two kingdoms.

KATIE: On the other hand, you *can* be waited on hand and foot. Which is awesome.

ISABELLA and KATIE have made their way back to the stage. They look out over the "ocean" in front of them. Sound effect: ocean sounds.

ISABELLA: I mean, look at this ocean. What's on the other side of it?

KATIE: No one knows. It's too big. No one has ever been across it.

ISABELLA: Exactly! I want to be the inchworm that finds out what's on the other side of the ocean.

KATIE: Ha! Yeah, right.

ISABELLA: You don't think I can do it?

KATIE: Izzy, I'm your best friend and Ladybug-in-waiting. You know I think you're super cool. But there is no way you can find out what's on the other side of that ocean.

ISABELLA: Why not?

KATIE: Because...because you just can't! It would be too hard. You don't even know how far it is across!

ISABELLA: You're right. I don't. But I'm going to find out!

KATIE: Aaaaand...there's a horrible beast that lives in the ocean.

ISABELLA: What?

KATIE: *(To the booth.)* Can I have some scary story music please? *(Sound effect: scary story music.)* Legend has it that a terrible monster lives in the ocean. It has slimy green skin; giant, dead eyes; and a huge mouth that is uses to eat insects...whole! It's the scariest monster in the whole world, and they call it...A FROG! *(Screams a horror movie scream for emphasis.)*

ISABELLA: What are you doing?!

KATIE: *(Pose.)* Acting!

ISABELLA: That story is not true.

KATIE: It is! No one has ever seen the frog and lived. They say the last sound you hear before it swallows you whole is his horrible voice saying..."Ribbit...ribbit..."

ISABELLA: If no one has ever seen the frog and lived, how can they tell you what he said?

KATIE: Look, I'm not a details person. I'm just trying to tell you that measuring the ocean is dangerous and you shouldn't go.

ISABELLA: I'm an inchworm. We measure things, inch-by-inch. It's what we do. Why wouldn't I measure the ocean? You know what? I have a proclamation – write this down! I'm going to make my first royal proclamation!

KATIE: *(Takes out her cell phone and readies herself to type.)* Ready!

ISABELLA: So I, Princess Isabella Inchworm of the Kingdom of the Overgrown Field, uh...my country 'tis of thee and... being of sound mind and body and um... *E Pluribus Unum*, asking not what my country can do for me... Does this sound official enough?

KATIE: *(Typing furiously.)* Yeah, yeah, great stuff! Keep going!

ISABELLA: I, Princess Isabella Inchworm am going to measure the ocean!

KATIE: *(A beat, then laughs uproariously.)* Ah ha ha ha ha!

ISABELLA: What's so funny?

KATIE: Oh, my gosh! I'm just imagining the look on your father's face when you tell him! Oh, my...I can't breathe...ha ha ha...!!

ISABELLA: Way to be supportive, Ladybug-in-waiting.

KING INCHWORM and PRINCE LONGLEGS enter back at the castle and make their way through the AUDIENCE to ISABELLA and KATIE.

KING INCHWORM: Isabella! Isabella! Are you over there!

ISABELLA: Over here, dad!

KATIE: Oh, this is going to be good.

ISABELLA: You keep quiet! I'm going to tell my father, and I don't need you chiming in with your crazy mouth all ... *(Makes a "yap yap yap" motion with her hand.)*

KATIE: Yes, Your Royal Highness! *(Claps her hand over her mouth.)*

KING INCHWORM and PRINCE LONGLEGS arrive at the ocean.

KING INCHWORM: I was just giving the Prince a tour of the castle grounds, and saw you out here. Isn't this a beautiful view of the ocean?

PRINCE LONGLEGS: Oh, *oui!* *Oui!* This ocean is very impressive with me standing here!

KING INCHWORM: And what are you ladies doing out here?

KATIE: *(Makes noise as she tries to stifle laughter.)*

ISABELLA: *(Shoots KATIE a look.)* Well, daddy, Prince, I have something exciting to tell you.

KATIE: *(More 'must not laugh' noises.)*

KING INCHWORM: Is she alright?

ISABELLA: She's fine. Now, daddy, you know that I want to see more of the world, and have adventures and stuff like that.

KING INCHWORM: Well, yes, but –

ISABELLA: So I've come up with a plan and I need your blessing.

KATIE: *(Even more 'must not laugh' noises.)*

KING INCHWORM: *(To KATIE.)* Young lady, do you need to use the restroom?

ISABELLA: *(Shoves KATIE completely off stage.)* Yeah, how about you give it a rest? So, daddy, my plan is...I want to measure the ocean.

KATIE: *(Off, bursts into laughter.)* Ah ha ha ha ha ha!

KING INCHWORM: Is this a joke?

ISABELLA: Nope, totally serious.

