

SIGNIFICANT CIRCUS

BY

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For a Cast of 10 or more, up to 18
Suggested Role Breakdown for 10 actors, 5 men 5 women
doubling/tripling roles (5)

MAYOR PUCKERER gay male (man)
GONERIA female

DISH gay male (man)
SPOT dog

SIS PHYLLIS female (woman)
DRAG female
WANDA lesbian female

MAID JANE female (woman)
CINDERELLA female
MISTY female

SWILL straight male (Man)
SMELL straight male
SQUIRM male

non-doubling roles (5)

QUEEN DEE female (man)
RAPUNZEL (woman, referred to as BEAUTIFUL GIRL top of Act I, scene 6)
PRINCE CHARMING (man)

MADAME KLOO lesbian (woman)
SLEEPING BEAUTY (woman)

The parentheses indicate if a man or a woman was cast in the first production, but the gender designation is how they play the role (not in parentheses). So the queen is cast as a man playing a woman. Casting could be different in subsequent productions, but the queen should always be played as a she whether or not she is male or female underneath.

In Act I Scene 15, the six dancers are made up by the company and can be anyone except Cinderella, Prince Charming and Queen Dee. The pyramid is created by the entire company except for the same three characters.

Asterisks (*) indicate interruptions in the text. Actors with asterisks at the beginning of their lines need to mark the lines prior to find their cues.

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SIGNIFICANT CIRCUS

ACT I

SCENE 1

MAYOR PUCKERER

What do you mean the Castle is awake?

DISH

Just what I said, sir, Your Mayorship, sir, don't say I didn't warn you sir --

MAYOR PUCKERER

Dish, what's with all the sir this morning? Since when have you ever called me, "sir"?

DISH

Since the Castle has awakened, sir.

MAYOR PUCKERER

What do you mean the Castle has awakened? What's on the agenda for this morning?

DISH

If this were a day like any other day, you're supposed to meet with that woman from the Significant Circus.

MAYOR PUCKERER

I love the circus. Is it significant?

DISH

Compared to the fact that the Castle is up, up, up and running, up and de-vining and the moat is shining all filled up with water? The piranhas that used to live there, and then died there, have all sprung back to life, new teeth* coming in sharper than ever!

MAYOR PUCKERER

*The agenda, Dish. What is on the agenda this morning?

DISH

I scheduled a walk through the village*, but considering the situation...

MAYOR PUCKERER

*I love to give tours! Who's it for?

DISH

The woman from the circus*, a Madame Kloo.

MAYOR PUCKERER

*A tour and a circus -- my favorite things, and it's a beautiful day --

DISH

No, it's not. The Castle is looming. The vines and the pines that covered it, they've been cut down or cut back or cut off and fallen so that the Castle rises, rises above us as if it sat on an inflatable mountain that had long ago deflated only now its being pumped back up!

(A shadow encroaches.)

MAYOR PUCKERER

Dish — ?

DISH

As the Castle rears its ugly head, its towers, ramparts, drawbridge, it casts a shadow over the entire Village!

(The shadow casts them into a darker day.)

MAYOR PUCKERER

You must be exaggerating*. Did you turn the lights out?

DISH

*I do tend to do that, but not when someone has stolen the foliage to the heart of the Castle and taken a kiss from the lips of that spellbound girl who was sleeping there, not when we don't even know the full matter of the matter, not today!

MAYOR PUCKERER

Someone what?

DISH

Just what I said sir. Oh, and the press is on the phone awaiting your statement.

MAYOR PUCKERER

My statement?

DISH

About the castle, sir.

MAYOR PUCKERER

Something about a Circus?

DISH

The Castle. The press is waiting.

MAYOR PUCKERER

The Village of Demensia has been ruled by the Mayor --

DISH

Let's say governed, shall we sir?

MAYOR PUCKERER

Of course. Ahem.

DISH

Let's not think of ourselves as a ruler.

MAYOR PUCKERER

Especially because we're not that straight.

DISH

Right!

MAYOR PUCKERER

The press has never before asked for a statement.

DISH

Don't want to get egg on your face, sir!

MAYOR PUCKERER

Egg on my face?

DISH

The Village of Demensia has enjoyed nothing but prosperity!

MAYOR PUCKERER

Good line. I'll use that one. I'm a good Mayor, a smart Mayor, a Mayor for every Demension!
There have been Mayors here for at least a hundred years.

DISH

Exactly a hundred years.

DISH (cont'd)

(cringing, to himself)
Ohhh, egg on my face!

MAYOR PUCKERER

A hundred years? Was there a time limit on the rule of law?

DISH

I'm sorry sir!

MAYOR PUCKERER

But why doesn't anyone seem to know about it?

DISH

They forgot.

MAYOR PUCKERER

What do you mean they forgot? Who forgot?

DISH

Jumped up and bit me on the ass.

MAYOR PUCKERER

A hundred years is not the easiest amount of time to measure.

DISH

I have no excuse. Are you going to whip me now?

MAYOR PUCKERER

I'm not going to whip you Dish.

DISH

You're too kind sir.

MAYOR PUCKERER

Just not my thing. Please stop calling me sir.

SCENE 2

(The Castle. QUEEN DEE yawns an enormous yawn and stretches an enormous stretch, all accompanied by her own noises. At her feet, MAID JANE & 2 SOLDIERS -- SQUIRM and DRAG -- yawn, stretch and make their own noises, taking cues from/mirroring the QUEEN. At the peak of this morning concert including gymnastics and contortion, QUEEN suddenly stops, catching THEM ALL by surprise, and THEY fall out.)

QUEEN DEE

HaHA!

(MAID JANE, SQUIRM and DRAG try to come to attention.)

QUEEN DEE

Why is it We are awakened in the early morning,
when We have often requested to be awakened
only in the late morning? When We prefer to sleep
just that teensy bit longer, We are jarred
from our bed by a bell or a bark,
and We end up awaking on our arse!

(A WHISPER is heard moving towards the QUEEN. DRAG hears it first and passes it to SQUIRM who passes it to JANE who passes it back to DRAG who passes it to the QUEEN who SCREAMS in horror.)

QUEEN DEE

Our slaughter, Creeping Booty's ass been Minced up by the Quick!

DRAG

Your quarter, Peeping Tulip, has been Wincd at by the Sick!

JANE

You oughta, Keeping Nudies, has been Cinched up in the Fifth!

SQUIRM

Your water, Leaping Julep, has been Rinsed wet in the Crik!

DRAG

Your daughter, Sleeping Beauty, has been Pricked by a Prick!

(QUEEN DEE screams and swoons. SHE is caught by the THREESOME.)

QUEEN DEE

Put us down, you fools!

(THEY do.)

QUEEN DEE

Is this the same old prick that afforded her the sleep?
Which prick? How big a prick? A manly prick or a prickly dick?
Could it be 'twas reverse and she was pricked by a prince?
Would that be much worse or was she pricked by a prick?
If she was pricked, or she was pricked,
either way there is a situation at hand.
Was this prince a prick of a man?
Was his pricking princely-wincely
or was it less than grand?
And how did he get in?
This formidable Castle has a moat and ramparts.
This formidable Castle has piranhas and our dog farts.

(SPOT enters.)

QUEEN DEE

Could this prince have penetrated in a prickly way
pressing past the bushes and the briars that surround our safe estate?
(breaking into the French children's song, Alouette)
Penetration, Gentle Penetration
Is he charming and is he quite the prince?

SQUIRM

Did he leave the sheets all stained?

JANE

Is she like a lion tamed?

DRAG

Was she wet?

SQUIRM

I can bet!

QUEEN DEE and THREESOME

Ah-ah-ah-ah!

Penetration Gentle Penetration

Was she lubed or was it quite a shock?

DRAG

Do you think her skin's in tact?

JANE

Will we have to alter fact?

SQUIRM

That daughter of yours?

DRAG

I bet she wants more!

QUEEN DEE

Where's Our daughter and what has she to say?

(THREESOME have scrambled themselves into a physical tangle from which they now attempt to free themselves in order to go get the daughter of the Queen.)

QUEEN DEE

Bring us Our daughter!

(THREESOME collapse on the floor in defeat. Enter FIFTH ATTENDANT -- this person is selected each night from the audience.)

FIFTH ATTENDANT

My Queen, your daughter is Missing!

(ATTENDANT exits as QUEEN gasps. SPOT circles barking.)

SPOT

I gotta go! I gotta find her! I gotta go! I gotta go!
(exiting)
Beauty beauty beauty beauty beauty!

QUEEN DEE

Missing?

SQUIRM

Hissing!

DRAG

Blissing!

JANE

Kissing?!

SQUIRM

I didn't hear Pissing, did I?

DRAG

Pissing?!

QUEEN DEE

Missing! She's missing! O!... --then bring me the Prick!

SCENE 3

BEAUTY

A princess by her nature is very very tall,
But to me, being a princess doesn't seem that way at all.
I feel so small. What if a princess were to fall?
What if a princess lost her station?
Would she need to give an explanation?
Would her fall upset her nation?
Why do people look up to me?
I've done nothing but dress prettily?
What if a princess lets herself be felled --
Hacksawed in half without a magic spell --
Would anyone hear her yell?
And if they heard would they care at all?
What if a princess dares to fall?

(At SWILL's bar.)

BEAUTY

I need a place to stay.

SWILL

There's room upstairs at the Inn. Two hundred a night.

BEAUTY

It doesn't look that big from the outside.

SWILL

Two hundred dollars.

BEAUTY

How do people without two hundred dollars get two hundred dollars?

SWILL

Quickly? Rob a bank. Sell your body. Ask your folks. Or get a job.

BEAUTY

Would you give me a job?

SWILL

No.

Why not?

BEAUTY

You're a princess.

SWILL

Is it that obvious?

BEAUTY

Yeah.

SWILL

SCENE 4

(MADAME KLOO enters MAYOR PUCKERER's office and strikes a dramatic pose.)

DISH

You must be Madame Kloo.

(MADAME KLOO strikes a new dramatic pose as an affirmative answer.)

MAYOR PUCKERER

The woman from the Circus?

DISH

It's so nice to meet you.

MAYOR PUCKERER

The one I get to take on the Tour?!!

DISH

I'm Dish, the Mayor's assistant. We spoke on the phone. Come in, come in.

(MADAME KLOO maintains her dramatic pose.)

MAYOR PUCKERER

I'm Mayor Puckerer.

MADAME KLOO

Pucker?

MAYOR PUCKERER

Puckerer. The person in the act of or with the ability to pucker. Puckerer.

(MADAME KLOO extends her hand and MAYOR PUCKERER kisses it.)

MADAME KLOO

Charmed, I'm sure. I have a contract you can sign to insure that The Significant Circus plays your town this spring.

(DISH scoops up the contract.)

MADAME KLOO

But I'll need it to --

DISH

Go! Take the tour! Have fun! It's a lovely day!

(aside to MAYOR PUCKERER)

Try to keep her attention away from the Castle, and I'll schedule that press conference.

MADAME KLOO

I wasn't prepared to speak to the press.

DISH

Oh, not you Madame Kloo, it's a small matter, nothing important.

MADAME KLOO

Why can't we stay here and sign the contract?

DISH

Stroll on Madame Kloo. The Mayor will be right with you.

MADAME KLOO

I shall await my escort.

DISH

If the Castle decides to run things, you won't be Mayor much longer.

MAYOR PUCKERER

What do you mean run things?

DISH

The Castle has a Queen and an Army of Soldiers.

MAYOR PUCKERER

A Queen? Did you say a Queen?

DISH

Just go. Go!

MADAME KLOO

I wanted to show you the contract.

MAYOR PUCKERER

And away we go! The Village of Demensia! Notice the shops down Main Street: the dress shop for larger sizes, Winterson's Women's Shoes, the bondage shop for fetishes. I get chills thinking about it! Turning the corner onto Vine --

(A SHADOW looms. To avoid it, MAYOR PUCKERER swerves.)

MAYOR PUCKERER

No, we don't want to go that way!

MADAME KLOO

What way?

MAYOR PUCKERER

Here, we can stroll the Village Green! All weddings, baby namings, any milestone marked with a public ceremony happens here on the Village Green.

MADAME KLOO

This is where The Significant Circus will perform!

MAYOR PUCKERER

Of course!

MADAME KLOO

We could sign the contract right here in a public ceremony.

MAYOR PUCKERER

(as a compliment)

How Demented of you to think of it! We'll have a celebratory drink at our Inn. There's a new pool table and a dart board, and our bartender, Swill, just shot a very big bison. It's head is being stuffed by our local Pachydermist.

MADAME KLOO

You allow that?

MAYOR PUCKERER

Just because we're liberal doesn't mean we harrass the hunters among us. Never know when we'll have to leave our pacifism behind and take up arms! There are some very dense forests behind the Ca-Ca --

(quick change of subject)

Next to the Inn is the Church, Our Lady of the Opera -- the organist is a special friend.

(BEAUTY, having just left the bar, in full princess regalia, yanks off her tiara and tosses it to the ground and sneaks off towards the woods.)

MAYOR PUCKERER

On the other side of the Inn is the jail in case one takes a wrong turn when leaving the bar. We like to make things simple in Demensia. This way to the Church, that way to the jail.

MADAME KLOO

I'd rather stay at the bar.

(As KLOO is about to grab the tiara, SPOT enters sniffing, growls at KLOO and takes the tiara, and exits searching for BEAUTY.)

MAYOR PUCKERER

Some do. Behind the jail is a very liberal arts college and an unfortunate few have become academic, but that's the way the ice cream melts. Did I mention ice cream is our Number One Export!

(SHADOW! MAYOR PUCKERER walks MADAME KLOO to the light.)

MADAME KLOO

Is that a shadow, Mayor?

MAYOR PUCKERER

Shadow? I don't see a shadow.

MADAME KLOO

Maybe we could go back to your office to get that contract.

MAYOR PUCKERER

What a lovely idea!

(MAYOR PUCKERER steers KLOO to the office where it is DARK.)

MAYOR PUCKERER

Dish, can we have some lights?

MADAME KLOO

Are you sure there's nothing strange going on?

DISH

Strange? Why would you say that?

MAYOR PUCKERER

Please, don't let the dark frighten you.

MADAME KLOO

A little darkness cannot harm me. I have tamed the wildest beasts.

DISH

But on the phone you said you were a people Circus, no animal acts.

MADAME KLOO

I am a people person, and I wasn't speaking literally.

MAYOR PUCKERER

Do you have dancing bears?

MADAME KLOO

Are you a literal sort of person Pucker?

MAYOR PUCKERER

Puckerer. I try to take the literal literally and the figurative, well, that's a private matter. Do all contracts come with such fine print?

DISH

It's much too fine to read.

MADAME KLOO

Suggesting it is superior? Like a cake too pretty to cut?

DISH

But shouldn't we* try to read it?

MAYOR PUCKERER

*Dish, please. We're in a meeting.

MADAME KLOO

I could read it to you, if you wish, Dish.

DISH

Before he signs, yes.

MAYOR PUCKERER

Only as a formality.

DISH

If you sign now and let her read it afterwards, then she would only be reading it as a formality.

MAYOR PUCKERER

Perhaps you could read it now, informally.

MADAME KLOO

If we're going to be informal, I'll change my clothes.

DISH

Aren't contracts legally binding?

MADAME KLOO

Perhaps I could tie you up with it.

DISH

I think reading it very quickly might suffice.

MADAME KLOO

(very quickly)

Once upon a time in the Village of Demensia the party of the first part shall be party to the party of the second part* and furthermore -- insufferable succotash -- more important is the fact that

MAYOR PUCKERER

*Is that the Circus or the Village?

MAYOR PUCKERER

** Did you say something about cream?

we are bringing our Circus to you and have the most at steak or tofu because you need no investment and get 40% of the advance off the top like the cream of the crop.** To not provide us with the use of your Village Green on the date specified --

MADAME KLOO (cont'd)

and if the Green is not green or we don't have access to it, you'll be fined an amount most deeply felt in your backpocket to excuse the fact that we packed an entire Circus into our backpocket to play a Village sans Green and leave here happy as clams!

MAYOR PUCKERER

Did I mention that our Village specializes in ice cream?

MADAME KLOO

All concessions are the proprietary propension of the Significant Circus and others will not be added to suit local preference as stated in the earlier section 5 subheading C which I already read.

MAYOR PUCKERER

Did you mention clams?

MADAME KLOO

I did.

(MAYOR PUCKERER signs.)

MAYOR PUCKERER

Done! I have a soft spot in my heart for people like you, Madame MADAME KLOO.

DISH

Wasn't there a penalty for the Village Green not being Green?

MAYOR PUCKERER

We just love a good circus!

MADAME KLOO

I'll see you on the big day! May Fifteen!

DISH

But what if it rains?

MADAME KLOO

May Fifteen or pay the penalties. Thank you both so very much.

(KLOO touches DISH's cheeks to her own,
then the MAYOR PUCKERER's.)

MADAME KLOO and MAYOR PUCKERER

Touch-touch!

(KLOO gathers contract and sweeps out.)

DISH

Penalties!? What did you do??!

MAYOR PUCKERER

Wasn't I supposed to sign?

DISH

We don't know what's going to happen with the Village Green. What if the Castle wants it?

MAYOR PUCKERER

It's not theirs to take.

DISH

But what if they send those big strong chain-mail-clad fencing muscled-up jousting Knighted Men?

MAYOR PUCKERER

Do they really have men like that up there?

DISH

The Castle and all the people inside have been asleep for a hundred years. That means that when they went to sleep they were Victorians.

MAYOR PUCKERER

Is that what they called Republicans back then?

DISH

Don't say that word. Don't think that word. Not in my presence, please Mayor sir!

MAYOR PUCKERER

Republicans?

(DISH screams.)

MAYOR PUCKERER

And you say they are awake now?

(DISH screams again, exits screaming.)

DISH

Egg on my face, I just know it. There will be egg on my face!

MAYOR PUCKERER

I wish I knew just what to do. I ought --
this is much more troubling than I thought.

SCENE 5

(In the Castle, QUEEN DEE and her THREESOME -- SQUIRM, DRAG and MAID JANE -- meet with PRINCE CHARMING.)

QUEEN DEE

Welcome Prince, and let Us officially thank you for waking Us at such a spine-tingling time of day!

PRINCE

The pleasure, your Royal Highness, was all mine.

SQUIRM

We hope not, slimebucket!

QUEEN DEE

Now, now. Let's not be rude to Our guest.

DRAG

(to PRINCE, less publicly)

I'll be rude if I choose to be rude, as soon as you're out of Her Royal Presence, snotface!

QUEEN DEE

Why don't you tell Us a bit about yourself?

PRINCE

I, um --

QUEEN DEE

Who are your parents?

PRINCE

My father, King --

QUEEN DEE

Where were you educated?

PRINCE

I have a Masters degree in --

QUEEN DEE

What sort of Castle do you hope to inherit?

PRINCE

Well, you might want to --

QUEEN DEE

You do hope to inherit a Castle of your own one day, don't you?

PRINCE

It might be easier if I just --

QUEEN DEE

ANSWER THE -- answer the questions. We have all the time in the world, don't We?

(DRAG hands PRINCE a guitar and the
THREESOME sing back-up, written in
parentheses.)

DRAG

Sing or die.

PRINCE (and THREESOME in parentheses)

I am Prince Charming (dum-dee-doo)
That's my full name, don't think it's alarming
I am Prince Charming (dum-dee-doo)
I don't have a brother.
My job is to keep us from harming each other.
My parents were royals from north of here (north of here)
My sister's queer (sister's queer)
There was a scandal, (a campaign of smear)
I rode away on the day I heard someone say (someone say)
"maybe that Charming guy is gay" (guy is gay)
"that's why he's running away" (running away)
but it's not true, and when I tried to defend myself
I accidentally killed someone else
by leaving my sword in the fog (in the fog)
so a witch turned me into a frog (to a frog)
and ever since then I've been searching for Beauty.

QUEEN DEE

Beauty was also the victim of a terrible curse. Of course she blames Us for it. But what's a mother to do? Do you blame your mother?

PRINCE

No, I --

QUEEN DEE

Of course not, only Our daughter blames her mother, only Our love is deemed deficient, Our fault, Our fault, let's all look and point a finger at Us!

DRAG

You still seem a bit amphibious to me.

JANE

Where is Beauty?

SQUIRM

In the eye of the needle?

DRAG

That's beholder!

JANE

Her daughter, Sleeping Beauty, where is she?

QUEEN DEE

Haven't the three of you sent people out to look for her, to find her and bring her back to Us?

DRAG

Yes, they're scouring the Village and the outlying areas.

SQUIRM

We'll go see about their progress, with your permission, of course.

QUEEN DEE

Of course.

(SQUIRM and DRAG exit. SPOT enters with BEAUTY's tiara.)

JANE

What have you done with her?

PRINCE

I didn't do anything.

JANE

You were the last person to see her.

PRINCE

I love her, I wouldn't do anything to her.

JANE

Why should we believe you?

PRINCE

I'm a relatively ineffectual character?

QUEEN DEE

Is that true?

JANE

He's the Prince. His very purpose is to help Princesses escape. That's his job.

QUEEN DEE

Away with you, leave Us alone. Out, Out, and take Spot with you!

(JANE and SPOT exit. PRINCE starts to leave too.)

QUEEN DEE

And don't come back without Our daughter! Charming, where do you think you're going?

PRINCE

Out to find Beauty?

QUEEN DEE

Did We dismiss you?

PRINCE

I thought you - uh - I guess not.

QUEEN DEE

Ah, when We said leave Us alone, I didn't mean Us, I meant us. The idea was to speak to you alone. Relax. I don't bite. Now where shall We begin?

SCENE 6

(The Village Inn's bar where SWILL hands a shot and a soda-back to a BEAUTIFUL GIRL while GONERIA and her SIS PHYLLIS play 9-ball. MADAME KLOO has a glass of champagne in the corner.)

SWILL

One shot.

(GONERIA shoots -- it sounds like a gunshot. The BEAUTIFUL GIRL responds physically, falling to the floor. SWILL doesn't miss a beat.)

SWILL

And one soda-back. You're supposed to drink first before you pass out.

RAPUNZEL (the beautiful girl)

Sure. Drink first.

(THE BEAUTIFUL GIRL gets up. SHE limps -- her ankle is out.)

GONERIA

Lousy shot.

SIS PHYLLIS

Shot wasn't so bad. It was your leave.

GONERIA

If it was such a bad leave, then why do you have such an easy shot?

SIS PHYLLIS

If you played the game well, you wouldn'ta left me a good shot. That's why it's a lousy leave, cause it's good for me. Get it?

GONERIA

If it's good for you, you should be thanking me.

(THE BEAUTIFUL GIRL and SIS PHYLLIS eye their shots like cats about to pounce.)

GONERIA

Shoot already!

SWILL

Drink already!

(THE BEAUTIFUL GIRL drinks as SIS PHYLLIS shoots. The balls connect -- like a gunshot -- the girl goes down again.)

SWILL

That's better.

SIS PHYLLIS

Damn!

RAPUNZEL

I'll have another please.

SWILL

I'm not allowed to serve you on the floor.

GONERIA

Let's play darts.

SIS PHYLLIS

I go first!

(GONERIA stands in front of the dartboard as SIS PHYLLIS aims a dart at her.)

RAPUNZEL

I prefer it down here. It feels safer.

SWILL

(to GONERIA and SIS PHYLLIS)
Break it up, you two. No physical weirdness in the bar!

SIS PHYLLIS

It's okay. She's my sister.

GONERIA

You wanna see her put a sword down my throat?

SWILL

Whose sword would it be?

GONERIA

Not yours, I can promise you that.

SWILL

Save it for Happy Hour.

GONERIA

You're right, I guess. There's no one here to impress.

(MADAME KLOO offers the BEAUTIFUL
GIRL a hand up. SHE takes it and stands.)

RAPUNZEL

Thank you.

MADAME KLOO

You're shaking. Is something wrong?

RAPUNZEL

I'm fine.

SWILL

Here's your shot.

RAPUNZEL

Thank you.

SWILL

Something's gotta be wrong. Things been wrong here all day long.

RAPUNZEL

And in the night too -- there was this -- well, it doesn't matter.

MADAME KLOO

Tell me.

RAPUNZEL

It's not important.

MADAME KLOO

You've hurt your ankle.

RAPUNZEL

No. Not really.

MADAME KLOO

I'm not from around here, and I don't know anyone in town, so if you're looking for someone to talk to... --

RAPUNZEL

I saw it happen.

MADAME KLOO

What happen?

SWILL

You saw it?

MADAME KLOO

Saw what?

GONERIA

(to MADAME KLOO)

You don't know about it?

SIS PHYLLIS

The Castle woke up this morning. That is what you're talking about, isn't it?

SWILL

She says she saw it.

GONERIA

Lots of people saw it.

SIS PHYLLIS

Who do you know who saw it? Who?

GONERIA

I don't know but --

SIS PHYLLIS

Cause you're talkin out your ass again.

GONERIA

You don't know that.

SWILL

Ladies.

SIS PHYLLIS

Who would be looking at the Castle, who would bother? It's not like you could see it all covered in forestry, camouflaged in thorns and shit.