KING INCHWORM: You want to measure the ocean? This ocean?

ISABELLA: Yup! This ocean.

PRINCE LONGLEGS: Whatever for?

ISABELLA: To know how wide it is! We're inchworms. We measure things, inch by inch. That's what we do.

KING INCHWORM: Wait, am I on one of those prank shows? Where are the cameras?

ISABELLA: No cameras, dad. I'm totally serious. I'm going to measure the ocean. It will be a great adventure!

KING INCHWORM: But why don't you just measure small things, like rocks or blades of grass? That's very satisfying. Once, at the edge of the kingdom, I measured a blade of grass that was five inches high! Now that's an adventure!

ISABELLA: I'm sure it was.

PRINCE LONGLEGS: In the Kingdom of the Dusty Old Barn, measuring is looked down upon. A silly activity. *Très, très stupide!*

ISABELLA: Who asked you?

PRINCE LONGLEGS: Everyone asks me. I'm *très, très* smart. When we are married, you will act like a proper princess and there will be no measuring! Now if you will *excusez-moi*, I must go back to the castle and spin a web. *Au revoir!* *(Exits.)*

ISABELLA: You understand why I want to do this, right daddy?

KING INCHWORM: Isabella, this adventure you want to go on could be very dangerous. You could get hurt...or worse.

ISABELLA: But that's why it's an adventure! Danger on the high seas! Peril at every turn! Certain death if I make one wrong move!

KING INCHWORM: Danger, peril and certain death aren't princess activities! You should be preparing yourself for marriage, and studying all about the Kingdom of the Dusty Old Barn to learn their laws and customs. Be a good girl, keep the Prince interested, and you'll have everything your heart desires.

ISABELLA: But daddy –

KING INCHWORM: Isabella, I'm going to tell you something, but you have to keep it a secret. You *must* marry Prince Dandy Longlegs. I lied to Shoo the Fly and Countess Poquito Mosquito. I don't have a solution to all the problems in the kingdom – the garbage shortage, the giants leaving, the worms complaining of the dirt drying up, the moths have almost finished eating that sweater hanging from the old clothes line. We need the Kingdom of the Dusty Old Barn, and all they have, to keep the Kingdom of the Overgrown Field alive! If you don't marry the Prince, we're doomed.

ISABELLA: But...that's not fair.

KING INCHWORM: It might not be fair, but I'm the king, and what I say goes. There will be no measuring the ocean, and that's final! Now, I'm going back to the castle. I'll expect you for dinner with a proper princess posture and attitude. (*Exits.*)

KATIE enters.

KATIE: Wow, harsh.

ISABELLA: Mega harsh.

KATIE: I wonder what happens to Ladybugs-in-waiting when the Princess gets married. Do I still wait? Or do I have to, like, get a job or something?

ISABELLA: You're not going to find out any time soon. I'm measuring that ocean. And I need your help.

KATIE: Uh, I don't think so. I'm your Ladybug-in-waiting, not your Ladybug-in-helping-you-disobey-your-father-who-also-happens-to-be-the-king...ing.

ISABELLA: Okay, then I'll ask Cindy to do it. I'm sure she'd love to be my Centipede-in-waiting –

KATIE: Okay, I'll do it! What do I have to do?

ISABELLA: We'll come up with a plan tonight. Right now we better get back to the castle. It's almost time for dinner.

ISABELLA and KATIE walk back through the AUDIENCE toward the castle.

KATIE: With the Prince!

ISABELLA: Ugh, whatever.

KATIE: You can tell it's getting late. The sun is setting, and all the crickets are chirping. They make that sound like this *(Demonstrates a cricket chirp. Then indicates to the AUDIENCE that they should chirp like crickets.)* I said - all the crickets are chirping.

ISABELLA: Yeah, I can hear them! But I can also hear bees buzzing as they fly back to their hives for the night. *(Indicates to the AUDIENCE they should buzz like bees.)*

KATIE: Boy, those are some busy bees! Thank goodness we're back in the castle now so they're not so noisy! In fact, they're absolutely quiet!

KING INCHWORM and PRINCE LONGLEGS enter.

KING INCHWORM: Quick, turn on the television! I just received a message that Gnatalie Gnelson is going to make some sort of big announcement!

ISABELLA uses a clicker and turns on the TV. Lights shift to split scene: ISABELLA, KING INCHWORM, PRINCE LONGLEGS and KATIE all looking out toward the AUDIENCE, i.e, watching the television; and GNATALIE GNELSON in another area, speaking out toward the AUDIENCE as if she's on TV.

GNATALIE: We interrupt "Real Queen Bees of Overgrown Field" to bring you this breaking news. There are unconfirmed reports that Vanilla Caterpilla, previously a big, bland, boring nothing, has transformed into a butterfly a full two weeks ahead of schedule.