MADAME KLOO

Obviously she was looking at it, if she says she saw it.

RAPUNZEL

Oh, you can see it, if you look.

GONERIA

You can see it now.

RAPUNZEL

It was covered in ivy and hidden by bushes and trees, but you could still see it.

SIS PHYLLIS

Covered and hidden don't sound too see-able to me.

MADAME KLOO

Why don't you give her a chance to tell you about it.

RAPUNZEL

I live a few towns over, I mean, I used to live there. I moved today. Sorta.

GONERIA

The point?

RAPUNZEL

I liked to look out at the Castle, because I liked to look out, and it was there. Even though nothing ever happened there, I always thought that something might.

SIS PHYLLIS

So this is a kind of wish fulfillment?

GONERIA

No matter what they say, nothing is gonna happen there.

SIS PHYLLIS

You don't know that.

SWILL

Let her speak.

RAPUNZEL

When I think of Castles I think of hope.

GONERIA

I ain't gonna let her speak sounding like a Hallmark card.

MADAME KLOO

Some of us are trying to listen.

RAPUNZEL

Princes come from Castles, and I've been waiting for a Prince.

SWILL

You really aren't from around here.

RAPUNZEL

It was early this morning, before the crack of dawn, and I was staring out at the Sleeping Castle, so silent in its sleep, but not so still. I could see ivy growing over its walls,

SIS PHYLLIS

She sees ivy growing.

RAPUNZEL (cont'd)

and as the moon moved to illuminate the southern wing where Sleeping Beauty sleeps, I realized, the ivy is moving, not creeping, being moved, pulled from the castle cracks and braided together to form a kind of rope. I moved closer to my window and looked down the length of that ivy braiding itself into a rope and I saw, on horseback, a Prince.

SIS PHYLLIS

How do you know it's a Prince?

RAPUNZEL

He was wearing his Castle colors, blue and white, on the puffed up shoulders of his waistcoat.

SIS PHYLLIS

What else?

RAPUNZEL

The hilt of his sword is fit with three large sapphires.

GONERIA

You saw all this by moonlight?

RAPUNZEL

Crack of dawn, but the moon was still up.

SIS PHYLLIS

That's it?

RAPUNZEL

He was riding a white horse.

SWILL

Sounds like she's got you girls.

MADAME KLOO

Everyone knows that all the best Princes have white horses.

GONERIA

Okay, okay, so what happened?

RAPUNZEL

He was riding the white horse back and forth in a figure eight pattern pulling at the strands of ivy, dropping one as he picked up another, riding to one side* and then coming back --

SIS PHYLLIS

*You're making me dizzy.

GONERIA

Don't make Phyllis dizzy. When she pukes, it's usually projectile.

RAPUNZEL

Basically he was forming a long braid.

SIS PHYLLIS

Out of ivy?

RAPUNZEL

Yes. And then I saw him tether his horse and climb up the braid, and as the last shaft of moonlight fell at the edge of the Princess's window, I saw him enter her chamber.

(GONERIA and SIS PHYLLIS growl and hoot and laugh at the potentially sexual ramifications of this entrance.)

MADAME KLOO

I'd like to talk to you further about this Castle, and your recent move, and your eyes, your very very blue eyes. Can I buy you a drink?

RAPUNZEL

Oh, do we have to buy them?

SWILL

Usually that is understood.

be his

(RAPUNZEL grabs SWILL by what would lapels if he had them.)

RAPUNZEL

I have other things to think about besides what I owe you for the drinks.

MADAME KLOO

What does she owe you?

RAPUNZEL

Most of my life, I've been trapped in a phallic symbol.

MADAME KLOO

I'll be happy to pay for your drinks.

(RAPUNZEL drops SWILL and turns to
MADAME KLOO.)

RAPUNZEL

I couldn't let you do that.

MADAME KLOO

It's done! We'll work it out, amongst ourselves.

SCENE 7

CINDERELLA

Cinderella. C-I-N-D-E-R-E-L-L-A. Did you say first, last, and security? But that's -- I don't have that kind of money. I could try to -- I could maybe -- I could -- is there any way I could pay it off in time? What do you mean work something out? I don't think I understand you -- I filled out applications at the dairy farm and the ice cream factory, but I haven't heard yet. I've been doing a lot of chores at home. I'm practically in charge of all the cooking and cleaning there. I was thinking of starting a catering company, oh not in my apartment, of course. (Your apartment.) I would rent commercial space for a real kitchen. I could create a Kickstart Campaign for that. I would never use your appliances for that sort of labor intensive type of -- maybe I should try to stick it out a little longer at home, just until I have more money to put down. Oh, but I do appreciate your offer, and working something out with you might be really nice, but maybe some other time. Thank you.

SCENE 8

(BEAUTY attempts her escape from Demensia while DRAG and Squirm search. During this physical scene DRAG and SQUIRM are outwitted by BEAUTY who, in the process of escaping tears off the bottom half of her gown and leaves it behind. SPOT discovers it and takes it with him.)

SCENE 9

(Meanwhile, back at the Castle...)

QUEEN DEE

Do you love Our Beauty?

PRINCE

I do.

QUEEN DEE

When did you first know that you loved her?

PRINCE

When she kissed me.

QUEEN DEE

I thought you kissed her.

PRINCE

She gazed at me with her big beautiful eyes.

QUEEN DEE

She hadn't opened them in a hundred years.

PRINCE

She blinked and blinked and gazed and gazed.

QUEEN DEE

Maybe she was just trying to focus.

PRINCE

She was awake when I got there.

QUEEN DEE

Awake?

PRINCE

She has terrible insomnia. She was doing a crossword puzzle. In ink.

QUEEN DEE

Please, go on. Give Us a chance to get to know her better.

PRINCE

When I appeared at her window, she said, you must be the Prince. I didn't say anything. I'm the strong silent type.

QUEEN DEE

And then you kissed her?

PRINCE

No. Then she rose from her bed and kissed me. She said it wouldn't be right for us to kiss while lying down, that our feet had to be on the floor the way the censors made them do it in the old Hollywood movies she likes to watch.

QUEEN DEE

What are old Hollywood movies?

PRINCE

You know the ones where, when the girl gets kissed (in a standing position of course) she lifts her foot to indicate her enjoyment. Beauty says the clitoris is such a small part of the body it is hardly ever seen in an erect position, so men must look for other signals sent out by women to indicate their level of arousal. The lifting of the foot during the kiss is a kind of signifier (of the clitoral erection) that allows anyone watching to understand that this particular pair of kissers will be married and live happily ever after.

QUEEN DEE

Did she lift her foot with you?

PRINCE

Your daughter has an amazing collection of old Hollywood movies. She gave me the remote to her flat screen and let me play with it all morning. When your servants came to summon her, that's when I first noticed she was gone. I guess it had been a few hours by then.

QUEEN DEE

Would you like Us to throw you an engagement party?

PRINCE

But what about Beauty? What is they don't find her?

(SPOT enters with part of BEAUTY's gown.)

QUEEN DEE

Our daughter loves to get dressed up. We'll proclaim a masked ball. All the beautiful princesses will attend. Beauty won't be able to stay away. You will lock eyes, rush to each other's side, kiss. We will watch for that significant gesture you mentioned and announce your wedding!

PRINCE

I think I should go out and look for her myself.

QUEEN DEE

But I thought you were enamored of her "flatscreen".

PRINCE

I have been searching for Beauty all my life. I found her once. I am certain I can find her again.

QUEEN DEE

Take your leave then, Prince Charming.

(PRINCE exits. SPOT petitions the QUEEN to go too.)

QUEEN DEE

And if there's anything you need, please don't hesitate to -- Yes, Spot, go help the Prince.

(QUEEN realizes she is alone, sighs, turns her back and makes out with herself by putting her arms around herself...)

QUEEN DEE

Is a kiss just a kiss? Is a sigh just a sigh? What are the fundamentals to apply now that so much time has gone by? If this kiss was more than just a kiss, we must get her married right away. In four months, she won't fit into our mother's wedding dress. But a May wedding, barely three months away?! She can be married the Demented way on the Village Green for all to see and celebrate!

(THE QUEEN'S INNER MOTHER emerges from inside the QUEEN herself.)

INNER MOTHER

Not like you.

QUEEN DEE

Hello Mother.

INNER MOTHER

We had to buy you a dress with an empire waistline, for the bride with something to hide!

QUEEN DEE

Oh Mother, I didn't mean to.

INNER MOTHER

I've waited one hundred and fifty years for someone to wear my dress. I didn't buy it to hang it in a closet.

QUEEN DEE

I'm sorry Mother. I bet you looked lovely in it.

INNER MOTHER

Do you think I want to send you on a guilt trip every time the subject comes up?

QUEEN DEE

No Mother.

INNER MOTHER

I want you to enjoy the dress.

QUEEN DEE

Yes Mother. Sorry Mother. But Mother, where is she? Where's my Beauty? Mother? Mother!

(THE QUEEN'S INNER MOTHER goes.)

QUEEN DEE

What a mess! Beauty better come home soon and fit into that dress!

SCENE 10

(BEAUTY is in the woods up a tree. SPOT enters and sniffs to the end of the trail and circles until SPOT realizes where BEAUTY is.)

SPOT

Beauty! Beauty! Beauty! Beauty! Beauty! Hello! I know you're up there.

BEAUTY

Go home, Spot!

SPOT

I missed you.

BEAUTY

This is not a good time for a reunion.

SPOT

It's been a hundred years.

BEAUTY

I'm running away.

SPOT

Can I come with you?

BEAUTY

You make too much noise.

SPOT

I'll be quiet. I can be quiet. I'm quiet.

BEAUTY

You smell bad.

SPOT

I can bathe. I can be your look-out. I'll go on missions. I'll catch fish in the creek, and we can eat sushi.

BEAUTY

Spot, go home.

SPOT

I am standing by you in your time of need.

BEAUTY

But I don't need you Spot.

SPOT

Yes, you do, as a Princess, you are definitely in need of your loyal dog.

BEAUTY

I don't want to be a princess anymore.

SPOT

What?

BEAUTY

You heard me. I resign.

SPOT

You can't resign. Once a princess, always a princess. Unless you go queen. Besides, your mother's giving a masked ball tonight.

BEAUTY

So?

SPOT

Prince Charming is going to be there.

BEAUTY

Prince Charming means nothing to me.

SPOT

That can't be true!

BEAUTY

The prince is not my love interest. He's not even a passing fancy. He's the alarm clock I was hoping would ring, the end of the spell that was placed on me. Once he arrived, and we kissed, I could get up and go about my business.

SPOT

Business? What business?

BEAUTY

For the past sixty years I've been reading feminist theory. I want to get a doctorate.

PRINCE

Doctors are good, almost as good as Princes. A Prince who's a doctor, that's even better than a regular Prince. If you come to the ball, maybe that's where you'll find your doctor at.

BEAUTY

You don't understand.

SPOT

Beauty, you're supposed to be like, "OhMyGod! I have nothing to wear! I need a manicure and a pedicure and a cure for my hair!"

BEAUTY

Those days are long gone.

SPOT

But being a princess is like being a bone. It's good good good!

BEAUTY

Says who?

SPOT

Prove to me that being a princess is bad, and I'll prove to you that I can be useful.

BEAUTY

If you're going to be useful, try to be useful somewhere else.

SPOT

See, being a princess is good because you get to order me about.

BEAUTY

You're a dog. Any human, royal or not, gets to order you about.

SPOT

And being a princess means you get to order more people about than ordinary people get to.

BEAUTY

People don't like to be ordered about. They put spells on you and talk about you behind your back. They laugh at you and you end up all alone. Grrr! Go make yourself useful.

SPOT

I can do that. I'll be (bark)!

SCENE 11

(In the bar. SWILL cleans his gun as MADAME KLOO and RAPUNZEL get acquainted and SIS PHYLLIS and GONERIA hang at the pool table.)

MADAME KLOO

Tell me more.

RAPUNZEL

It was the Prince climbing up those ivy braids. He showed me how to free myself from my own situation, and so I did.

MADAME KLOO

Runaway?

RAPUNZEL

I'm old enough to look out for myself.

MADAME KLOO

I'm Claire. I run the Significant Circus with my partner Wanda. It's an all female thing, y'know?

RAPUNZEL

I'm Rapunzel. I expect there will be people out looking for me soon.

MADAME KLOO

Do you want them to find you?

RAPUNZEL

No, but I don't know where to go, and --

MADAME KLOO

And you hurt your ankle running away.

RAPUNZEL

I always thought a Prince would rescue me. I don't know where I got that idea, as if a Prince would even care that I was stuck in a tower fifty feet in the air.

MADAME KLOO

You do heights!

RAPUNZEL

I hate heights. I fell. I'm terrified of heights. That's how I hurt my ankle!

MADAME KLOO

But you lived in a tower.

RAPUNZEL

I cut off all my hair and braided it. I used it as an escape ladder.

MADAME KLOO

Did you bring it with you?

RAPUNZEL

I thought it best to go on without it. I didn't want to continue the attachment once it was broken.

MADAME KLOO

Pity. I was thinking that if you come with me we could make a trapeze of it*, and you could --

RAPUNZEL

I'm not a freak. I don't want to join your circus. I don't even know you.

MADAME KLOO

*I never said you were. I was only offering you a place to stay, a way to travel quickly. Wanda's coming to pick me up in a truck, and we can get out of here. Unless of course you want them to find you, whoever they are.

RAPUNZEL

No, you're right. You're being kind, and I'm - I just - I'm not used to anything, that's all. I thought my life would be a certain way, and now that I'm living it, it's totally different.

MADAME KLOO

To leading a different life then! O, you need another drink.

(CINDERELLA enters as GONERIA cheers
SIS PHYLLIS on at the pool table.)

GONERIA

Go Phyllis! Go Phyllis! Get a ball in! You call it!

SIS PHYLLIS

I am trying to focus.

GONERIA

Don't look now but the princess has arrived.

SIS PHYLLIS

Ooh, from the Castle? What's she wearing? Is it Versace? I love Versace!

GONERIA

Not that princess and Versace is dead*, she would wear something new, something amazing.

SIS PHYLLIS

*Do you have to keep reminding me that Versace is dead? Can't I dream? Don't you think he would have wanted me to dream?

CINDERELLA

Excuse me Goneria, Sis Phyllis, but could I --

GONERIA

Bow down stepscum, before addressing us.

SIS PHYLLIS

Yeah, and give us all of your chewing gum.

CINDERELLA

But I don't chew gum.

GONERIA

Then carry some anyway.

SIS PHYLLIS

In case we want some.

CINDERELLA

I thought you'd want to know that the Queen is throwing a ball tonight, and because you're my stepsisters, I can get you in, but I need something to wear.

GONERIA

Borrow whatever you want, but those designer original were custom-made for me. If you take them in, you'll destroy their resale value.

SIS PHYLLIS

Don't look at me like that. My clothes, as everyone knows, are covered in cum stains.

GONERIA

Don't you have work to do?

SIS PHYLLIS

Like weren't you doing our chores?

GONERIA

Maybe you're rather help us with our knife-throwing act.

CINDERELLA

I have a lot of other things I have to do.

(SWILL brings over a round.)

SWILL

Excuse me, Princess, but you gotta wear shoes in my bar.

CINDERELLA

I don't have any shoes to wear! I don't have anything to wear! I go to my closet and there's nothing but rags, rags, RAGS!

(CINDERELLA steals SWILLS gun and exits.)

SWILL

I'm just saying. You know. Health Code Regulations.

SIS PHYLLIS

(with her shot)

Race ya! We are going to a ball!

GONERIA

Woohoo! We love to ball!

SCENE 12

(Fancy's Department Store. CINDERELLA wields gun.)

CINDERELLA

Shoppers, attention all shoppers, get down on the ground! Move it move it move it!

Wait. I changed my mind. Shoppers does not include store personnel. You work here, on your feet! Up up! Hands up over your heads and keep them there. That's it. Good.

Am I not clear? I am not making myself clear? Shoppers on the ground, face down! Personnel on their feet, hands in the air! Personnel, line up over here, move move move move move! Okay. You,

(reading nametag)

Miss Finch, untie these fur coats and lock up all these shoppers here inside the rack. Shoppers form a line, good, into the rack. I don't care if you're allergic to fur, just do it!

What do I want? What do I want? What do I want? You are not looking at the face of desire, no conspicuous consumer here, not me. I have needs, real serious human needs, and they are not being met. Good job Miss Finch. You must have experience with this sort of thing.

Okay Personnel, listen up. Your mission: meet my needs. And no one will get hurt. I need a ball gown, and I don't want to see any other princess wearing the same dress as me. I need a wrap and a muff and a make-over, my own personal stylist and underwear to die for. Am I clear now? Good.

Oh, and one more thing: I need shoes, no not shoes... slippers. Something delicate, something daring yet delightful, something there but not really there, something light and sparkly, sharp and sexy. Got that? Good.

Move it move it move it or these shoppers may never see the light of day again!

SCENE 13

(WANDA enters and watches MADAME KLOO with
RAPUNZEL.)

WANDA

I've been out there honking for fifteen minutes.

MADAME KLOO

Wanda, darling! I didn't hear a thing.

WANDA

Don't "Wanda darling" me, Claire.

MADAME KLOO

Please. We have a signed contract for May Fifteen, and I have my reputation to maintain.

WANDA

Then I guess you'll have to call me Mistress.

KLOO

Why aren't you wearing your boots?

WANDA

How much celebrating did you do, "Kloo"?

KLOO

She did more than me. I gave you those boots.

WANDA

I've been on the road all day, so I thought you'd drive us back, but I guess that's too much to hope for. It's all smoke and mirrors to you.

KLOO

I'll make it up to you, I promise.

WANDA

I've got a fistful of promises from you.

KLOO

That's not true. I come through for you Wanda. I gave you those boots. I got us a new Clarisse.

WANDA

Don't tell me -- her?

KLOO

She's perfect for it.

RAPUNZEL

Did I mention my fear of heights? Fear of ropes?

WANDA

Who is this chick?

RAPUNZEL

I used to have beautiful hair.

(sobbing into a shot glass)

When this fills up with my tears, I'll drink it and my sorrow will never run out.

WANDA

She's gonna ride on your lap?

KLOO

Maybe.

WANDA

Not in my truck, she won't.

KLOO

We can put her in the back with blankets.

WANDA

In the flatbed? She'll get all black and blue.

KLOO

She's already black and blue. She fell this morning, escaping from her tower.

WANDA

You really know how to pick them. What's her name?

KLOO

Call her Clarisse.

WANDA

All right Clarisse.. One foot in front of the other.

RAPUNZEL

I don't want to leave my tears.

WANDA

Walking works best when the hips are over the knees. Forward two -- what's with her ankle?

KLOO

I told you she's bruised up.

WANDA

All right sweetcheeks, ever meet a fireman?

(WANDA lifts RAPUNZEL fireman style.)

RAPUNZEL

Upsy-daisy!

WANDA

The circus is hard enough to run without you running after pretty pussies. You try to start something* with this girl and I'll --

KLOO

*I thought she'd make a good Clarisse.

(KLOO exits.)

WANDA

I used to walk the tightrope for you too. Look where it got me.

(WANDA exits carrying RAPUNZEL.)

SCENE 14

SPOT

Beauty! Hey Beauty! I made myself useful. I gotcha something a princess would never wear.

BEAUTY

If I would never wear it, why would I want it?

SPOT

As a disguise, so no one can tell you're a princess.

BEAUTY

I don't want to disguise my princess self, I want to leave her behind forever. Hey, these are nice, Spot! Where did you get these boots?

SPOT

They fell off the back of a truck.

BEAUTY

Are these hot, Spot?

SPOT

From a pickup driving out of Demensia suddenly popped these boots! They fell at my paws, and I saw them and thought, "these are the boots that Beauty will use!"

BEAUTY

Very tough-looking. I could really kick some butt with these babies.

SPOT

That's very unprincess-like behavior Beauty.

(When she puts on the boots, there is a magical sound.)

BEAUTY

Good work, Spot. Have a bone!

SPOT

All the bones are at home. That's why you should go there and be a princess again.

BEAUTY

You go. I've got to keep moving.

SPOT

Can't we rest for a minute? I ran all the way from Demensia.

BEAUTY

(with resolve)

No Spot, I won't.

SPOT

Gimme back those boots!

BEAUTY

Go home Spot. Go!

(SPOT and BEAUTY exit opposite ways.)

SCENE 15

(The Ball at the Castle. Music. Dancing. QUEEN DEE and PRINCE CHARMING watch from on high.)

PRINCE

Even though they are all wearing masks, I know she hasn't arrived yet. No one here is as beautiful.

QUEEN DEE

Don't you worry. We know Our daughter. And we know she'll be here.

MASKED DANCER 1

Male doctors in the village of BlahDeeBlah are not allowed to look at female genitalia.

MASKED DANCER 2

Then how are women examined?

DANCER 1

The doctors use mirrors. That way they can see without looking.

(THEY dance away.)

QUEEN DEE

We wish she would get here soon. We'd like to introduce the two of you.

PRINCE

We are a good-looking couple, I have to admit.

MASKED DANCER 3

Did you hear that in the village of LocaLaLa, the men there are legally allowed to have sex with animals, as long as the animals are female.

MASKED DANCER 4

What happens if a man has sex with a male animal?

DANCER 3

He's never mentions it! Ha ha ha!

(They dance away.)

QUEEN DEE

With all the attention she takes with herself, once she kept an entire ballroom waiting for three days.

PRINCE

But I'm sure it was worth the wait.

BEAUTY

You know our Beauty. When she finally arrived, she simply glowed.

MASKED DANCER 5

In the village of Goo, men are paid to travel from house to house to deflower virgins.

(MASKED DANCER 6 tries to spin away from DANCER 5.)

MASKED DANCER 6

Finally, I've found my calling!

(DANCER 5 pulls DANCER 6 back into the dance.)

DANCER 5

Don't you want to know why?

DANCER 6

Not really.

(THEY dance away. ALL DANCERS dance.)

QUEEN DEE

It's almost midnight.

PRINCE

That beautiful bewitching hour.

QUEEN DEE

Do We hear the hooves of the horses of a coach approaching?

PRINCE

Perhaps that's my heart beating hard in anticipation.

(Enter masked GIRL in a gown and glass slippers. EVERYONE stops to look.)

DANCER 1

Who is that?

DANCER 2

I thought we were waiting for Sleeping Beauty.

QUEEN DEE

(gasps)

Doesn't she look lovely!

DANCER 3

I've seen her somewhere before.

DANCER 4

Do you think she's a real princess?

QUEEN DEE

We never know what color she'll dye her hair next.

DANCER 5

Where on earth did she find those shoes?

DANCER 6

Only a true princess could have the feet to wear those shoes!

QUEEN DEE

She is always so full of surprises. That's one of the things we just adore about Our Beauty!

PRINCE

I am rendered speechless, strong silent type that I am.

QUEEN DEE

Go quickly Prince, and take her by the hand. Sound the trumpets! Raise the banners!

(DANCERS form a pyramid that PRINCE and GIRL ascend, meet top center and kiss. HER glass-slipped foot extends upward. The bells begin to chime Midnight.)

QUEEN DEE

We would like to take this opportunity to announce --

DANCER 3

Hey, that's the girl from the department store!

DANCER 4

She stole that outfit!

CINDERELLA

Are those bells?

DANCER 5

Quick, call out the Soldiers!

PRINCE

Chiming Midnight my love.

CINDERELLA

I must go.

PRINCE

So soon? But you just got here!

DANCER 6

Stop!

DANCER 1

Thief!

(CINDERELLA rushes down the people pyramid, losing a glass slipper which is handed to PRINCE. Whispering begins amongst the DANCERS. QUEEN speaks over it.)

QUEEN DEE

Prince Charming and Our daughter Sleeping Beauty will be married on the Village Green this May Fifteen in a public ceremony to which you're all invited! Beauty? Where did she go?

PRINCE

I don't know.

QUEEN DEE

You best go after her.

PRINCE

I will.

(PRINCE exits with slipper.
QUEEN shouts over loud
whispering.)

QUEEN DEE

Music please! Practice your dancing for the most wonderful wedding you've ever seen on the Village Green this May Fifteen!

(From the whispers, come...)

DANCER 1

That Prince is a toad who kills Fairies in their sleep!

DANCER 4

That frog has a fetish for girls with small feet!

DANCER 3

The problem is lettuce for world class skinnies!

DANCER 2

Stay or a bomb will explode tonight in the street!

DANCER 6

The players shake from contact at night indiscreet!

DANCER 5

The Mayor has taken out a contract on the life of the Queen!

(QUEEN faints into the arms of the crowd.)

BLACKOUT -- END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE 1

(Three months later, May 15. A diner off the highway. BEAUTY, in a pink waitress uniform, with the same combat boots on, writes on her order pad.)

BEAUTY

What makes a Princess a Princess? question mark, colon: identifying hierarchies of beauty and power via common signifiers. Can a colon come after a question mark in a title?

SMELL

Hey, Princess, put some mileage on them boots of yours.

BEAUTY

When I get a customer I'll work. Til then, I am content to be your personal eyesore.

SMELL

The ketchups need marrying.

BEAUTY

Whatever it is you do with the ketchup bottles is none of my concern.