ISABELLA: Whoa! Two weeks early!

GNATALIE: I'm waiting outside of Vanilla's home in an attempt to get confirmation of this fact, and I'm hoping we'll get an official statement from Vanilla in person.

KATIE: Oooh, she was just in your castle, and now she's on TV. I love that!

GNATALIE: I think I hear something...

VANILLA CATERPILLA, now FLUTTUH-BY BUTTUH-FLY, bursts onto the TV screen with a musical fanfare and amazing party light cues. S/he flies around the stage and through the AUDIENCE for a bit, then lands next to GNATALIE.

ISABELLA: Wow! Look at Vanilla!

GNATALIE: Vanilla! You've changed! You aren't so...vanilla any more.

FLUTTUH-BY: That's right, Gnatalie. I'm no longer Vanilla Caterpilla. I've transformed, and now I'm Fluttuh-by Buttuh-fly!

Sound effect: Musical fanfare.

GNATALIE: And to what do you credit your amazing transformation?

FLUTTUH-BY: Well, I was very nervous about the transformation, to be honest. But King Inchworm was so supportive, his encouragement gave me the confidence to go ahead and do it. And nature sort of forced me to. But King Inchworm was definitely an influence. And now I'm Fluttuh-by Buttuh-fly!

Sound effect: Musical fanfare.

ISABELLA: Daddy! They mentioned you on TV! You totally gave Vanilla the courage to change!

KING INCHWORM: Oh, well, it was nothing, really...

GNATALIE: So now what are you planning to do?

FLUTTUH-BY: Well, pretty much anything I want to do. I have a ton of endorsement deals lined up, and of course a reality show pilot to shoot tomorrow. Oh, and my transformation is supposed to be the sign of the restored Kingdom of the Overgrown Field, so everybody should get ready to have an awesome time! I'm Fluttuh-by Buttuh-fly!

Sound effect: Musical fanfare.

GNATALIE: And I guarantee that music sting is never going to get old.

FLUTTUH-BY: Isn't it a jam? [*name of current popular musical act*] wrote that for me. Gotta fly! Because I'm Fluttuh-by Buttuh-fly!

Sound effect: Musical fanfare.

Remember – you can do anything you put your mind to! Follow me on Twitter! (*Flies through the AUDIENCE and exits.*)

Sound effect: Musical fanfare.

GNATALIE: I was wrong. That song totally gets old. Well there you have it. Fluttuh-by Buttuh-fly...(*Sound effect: Musical fanfare in the distance.*)...the newest manufactured celebrity that the media is going to force upon you until you scream for mercy! I'm Gnatalie Gnelson. Back to you in the studio!

Lights out on GNATALIE, who exits.

KING INCHWORM: That Fluttuh-by is going to do great work, I can tell! I knew s/he had it in him/her!

ISABELLA: Daddy, why are you so supportive of Fluttuh-by, but you won't let me measure the ocean?

KING INCHWORM: That's different. You have a different set of responsibilities than Fluttuh-By.

ISABELLA: Says who?

KING INCHWORM: Says me!

ISABELLA: But who are you to say?

KING INCHWORM: I'm the king!

ISABELLA: But who said the king gets to say? Who said that?

KING INCHWORM: Well, I don't know. But they said it, and now it's said and now I get to say!

ISABELLA: Says who?

KING INCHWORM: Says me! Now stop it this instant! You are not measuring the ocean, and that's final! (*Exits.*)

PRINCE LONGLEGS: Your father is just like my mother. Very strict. *Ma mère est très stricte.* I wanted to learn to knit – with eight hands I could knit four different sweaters at once! *Très rapide!* I asked her please, *s'il vous plaît, s'il vous plaît!* Get me knitting needles and yarn! But she said "*Pas mon fils ne sera jamais une personne qui tricote! Ne jamais!*" (*Translation: No son of mine will ever be a person who knits! Never ever!*)

KATIE: What does that translate to?

PRINCE LONGLEGS: "No."

KATIE: I would totally wear a sweater knitted by you. Just saying.

ISABELLA: So how did that make you feel?

PRINCE LONGLEGS: *Très, très triste.* (*Translation: Very, very sad.*)

ISABELLA: Well, my father not letting me measure the ocean, and you telling me that measuring is looked down upon in your kingdom, makes me feel *très, très triste*, too.

KATIE: Boom! *Triste!* Didn't see that coming, did ya?

PRINCE LONGLEGS: Oh, I did not realize.

ISABELLA: So, yeah, there's that.

PRINCE LONGLEGS: My apologies. *Mes excuses, Votre Altesse.* I will do whatever I can to make it up to you.

ISABELLA: Really? Like maybe help me get everything I need to measure the ocean?

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