SMELL

It's your job, Cupcake. It's your mother-freaking livelihood.

BEAUTY

Customers are my job. Your job is* to torment me.

SMELL

*Here are some customers right now. How about a little service with a smile, Sweetcheeks?

(MADAME KLOO, WANDA, MISTY and RAPUNZEL enter and sit. BEAUTY writes.)

BEAUTY

Chapter One: Work. A princess doesn't work. A princess doesn't need to work. A princess was never expected to work.

KLOO

Excuse me.

BEAUTY

She was not raised to understand what work is, why work is necessary, or how to work well.

WANDA

We're ready to order, when you feel like working.

BEAUTY

Work might be defined as labor for which one gets paid, or labor for which one is Underpaid, or effort expended for potential gain, e.g. cleaning the ring in the bathtub before you soak your feet.

WANDA

Some time this century, okay?

BEAUTY

I never knew bathtubs need cleaning til I noticed that if you don't clean them, stuff grows there.

SMELL

You got customers, Dollface.

BEAUTY

My uniform (signifying my status as a work) has caused busloads of Demensions (searching for Sleeping Beauty) to refuse to see me as the princess I am simply because a princess would not be working and/or wearing a waitress's uniform.

WANDA

What is this, Halloween?

BEAUTY

You talking to me?

WANDA

You wearing that uniform for kicks or do you really work here?

BEAUTY

I work here.

WANDA

Wanna prove it?

MISTY

We are circus performers with a show to do this evening in a town far away from here.

KLOO

To get there on time, and do a good show, we need your help.

BEAUTY

When you put it that way, how can I resist?

MISTY

I'd like a low-fat* cheese omelette and some --

BEAUTY

*With a figure like yours, you can afford to eat Swiss, American, Feta or even Cheddar!

MISTY

Low-fat please with french fries* and --

BEAUTY

*With a figure like yours, order hash browns double-baked with a side of mash with extra butter.

MISTY

A plain baked potato and a side of --

BEAUTY

With a figure like yours, go for the bacon or a chicken fried steak or the sausages stuffed with cheddar in a biscuit. Put some meat on those bones.

MISTY

A side of dry toast, and could you make that omelette with just the egg whites?

BEAUTY

Sure can. And you?

WANDA

I'll have the same.

MADAME KLOO

Sounds good to me.

RAPUNZEL

I'd like my eggs with yolks and cheddar, hash browns double-baked, an order of those stuffed sausages, a toasted bagel, extra butter and jelly and a stack of pancakes with maple syrup on the side.

BEAUTY

Hey Smell, gimme three princesses and a pig!

WANDA

(to RAPUNZEL)

Do you intend to walk the tightrope this evening or will you be performing as the next blimp?

KLOO

She can afford a few pounds with her figure.

WANDA

I don't think you should be keeping track of her figure.

MISTY

(to RAPUNZEL)

Don't you worry you'll fall when you're up there?

RAPUNZEL

All the time.

KLOO

(to MISTY)

I can show you.

WANDA

Leave her alone Claire.

RAPUNZEL

(to MISTY)

What she wants to show you has nothing to do with falling.

KLOO

Of, it has everything to do with falling -- it has nothing to do with the tightrope. Excuse me ladies, I'm going to freshen up.

BEAUTY

(writing)

A princess has no incentive to get along with others, because others usually admire the princess for either her status as a princess or her beauty or both.

KLOO

Excuse me.

BEAUTY

(writing)

Admiration, for qualities one has not worked to achieve, is worthless admiration, and does nothing for the self-esteem of a princess which is typically low.

KLOO

You have quite a thought process going on up there, don't you?

BEAUTY

Aw, aren't you sweet to say so.

KLOO

I didn't think pink collar workers were thinking such significant thoughts these days.

BEAUTY

Funny how the mind sneaks up on you and suddenly your thoughts are right out there in the open.

KLOO

As in "I'd really like to get to know you better spread-eagle on the ladies room sink"?

BEAUTY

It's just down there.

KLOO

Act natural and meet me there as fast as those boots can carry you.

(KLOO rushes off, BEAUTY serves.)

BEAUTY

Your friend asked me to keep her warm, I mean to keep her order warm in the kitchen until she gets out of the ladies room

(BEAUTY exits. PRINCE enters with SPOT who smells BEAUTY.)

SPOT

She's here! Or if she's not here, then she's been here. I can smell her. She's here!

PRINCE

Spot, calm down.

SMELL

You'll have to leave the dog outside pal. Health code regulations.

SPOT

But I smell her, I do. It's clear she's here. Get out your shoe! I smell her, I do!

PRINCE

You heard the man, Spot. Outside!

(PRINCE walks SPOT out and chains him there.)

RAPUNZEL

That's a Prince.

MISTY

How do you know?

RAPUNZEL

When he walked in the scent of the diner became the scent of a Prince. The light brightened, and I felt my "spirits" lift as if by angels toward heaven. My heart leapt and, responding with a great big, "hello Prince," from deep inside my hormonal landscape spoke my uterus. My genetic structure has been awakened if not actually altered by his presence here, and soon I might ovulate at the chance that some of his sperm might escape his scrotum and find its way into my wetting hole. That's how I know he's a Prince.

WANDA

That can happen to anyone.

RAPUNZEL

I've been looking for a Prince all my life.

WANDA

Eat your breakfast.

SPOT

I know she's here somewhere. I know she's here somewhere. I know she's here somewhere.

(SPOT, chained, goes round and round until dizzy and then passes out.)

PRINCE

Morning, ladies.

WANDA

Says who?

PRINCE

It is morning, and I say it. I'm a Prince, Prince Charming. Would any or all of you like to try on this glass slipper? I'm trying to find my true love who ran out on me.

WANDA

I wouldn't blame her.

PRINCE

She was wearing this slipper. Maybe one of you recognize it. Take a good look.

WANDA

A shoe with a heel like this can be an object of desire, a fetishist's fancy, or it can be a weapon, a stiletto dagger aimed straight for my heart. I've been warned about shoes like this.

MISTY

The excitement lies in deciding -- which kind of shoe would you want it to be?

PRINCE

The one who fits this mold is the one I want to have and hold for that happily ever after I seek? Any small feet?

RAPUNZEL

Go ahead. *

MISTY

I'll give it a try.

WANDA

*What if it's poisoned or someone's cast a spell on it?

RAPUNZEL

Do you have a little stocking she could use?

WANDA

Misty, the moment your foot slips into that slipper, you become the docile girl of his dreams, cancelling all your plans with your girlfriends, offering to cook and clean and humiliate yourself for him, even crave him, what then?

MISTY

Do you really think a shoe can do all that?

WANDA

It's possible.

RAPUNZEL

You're crazy, Wanda. Shoes don't change people.

MISTY

Maybe we should get to know each other first?

PRINCE

What do you want to know?

WANDA

It's a trap. Get to know him, put the shoe on, Poof! You're popping out offspring with bag balm on your tits.

MISTY

No thank you. Sometimes you just don't think things through Rapunzel.

PRINCE

Anyone else? Okay, but don't say I didn't ask.

(RAPUNZEL sighs. KLOO enters as SMELL brings out her food then turns to PRINCE.)

SMELL

Rough morning, buddy?

PRINCE

You could call it that.

RAPUNZEL

Sometimes a chance is worth taking.

KLOO

How would you know?

RAPUNZEL

I'm the one who walks the tightrope.

WANDA

So why didn't you try on that stupid shoe?

RAPUNZEL

There was no way I could get my foot in there, but Misty has small feet. Hers might have fit.

MISTY

But what if it was cursed?

KLOO

(to RAPUNZEL)

I don't see you taking any chances ever.

RAPUNZEL

I take chances all the time.

KLOO

Not with me you don't.

RAPUNZEL

I told you I'm not interested.

KLOO

Afraid you'll like it.

WANDA

I'm sitting right here Claire.

MISTY

Do you think I should have tried it on?

KLOO

You don't want to turn into a doormouse, do you?

MISTY

I guess not.

KLOO

Okay, let's go then.

(WANDA, KLOO, RAPUNZEL and
MISTY exit as BEAUTY returns exuberant.)

SMELL

Took you long enough.

(BEAUTY rushes toward exit and waves to
KLOO, combat booted foot in the air.)

BEAUTY

Bye!

(SPOT sees BEAUTY and pounces only to
be choked by the chain.)

SPOT

It's her! She's here! It's her! Beauty! Beauty! Beauty! Beauty! Beauty!

(SPOT collapses and pants.)

BEAUTY

Smell, I need the rest of the day off.

SMELL

Might as well never come in at all.

BEAUTY

Are you firing me?

SMELL

Merely making a suggestion.

BEAUTY

Because if you fire me, I won't hold it against you.

SMELL

Really? If I fire you and pay your unemployment, you promise you won't be mad at me?

BEAUTY

Not one bit.

SMELL

Keep dreaming, Daisy-face.

BEAUTY

I have to take the rest of the day Smell. Please? Let me go, come on.

SMELL

Petunia, life is so much sweeter when you're not here, I might celebrate your absence, but let you go? Never!

BEAUTY

But I really really have to go.

SMELL

Can you get those dishes over there?

BEAUTY

(making notes in her pad)

Gratification is always immediately granted to a young princess, so as she ages, her ability to postpone pleasure is severely limited. In fact, what can be easily postponed or worked for and enjoyed as a reward by others, like going to the circus or seeing one's lover, is something a princess believes she deserves, therefore delaying gratification becomes unbearable and could drive her insane.

(to SMELL)

You see those dishes over there? Get them yourself!

(BEAUTY starts to leave. SPOT rises and pounces on BEAUTY.)

SPOT

It's you. It's you. I know it's you. My Beauty Beauty Beauty Beauty Beauty!

(BEAUTY recognizes SPOT and enters diner. PRINCE rises to leave.)

PRINCE

Thanks for the cocoa. Hit the spot!

BEAUTY

Your dog is trying to molest me.

PRINCE

We were just leaving.

(PRINCE unchains SPOT.)

SMELL

Poor guy. Today is supposed to be his wedding day, but he lost his girl, and all he's got left is the slipper she wore. That's what I love about owning a diner. YOU think you got troubles til you meet someone else and hear what they got, and you count your lucky stars that you're not them. All the lost souls out there, coming in here and drinking my cocoa. Makes me feel all warm and gooey inside.

BEAUTY

He didn't ask me to try on his slipper.

SPOT

Can't go, can't go, she's there. She's right there!

PRINCE

Spot, that is a waitress in a pink waitressing uniform.

SPOT

But she's got the boots the boots the boots, that fell off the truck the truck the truck, pulling out with the dykes the dykes the dykes, the dykes in the circus, you see? It's her! It's Beauty!

BEAUTY

(to PRINCE)

Why didn't you ask me to try on your slipper?

PRINCE

I didn't think it was appropriate to ask, you working and all.

BEAUTY

Because a princess doesn't work, and a princess wears this slipper, right?

PRINCE

It's not that I don't think you could be a princess, it's just that --

BEAUTY

Because working on one's feet all day means wider feet, since standing for long periods of time causes feet to spread, so the chance that I'll fit into that slipper is small, right?

PRINCE

I'd be happy to let you try it on. I'm just having a bad day --

BEAUTY

Yeah, well I don't like to take these boots off anyway, even for a Prince.

(BEAUTY returns to the diner.)

SPOT

I hate you. I'm leaving.

PRINCE

I don't blame you Spot. I'd leave me too.

SPOT

That was really Beauty in there.

PRINCE

But Spot, I'm not looking for Beauty anymore. Remember?

SPOT

You want that princess with little feet. But that was still my Beauty.

PRINCE

If you say so.

(PRINCE exits. SPOT remains, waiting for BEAUTY.)

SPOT

(howls)
Beauty!

BEAUTY

Are you happy now Smell? I cleaned it all up for you.

SMELL

You want a medal or something? I told you a million times already, it's called a job.

BEAUTY

I want the keys to your car.

SMELL

You're outta your mind.

BEAUTY

My car won't make it all the way to Demensia, and I gotta go there or I'll burst!

SMELL

Gosh Beauty, I wouldn't want you to do any bursting. You wouldn't be around afterwards to clean it up. Besides, there's civil unrest in Demensia.

BEAUTY

So?

SMELL

I'm just saying, put my car in a lot, so it'll be safe, cause it's not like anyone will recognize you dressed like that, or care that you are driving my car, so don't expect any special treatment when you get there, unless you're going back to being the Princess you say you once were, not that you've changed much, and in either case, I don't care.

BEAUTY

The keys?

SMELL

Oh hell, you want me to drive you?

BEAUTY

Why yes, I think I do.

SCENE 2

(CINDERELLA speaks to her parole officer.)

CINDERELLA

...on top of the regular cooking and cleaning I do, while my stepmother does nothing and my stepBITCHES do -- excuse me? stepsisters, of course I said stepsisters (DO NOTHING!), sorry -- my catering company's getting more orders and I'm working like a dog to save enough money to get OUT OF HERE. I know I'm not allowed to leave Demensia until I finish my community service, AND until you sig off on my full rehabilitation, but it's been three months and I haven't held up the department store for fashion or money and I've kept my unbearable impulses in check. "I don't deserve what I can't earn. I don't deserve what I can't earn." (I don't DESERVE what I can't EARN.) I know now, thanks to you. There's nothing wrong with me. Even my probationer officer says how proud he is of me for learning so quickly, various sexual positions and -- excuse me? sexual? I didn't say anything like that. My probation officer? He's teaching me the basics of economics, you know, supply and demand. Can't you pretend that I come here? File whatever reports you have to file with the courts, and we'll split the money they pay you. Then at least I'll get something out of this. You said you'd help me. And we can both benefit since the sooner I move into my own place, the better I'll feel, and I won't have any more violent outbursts. If I make it worth your while...? But you will be helping me, since the only thing in my way is the money. Oh. Well fine then. BE ethical. Of course I understand. I'm fine. I said I'm FINE.

SCENE 3

(The Village Green. DISH face-timing on an iphone.)

DISH

No Scoop, she wants to hold a wedding for an imaginary daughter and we want to give the people the circus which is what they want. So what can you do?

DRAG

Excuse me, but my messenger has laryngitis, and I was wondering if you thing there might --

DISH

Just a minute Scoop.

DRAG

Is that -- does that -- can you hear Scoop Henderson on that thing?

DISH

Yes, it's Scoop, what do you want?

DRAG

If I could uh -- you know -- just for a minute -- in the spirit of bipartisanship...

DISH

Articulate much?

DRAG

Huh?

(DISH gives DRAG the iphone.)

DRAG

Scoop, hey there old buddy, I can see you! Can you see me? Cool. Hey Scoot, you know those aerial things that show the world what the ground looks like as if the person looking is way up somewhere in the clouds? They're not daguerrotypes, they are "photographs!" yeah, the photographs you got yesterday were beautiful but the Queen doesn't like to be followed by that flapping fly-swatting metal contraption.

DISH

The helicopter?

DRAG

She says it messes up her hair. Personally, I can't tell the difference, but if you could let us try one more time to get the people to listen to reason, before the media move in, we would really appreciate it. Thanks, Scoop*. Thanks little buddy.

(*QUEEN enters with SQUIRM, JANE and MAYOR PUCKERER. DISH resists killing DRAG.)

DRAG

That little thingamajig works so much better than relay runners.

QUEEN DEE

We didn't come out here to be insulted.

MAYOR PUCKERER

But you can't insist that people pay taxes to you when you don't do anything for them.

QUEEN DEE

We have parties! Even today we have a wedding planned for our daughter.

MAYOR PUCKERER

We all know how much you miss Beauty.

QUEEN DEE

We will not listen to people who have given up hope.

MAYOR PUCKERER

The people of Demensia have sacrificed time and money to search for her,

QUEEN DEE

We will not let our faith be sucked into the muck and mud of a pessimistic personality.

DISH

but there comes a time when --

QUEEN DEE

Our daughter does not disappear and our villagers pay their taxes out of a willing, smiling obedience to their sovereign.

DISH

But what do you offer the people of Demensia?

QUEEN DEE

We are their Queen, what more must we offer?

SQUIRM

Tell him how your Soldiers offer protection.

QUEEN DEE

We offer Soldiers.

DISH

It's peacetime.

DRAG

We could change that if we wanted.

MAYOR PUCKERER

Is that a threat?

DISH

We don't want looking and shooting the streets, soldiers in riot gear. The trashing of multinational corporations doesn't attract new investment.

QUEEN DEE

What is he talking about?

MAYOR PUCKERER

Why not let us have the circus tonight and you can have the wedding tomorrow?

QUEEN DEE

It's supposed to rain tomorrow.

MAYOR PUCKERER

I had no idea.

DISH

What about the next day?

QUEEN DEE

How stupid do you think we are?

SQUIRM

What we'd really like would be to put on the chain-ail and have a real rough and tumble knock down drag out swordfight with all the damsels watching in those tiny skirts with the pompoms they shake inside that big curved screen with those funny people inside.

DRAG

And those cop shows, real life mysteries and outer space drama!

(SQUIRM high fives DRAG and exits)

JANE

Does this mean they get to fight? In chain mail?

QUEEN DEE

Your circus people will have to wait until a victor is declared.

MAYOR PUCKERER

But we can't turn the circus away. We have a contract.

DISH

Be strong. Be tough. You can do it, big guy. She's a featherweight. It's all you man. It's all you.

MAYOR PUCKERER

And we have to let them perform here tonight,

DISH

or else --

MAYOR PUCKERER

Or else --

QUEEN DEE

Or else what?

JANE

You can see straight through to their nipples. Chain-mail casts a sexy shadow across their chests. And some of them are hairy, and some are rippling with muscles, and some have tattoos, scars, piercings, welts and war stories. Did you know that this village has its own Taxidermist?

MAYOR PUCKERER

Or else I'll call out my hunters, that's what!

SCENE 4

(A WANTED poster of BEAUTY hangs over SWILL's head as he tends bar.)

BEAUTY

... and he'll have a beer.

SWILL

Who's he?

BEAUTY

He was here a minute ago.

SWILL

You mean the big guy who looks like me?

BEAUTY

Now that you mention it...

SWILL

Musta hit the head. Do I know you from somewhere? Have you been in Demensia long?

BEAUTY

I grew up here. I thought it would be harder to come home, but we just hopping in the car -- of course i have seen my mother yet, that'll be the hard part, but it's suck a sweet little town.

(DRAG and PRINCE enter the bar
mid-swordfight. BEAUTY takes no notice.)

PRINCE

But I have to get across the Village Green. There's a girl over there who I heard has small feet!

DRAG

I have my orders pal.

BEAUTY

I could stick around and get my doctorate at the U.

PRINCE

I'm a Royalist, just like you.

DRAG

Prove it.

PRINCE

My sword. The townsfolk all have automatic weapons.

(SWILL gets down his weapon and cleans it.
BEAUTY doesn't notice.)

SWILL

I had a little gun for a while, but one day it walked. No good-bye, nothing. Now I figure the bigger the weapon, the better chance I got keeping track of it, y'know what I mean?

BEAUTY

Do you think I could knock back a few beers in here with my friends, celebrate the publication of my thesis, become a professor, wear that little hat with the tassel, even though I've never had friends, I don't drink beer and I don't have a high school diploma?

SWILL

What do you have?

BEAUTY

I have a crush on a woman. We had amazing sex this morning, but she's a circus performer doing a show tonight. She gave e a ticket. Do you think she'll remember me?

SWILL

You never know.

(GONERIA enters and goes to the pool
table.)

GONERIA

Hunters with guns, soldiers with swords. Here too? Can't you do anything about it?

SWILL

How 'bout a shot?

GONERIA

If you insist.

(SWILL pours her a shot and delivers it
across the swordfight.)

PRINCE

I met you at the Castle three months ago.

DRAG

I meet a lot of people.

PRINCE

It was the day Beauty disappeared.

DRAG

I remember you! You were the last one to see her. I have to kill you now.

(DRAG prepares to kill PRINCE.)

PRINCE

You can't kill me. I haven't found Love!

GONERIA

This is supposed to be my refuge, my home away from home, my peace and tranquility.

(GONERIA at the pool table shoots --
gunshot -- DRAG goes down.)

DRAG

Ah! Was I shot?

PRINCE

Does it hurt?

SWILL

Opph, that looks real bad. You'll get blood all over my floors.

DRAG

Blood?

(DRAG faints.)

PRINCE

Thanks pal. I owe you.

SWILL

Just get him outta here, will ya? Nice shot.

(PRINCE drags DRAG out of bar.
GONERIA shrugs and exits saying...)

GONERIA

It feels so good to connect.

BEAUTY

I can't stand this town and its provincial ways. I never wanted to come back here to stay. What was I thinking?

SWILL

Do you ever get the feeling it's gonna be one of those days?

SCENE 5

QUEEN DEE

Just put the tiara on your head and then turn towards us and say, hello mother.

JANE

It's only going to upset you again.

QUEEN DEE

If we are upset, then that is our problem. Tiara... good. Now turn and...

JANE

Hello Mother.

QUEEN DEE

Oh, it's no use! No use at all. You're nothing like her. There is no one in the world like out Beauty. We try to face it, but it's just too terrible. Do you think she's really gone? Do you think it's all our fault. We are her mother. The mother is always the one to blame. Like that Mother of those seven little boys who grew up to be so small. Drank and smoked all through her pregnancy. And the fertility drugs she too, like a dog dropping a litter. You can bet they blame her. And when they grew up, they never married, not a single dwarf. Everyone knows that it's their mother's fault. And this must be ours. Oh Beauty Beauty Beauty, why have you left us?

SCENE 6

(MADAME KLOO and WANDA in the MAYOR PUCKERER's office.)

KLOO

I'm sure he'll be here in a moment. Just relax.

WANDA

With all those soldiers fighting out there? And the villagers wearing those animal skins?

KLOO

We'll go home with a lot of money. I set it up in the contract.

WANDA

I want to put on a show tonight. I have something special planned.

KLOO

If they're in breach of contract, we don't lose a dime, we capitalize.

WANDA

I don't care about the money Claire. The show must go on.

KLOO

What do you mean something special? You're not thinking of -- you leave Clarisse out of this.

WANDA

What are you talking about?

KLOO

We're supposed to be a team. It's hard for me to keep replacing Clarisse.

WANDA

Maybe you'd rather replace me.

KLOO

Wanda, sweetie, that isn't true, I --

(MAYOR PUCKERER enters with DISH.)

KLOO

Mayor!* Breach of our contract!

WANDA

*Claire, we were talking about something important.

DISH

The Mayor is in meetings now. He cannot be disturbed.

KLOO

Subheader J in the F section*, of the thirteenth paragraph** of the statutory ex rosicrucian clause says you are in deep deep trouble. ***

DISH

*Did you hear what I said?

WANDA

**We drove all the way out here, in spite of the civil unrest.

MAYOR PUCKERER

***I know. I'm working on it. Dish, aren't I working on it.

WANDA

We need to put up the big top.

KLOO

If we're going to have a circus tonight.

(DISH and MAYOR PUCKERER press
KLOO and WANDA out of the office.)

MAYOR PUCKERER

Good*bye!

DISH

*Riddance!

MAYOR PUCKERER

What are we going to do Dish?

DISH

Do you really think Beauty's gone for good?

MAYOR PUCKERER

If you were Beauty, would you come back here?

DISH

In that case, I have an idea. It's devious, it's daring and it's delightful.

MAYOR PUCKERER

Debrief me!

DISH

Ok, but you have to be tough, ok? You have to be strong, ok? You have to be firm, ok?

MAYOR PUCKERER

You want me to act like a man?

SCENE 7

(Mayhem and swordfighting on the Village Green. Meanwhile at the Castle.)

QUEEN DEE

Mirror Mirror on the moat, if I jump in do you think I'll float? Will pirhanas tear me limb from limb or nibble me silly til I learn to swim? Now that Demensia has gone to war, my people might not love me as much as before. I cannot bear the thought of it, I cannot stand the din. I have to find my Beauty before the Villagers win!

(Mayhem and swordfighting continue.)

(Meanwhile in her trailer, on the outskirts of Demensia.)

RAPUNZEL

Mirror Mirror on the table, who's the flygirl fair and able? Will she keep her balance right? Who will help her float tonight? Where is the Prince I am waiting for? When will he knock on my trailer door? Why do I dream of being saved? I'll invent for myself the life I crave!

(Mayhem and swordfighting continue.)

(Meanwhile back in Demensia.)

BEAUTY

Mirror Mirror on the throne, why am I scared to go back home? Where is my oomph and my get up and go? Where is my daring and my nerve to say No? If I take this Once Upon a Time in hand, I'll tell my mother straight up what I think of all her plans!

(Mayhem and swordfighting continue.)

(Meanwhile back at Cinderella's.)

CINDERELLA

Mirror Mirror on the tiles of my shiny kitchen, who's that girl and why's she bitchin? No more judges, no more juries. I learned how to mask my furies. Why so angry? Why so mad? Everyone said I was terribly bad. That's bad with a knife -- I can slice! I can dice! I can wrap up canapes. I can make my own mayonaise. But I'm not soft, and I'm not stupid. I'm a caterer tight with Cupid. Bringing the food for love if you order, I got new meds for bipolar disorder. That's bad ass to you ya mothuh fuckuhs. Stop me before I sautee again, suckuhs! I got more style in my middle digit than both my stepbitches and don't you forget it.

SCENE 8

(GONERIA and SIS PHYLLIS practice knife-throwing. SWILL tends bar.)

SWILL

Don't you feel any desire to join the fighting?

GONERIA

My testosterone levels are just not that high.

SIS PHYLLIS

(throwing knife)

Weep, sister, weep!

SWILL

But don't you feel the urge to protect your Village?

GONERIA

From the Castle? Nah. Let them have us.

SWILL

What if they win?

SIS PHYLLIS

What difference does it make?

SWILL

Don't you know what it will mean?

GONERIA

We go to parties in the Castle. They all seem like nice folk to us.

SWILL

Maybe you should play pool and toss your knives in the Castle. Drink your beer in the Castle too.

SIS PHYLLIS

We can't go there every night.

SWILL

Why not? You come here every day.

GONERIA

We have to keep up appearances with them.

SIS PHYLLIS

Yea. You're just a bartender.

SWILL

Like that woman who was here a few months ago. I guess she was just a circus woman.

SIS PHYLLIS

What circus woman?

SWILL

When the Castle woke up and that girl was here with her braids cut off and that woman from the circus.

GONERIA

That woman was from the circus?

SIS PHYLLIS

The woman sticking up for that stupid girl with the braids sticking out like a bad castration?

GONERIA

She was from the circus?

SWILL

That she was*, so don't be thinking no one's worth your efforts to keep up appearance. Everyone is somebody.**

GONERIA

*Damn!

SIS PHYLLIS

** We shoulda shown her our act!

GONERIA

We've been dying to get into the circus! We were the first ones to buy tickets!

SWILL

Doesn't look like there's gonna be any circus tonight.

GONERIA

We were gonna help put up the big top.

SIS PHYLLIS

And dazzle them with our agility and speed.

GONERIA

We got our knife throwing act, and we also spit fire!

(SIS PHYLLIS throws her knife.)

SWILL

You girls are truly talented.

SIS PHYLLIS

Now we'll never get out of here.

GONERIA

There aren't that many princes to go around.

(PRINCE CHARMING enters as SIS
PHYLLIS slips her knife into her garter
belt.)

SIS PHYLLIS

And who would you be?

PRINCE

I'm Prince Charming. I'm in search of the princess whose foot fits this slipper.

SWILL

Betcha can't say that five times fast.

GONERIA

I can! Foot fits this slipper, foot fits this slipper, foot fits this slipper, foot --

(SIS PHYLLIS slaps GONERIA)

GONERIA

Hey! I almost did it!

SIS PHYLLIS

No one wants to marry a person who sounds like an idiot.

(to PRINCE)

Talk to me Why this slipper? Would any other slipper smell as sweet? Any other feet?

PRINCE

I've tried every female foot from Pew to Perjoria. I crossed the River Snicker where everyone laughed at me. I've been downhearted, disconcerted and deserted. Once I even slipped a prepubescent. It was a misunderstanding. I was briefly arrested. Of course I confessed. They took my horse to pay the lawyers. And then this morning my girlfriend's dog up and left me, so all I got left is my sword and my country.

GONERIA

It'll fit me. I'm sure of it.

SIS PHYLLIS

You will never get that on your fat foot.

GONERIA

I do not have fat feet.

(Slipper doesn't fit.)

SIS PHYLLIS

Now you do.

PRINCE

Don't feel badly. I've tried it on at least fourteen hundred women, and it hasn't fit one yet.

GONERIA

There are eight supermodels in the entire universe and fourteen hundred thousand million girls just like me, and I don't feel badly. Do you want to know WHY?

(GONERIA expresses her RAGE. And then...)

GONERIA

Because I can express myself. Here, Sis, see how you feel with our tits falling outta your shirt and your butt up in the air trying to press your fleshy foot into that contraption. See what that does for your self-esteem.

SIS PHYLLIS

I'm not worried. I know it will fit.

(SIS PHYLLIS slices off her toes with her knife. Blood oozes over the edges of the shoe as she tries to make it fit, but it doesn't. GONERIA picks up the hacked off section of her four toes.)

GONERIA

You've destroyed our whole act!
We can't play anymore! We can't play!
What kinda balance are you gonna have
without toes? You've sacrificed all we've
ever worked for, everything we liked to do,
for what? You did this for a shoe?*

PRINCE

Oh -- I -- oh no --

SWILL

You okay buddy?

PRINCE

I didn't think she would do that.

SIS PHYLLIS

*For the Prince.

PRINCE

Don't say that. Please.

SWILL

Hey buddy, have one on me.

(SWILL pours PRINCE a glass. PRINCE
drinks hiding his face in his hands as ...)

GONERIA

Even if the slipper fit, he woulda found some way to get out of it.

SIS PHYLLIS

Not if he gave me a try. I'm a nice person. I'm fun. I give great head.

GONERIA

Nobody marries a woman that good with a knife. It's intimidating.

SIS PHYLLIS

I just wanted to fit in!

GONERIA

Maybe they can sew these back on at the hospital.

SIS PHYLLIS

This little piggy had roast beef. This little piggy had none. And this little piggy cried --
(breaking into a wail)
Wee-wee-wee- all the way home!

(GONERIA and SIS PHYLLIS exit.)

SWILL

(to PRINCE)

They have a step-sister. Cinder-something. You might give her a try.

PRINCE

I'm through with this. I'm getting rid of this slipper once and for all.

SWILL

That's glass though, isn't it?

PRINCE

Yeah, why?

SWILL

Laws. Recycling.

(Fighting outside. SWILL gets down his high-powered automatic weapon.)

SWILL

Excuse me. I'm joining the home team.

(SWILL exits with weapon.)

SCENE 9

(The Castle. QUEEN and JANE with tiara as before. SPOT, tied up, is being interrogated.)

QUEEN DEE

Spot, you're a good dog, tell Mommy where Beauty is. Tell Mommy Spot or no more bones.

JANE

See the bone Spot? Go get it! Oh no, poor Spot is all tied up and can't reach the bone.

QUEEN DEE

Tell Mommy where Beauty is and Spot gets the bone.

JANE

Wanna bone Spot? Wanna bone?

(SPOT sense someone's presence.)

SPOT

Someone's coming!

(MAYOR enters. JANE, embarrassed in tiara, takes tiara off, curtsies to MAYOR and unties SPOT, but she tries to maintain control over SPOT with his leash.)

MAYOR PUCKERER

I am holding your daughter hostage.

QUEEN DEE and SPOT

BEAUTY?!!!

(JANE holds SPOT back so he can't attack the MAYOR.)

MAYOR PUCKERER

If you call off your Soldiers and let the Circus perform on the Village Green then she will be returned to you safe and sound.

QUEEN DEE

How could you have kept her from me all this time?

MAYOR PUCKERER

I just got her today.

QUEEN DEE

Where has she been?

MAYOR PUCKERER

I don't know.

QUEEN DEE

Didn't you ask? Was it Our fault? Did We do something to make her leave? What did We do?

MAYOR PUCKERER

I'll ask her. Will you call off your troups?

SPOT

Lemme out. Lemme outta here! I gotta find Beauty! I'll save her!

(JANE loses the leash and SPOT exits.
JANE follows.)

QUEEN DEE

Whatever transpired in the past few months including our current dispute, We will not be held responsible. Like the goddess Demeter letting the world freeze when her daughter was kidnapped, We are in pain, terrible psychic pain, and this war is only an outer manifestation of how We feel inside. Our emotions are in sinc with the world We live in because We rule that world. It's only natural that a sad bereft Queen begets a sad bereft world. How do We know you're really holding Our Beauty?

MAYOR PUCKERER

Sometimes you have to trust a person.

QUEEN DEE

You've tied our hands Mayor. You're such a big brute of a man. Why aren't you married yet?

MAYOR PUCKERER

I'm gay.

QUEEN DEE

But isn't that legal now?

II-9-93

MAYOR PUCKERER

Not in Demensia.

QUEEN DEE

We'll have to see about that.

SCENE 10

(PRINCE with his glass slipper enters the wood where CINDERELLA is meditating in a yoga position.)

PRINCE

Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow --

CINDERELLA

Come live with me and be my love...

PRINCE

Whoever you are, I'm not interested.

CINDERELLA

We will all the pleasures prove.

PRINCE

Don't press yourself against me.

CINDERELLA

Ouch -- what is that strange object you're pressing into my flesh?

PRINCE

Dreaded glass slipper. The girls I hope fit into it don't and the ones that try to, I hope won't.

CINDERELLA

So if I ask to try it on, you won't want me, and if I refuse to try it on, you'll want me, but we'll never know if it fits or not, because I'll have to be coy about it.

PRINCE

I've got issues.

CINDERELLA

Maybe you're not doing it right.

PRINCE

What's there to do? When the shoe fits, we're supposed to live happily ever after.

CINDERELLA

I think that's the storybook version. You're missing the real parts. Didn't you read the manual?

PRINCE

The what?

CINDERELLA

Inside, under the heel pad, there's a little manual.

(PRINCE searches and finds it.)

PRINCE

How to marry the girl of your dreams.
(beating himself with the shoe)
How could I be so stupid?

CINDERELLA

Give me that.

PRINCE

No! Stay back! I'm through with women. You don't know what I've suffered. You don't know the pain I've caused.

(CINDERELLA puts on the shoe. It fits!
PRINCE does flips in ecstasy.)

PRINCE

The shoe fits! It fits it fits it fits!

CINDERELLA

Just because a shoe fits doesn't mean I want to wear it. It's not comfortable or wearable for any length of time.

PRINCE

Is that why you had to leave the ball at midnight?

CINDERELLA

If my coach turns into a pumpkin, I have to walk home, and I can't walk in these shoes!

PRINCE

But we danced, you floated!

CINDERELLA

You floated. I just tried to keep up.

PRINCE

But don't you want me to desire you?

CINDERELLA

The desire to be desirable only lasts as long as my feet don't hurt.

PRINCE

So maybe you could love me, you just don't want to wear these shoes?

CINDERELLA

That gives rise to the age old question: will you still love me tomorrow? Tomorrow when I refuse to wear these shoes. When I discover blisters and bunions. Tomorrow when I'm pregnant and my feet are so swollen I can't wear any shoes at all. Tomorrow and Tomorrow and tomorrow when I creep in some petty pace on the last high heel of recorded time. Will you still love me on that tomorrow?

PRINCE

Yes.

CINDERELLA

And all your yesterdays?

PRINCE

I was but a fool hopping my way toward dusty death through the smog of LA the frog that I was cast no shadow upon the stage. A poor country bumpkin who will now be heard to roar: Yes, I will love you tomorrow!

CINDERELLA

And tomorrow?

PRINCE

And tomorrow.

CINDERELLA

I am not an idiot! Ah!

(CINDERELLA has a violent outburst.)

PRINCE

What's this sound? Why such fury?

CINDERELLA

You are a Prince and as such Charming, and you must signify something, but what? A dollar sign?

PRINCE

I thought I was supposed to save you from the humiliation of living with your stepmother and stepsisters.

CINDERELLA

How can I honor and cherish you for that?

PRINCE

Isn't that what you want?

CINDERELLA

But I deserve so much more.

PRINCE

What about Love? What about Desire?

(THEY kiss.)

CINDERELLA

I feel -- NOTHING!

SCENE 11

(Demensia, outside the bar.)

SMELL

Swill, hey Swill, it's me, Smell, your cousin, the diner guy! Can you point that gun at someone else for a minute? Or maybe you could just put the gun down? I'm on your side Swill. Remember how we used to steal those girlie magazines and jerk off together in your dad's garage? I'm still your best buddy okay? You wanna put that gun -- ok, it's not just a gun, I hear ya. It's a lean mean killing machine. That's cool man. I'd love to get a closer look, sure, but for now, why don't you just. YOU want me to what? I can repeat that. I believe it too. The people in the Castle suck. The Queen sucks. Ok, the Queen sucks like a thirsty whore. I'm not arguing with you man. Nobody can just appoint themselves in charge of stuff. Just like that. No election or nothing. It just ain't fair. I get it Swill. But this ain't necessarily the best way to -- if you come down we can brainstorm ok? I got some guns too. Not as nice as that one, but yeah, we can pool our resources. Now you're thinking. But the Queen agreed to get her people outta here, so the Circus can set up. The Circus! With clowns and dancing bears and trained tigers --

(WANDA enters with shopping bag from Winterson's, hands him a circus brochure)

WANDA

It's not that kind of circus.

(WANDA exits. SMELL looks at the brochure.)

SMELL

Oh, well they got sexy chicks in fishnet stockings, and check it out -- Swill, it's a lesbian circus. A lesbian circus! Yeah, it says it right here. LEZZ-B-N! You just leave the gun up there for now, and come down to see the show. That's it. Good.

(SMELL is relieved. BEAUTY enters.)

BEAUTY

Don't expect me to treat you like a hero.

SMELL

But I slayed the dragon. The Princess is my reward.

BEAUTY

Keep dreaming.

SMELL

Beauty, you gotta give a guy some credit.

BEAUTY

I don't owe you anything Smell.

(SPOT enters, lunges at and grabs hold of BEAUTY and maintains his hold.)

SPOT

Back! Back! She's mine. Back! Back!

(BEAUTY struggles to free herself from SPOT who tries to maintain his hold. This causes most of her uniform to be destroyed until she is left in some very sexy lingerie and combat boots.)

SPOT

O Beauty Beauty Beauty how I missed you
Beauty how I searched. O Beauty
how I worried when they took you
hostage! I searched and searched
to find you and save you to keep
you safe from harm. My Beauty!

BEAUTY

Spot, stop it. Leave it. Spot let me go!
You're ripping my uniform. You're tearing
my clothes. Bad dog. Let me go!
Smell, are you just going to stand there?
Here's another dragon -- you can slay him!
Smell! Help me!

(SPOT exhausts himself and passes out on
the ground.)

SMELL

Did you say something?

BEAUTY

I have no clothes on!

SMELL

I can see that.

BEAUTY

Do something!

(SMELL kisses BEAUTY as PRINCE enters. SPOT rises.)

PRINCE

Beauty, you're undressed!

SPOT

I toldja it was Beauty! Toldja, toldja, toldja!

(PRINCE covers BEAUTY with his cape.)

BEAUTY

Thank you. Down Spot!

SMELL

You know her pal?

BEAUTY

Of course he does. I was naked!

SMELL

Oh, I didn't realize that you two had...

BEAUTY

We didn't.

PRINCE

I wouldn't have interrupted but her foot wasn't up, so I thought --

SMELL

Her foot?

BEAUTY

I tried to lift it up, but these boots wouldn't let me! I think they're bewitched.

SMELL and PRINCE

Bewitched?

BEAUTY

Look! They're putting up the Big Top!

PRINCE

With elephants that balance on beach balls and prancing horses, juggling seals!

SMELL

It's not that kind of circus.

PRINCE

Oh.

SMELL

It's a lesbian circus.

PRINCE

Exactly where I belong. I will place my heart, still beating, under a crystal dome on a little pedestal under a spotlight, and I'll pray for it to finally cease.

SMELL

You wanna join the circus, eh? Become a fear? The last human male with a heart of gold? Soon, no one will ever believe you existed. You'll live in a cage, and when they draw back your curtains, your heart will glow while you strut and fret and bleat and crow.

(PRINCE is given a guitar.)

PRINCE

I searched in my youth for Beauty
I searched my adulthood for Love
And now I am caged empty-handed
Attempting to believe there's a heaven above
I found Beauty but she was not into me
I found Love she was cold to the touch
What can I seek to keep my heart from weeping
Without turning hard or or tough or unfeeling?
Should I try to find someone with money?
Should I try to find someone with fame?
All I ever dreamed of when I was a boy
Was a girl who liked saying my name.

SCENE 12

(Circus music. Lights up on WANDA as the MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES.)

WANDA

Ladies and Gentlemen, the tantalizing spectacle that you are about to see has in fact never been performed. So dangerous is this amazing feat of agility and daring, we bring it directly to you cold. And cold is the term we circus folk like to use when we mean never before tried, never before attempted, un-re-hearsed. And when you think about words like un-re-hearsed, think about the word for that long black car that takes our loved ones to their final resting places. I certainly hope that is one word we will not need this evening, but it is something to consider, because this act is not under-rehearsed -- it has never been rehearsed at all. I ask you once again to welcome our lovely ladies of the high wire, the stars of The Significant Circus, the only traveling tent with a social message. Please give a warm round of applause to the marvelous Madame Kloo and Clarisse!

(KLOO and RAPUNZEL play to the audience 100 feet below from their safety boxes on the floor of the stage.)

MADAME KLOO

Friggin' ants. Sticky mouths and sticky fingers, oooh, we're gonna give it to them now.

CLARISSE

Do you have any idea what we're going to do?

MADAME KLOO

What do you mean, what we're going to do? It's your turn, "dahlink."

RAPUNZEL

My turn? How can it be my turn?

MADAME KLOO

Wanda was Clarisse last night, and I did the big finale. Tonight you're Clarisse, so it's your turn.

RAPUNZEL

No. That just means that the next time you work with Wanda, it's her turn. Last time we did this, I made it up.

MADAME KLOO

The last time you and I did this, there was no finale. The last time you and I did this --

RAPUNZEL

I told you I didn't want to talk about that. It took me three weeks to get my ankle back.

MADAME KLOO

If you're just let me show you. There's a way to fall without falling.

RAPUNZEL

Maybe I want to fall. Ever think that? Maybe it was the best ending we ever had. You think those people outside Albuquerque have forgotten my fall?

MADAME KLOO

Not yours. Clarisse's. They don't know you. I know you, and I know that you hate to fall. You can't even look down.

(Drum roll. THEY strike poses.)

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

The Amazing Madame Kloo!

RAPUNZEL

She wants us to start.

MADAME KLOO

Any ideas?

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

Ladies and Gentlemen, please give our star performers your complete attention. The sound of a pin dropping could break their intense concentration, shattering not only this remarkable moment, but their bones. Perhaps, their lives!

(Drum roll. RAPUNZEL stretches up on her toes.)

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

Aha! Clarisse is sending us a signal.

RAPUNZEL

Oh Goddess, what now?

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

A real treat, even more dangerous than first imagined, because Clarisse will wear high heels!

RAPUNZEL

What?

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

Please welcome our prop mistress Misty, who will climb all the way to the top of the tent to deliver this treacherous footwear.

MADAME KLOO

You are in for it now. Misty's on her way up.

RAPUNZEL

I'm going to throw them at you.

MADAME KLOO

Ooooh, kinky!

RAPUNZEL

Don't start with me.

MADAME KLOO

I wish you'd start with me.

RAPUNZEL

This is Wanda's idea of a joke?

MADAME KLOO

She's perfectly serious. She wants you to fall. She wants you completely out of commission.

RAPUNZEL

Oh come on.

MADAME KLOO

She sees you as her biggest competitor, and she's right.

RAPUNZEL

I don't compete with Wanda for anything.

MADAME KLOO

I wish you would.

RAPUNZEL

You told her?

MADAME KLOO

We share our fantasies. She is my lover.

RAPUNZEL

She'll keep us hostage up here all night if she wants to. Are the high heels part of your fantasy or did she make them up herself?

MADAME KLOO

It's your turn to come up with the big finale. I have nothing to do with it.

RAPUNZEL

Where's Misty?

MADAME KLOO

About half way. Whatever you suggest, I'll agree to.

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

The Marvelous Madame Kloo!

(MADAME KLOO poses dramatically.)

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

Misty is bringing Clarisse a pair of special spike heels from Winterson's Women's Shoes at the corners of Main and Vine. Visit Winterson's Women's Shoes for your footwear needs. Clarisse was unable to try them on in the store today. Gee, I hope they fit!

(RAPUNZEL takes the shoes from MISTY.)

RAPUNZEL

Thanks Misty. If I fall this is murder. The whole thing was Wanda's idea. If I die, my last words were prosecute. You got that?

(to MADAME KLOO)

I think she's crying. Do you hear her? Like a puppy. She whimpers.

MADAME KLOO

That's my heart. Pining for you.

RAPUNZEL

I don't think so. She's shaking my box.

MADAME KLOO

The way you shake mine -- God, I'm so literal. I've got to start thinking outside the box.

RAPUNZEL

Goddammit! They're tied together with plastic.

(RAPUNZEL tries to break the plastic holding the heels together.)

MADAME KLOO

That had nothing to do with the fantasy, I promise. Oooh, you're so butch!

RAPUNZEL

(giving up on barehandedly ripping them apart)
You know I'm not into that role-playing crap.

MADAME KLOO

Bring them over. I'll help you.

(Drum roll for RAPUNZEL's impending cross.)

MADAME KLOO

All I really want is for you and me to be together. Maybe that makes me too easy, not enough of a challenge for you, but I've watched you since you got into this racket, and you're the only person I've ever genuinely admired. I respect you Martha. I really do. You stand up for yourself. You don't sleep around. And you've got great style.

(RAPUNZEL completes her cross. TADA!)

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

The lovely Clarisse!

MADAME KLOO

All right, try to stand as close as you can.

RAPUNZEL

If I get any closer, I'll stretch out your leotard. What are you doing?

MADAME KLOO

You want me to break the plastic, right? You probably don't know that I have a lot of good qualities. One thing you might admire in me is I'm always prepared.

(MADAME KLOO slices through the plastic with a knife.)

RAPUNZEL

You keep a knife in your cleavage?

MADAME KLOO

Let's pretend that I can strong-arm the shoes. I need more space.

(RAPUNZEL begins a backward cross so MADAME KLOO can pretend to separate the shoes for the audience. TADA!)

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

The Incredible Madame Kloo!

(MADAME KLOO bows, etc., and hands the shoes to RAPUNZEL who puts them on.)

MADAME KLOO

When I think about you, I start to feel as if I'm falling.

(RAPUNZEL makes the pose to cross. Drum roll. RAPUNZEL begins her cross wearing the heels.)

MADAME KLOO

Falling is a feeling I love. It's what got me started in this business. I used to climb anything I could, just to throw myself down to feel the fall.

(RAPUNZEL turns to face MADAME KLOO, continuing backwards.)

RAPUNZEL

You're a masochist.

MADAME KLOO

No, I'm not. By the time I was nine I had broken every limb at least once. I didn't like that part, the splat part, the pain. I only like the falling. That's why I perfected the way to fall without falling.

RAPUNZEL

You're in love with a feeling.

(RAPUNZEL does a full turn, continuing backwards)

RAPUNZEL

It has nothing to do with me.

(RAPUNZEL completes her cross, TADA!)

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

The Inimitable Clarisse!

MADAME KLOO

Give me a chance. I can show you.

RAPUNZEL

You're wrong about me.

(Drum roll.)

RAPUNZEL

I like you. I admire you.

(Drum roll.)

RAPUNZEL (cont'd)

But I don't feel that way about you. You have to get over it. You wanna do this?

MADAME KLOO

What are we doing?

RAPUNZEL

Just move towards me for now. I'll figure it out when we get there.

MADAME KLOO

I've been moving towards you all my life.

(THEY strike their poses. Drum roll. The cross begins.)

RAPUNZEL

Waver.

MADAME KLOO

Waver.

(THEY waver simultaneously.)

RAPUNZEL

Half turn, back three.

MADAME KLOO

Half turn, back three.

(after completing the movement)

There's not much father to go.

RAPUNZEL

Don't pressure me. Forward two, lunge and arch.

MADAME KLOO

Forward two, lunge and arch.

RAPUNZEL

I'm going to prove to you there's nothing here.

MADAME KLOO

(arching toward RAPUNZEL)

Nothing where?

RAPUNZEL

And up, half turn, sonata steps to center.

MADAME KLOO

And up, half turn, sonata steps to center.

RAPUNZEL

Between us. Nothing between us.

(face to face, center)

Mirror.

MADAME KLOO

Mirror.

(THEY mirror each other. RAPUNZEL
leads imperceptibly.)

RAPUNZEL

I'm going to kiss you.

MADAME KLOO

What?

RAPUNZEL

Now.

MADAME KLOO

Here?

RAPUNZEL

Yes.

MADAME KLOO

That's your finale?

RAPUNZEL

Our finale. There is nothing between us. One kiss and you'll know it.

MADAME KLOO

A real kiss?

RAPUNZEL

My lips on your lips, my tongue in your mouth, my hands pull you towards me, your breasts to my breasts, my real breasts,

(removing her falsies and tossing them off)

pelvis to thigh, thigh to pelvis, my hand at your neck, your tongue in my mouth, three count to break away, moving back two and up, arch, then forward sonata steps to the end.

MADAME KLOO

You want me to repeat all that?

RAPUNZEL

Just follow me. And...

(THEY do this. They may move off the tightrope completely dancing together in space for the moment.)

RAPUNZEL

I'm falling Claire. I'm falling easy. I'm falling soft. I was wrong. I know what you mean now. This fall without falling. I love you Claire.

(Back on the rope, they complete the movement from the half turn)

RAPUNZEL

But here we are still on the tightrope. Is it possible? No, please don't turn away.

MADAME KLOO

Half turn, arch, then forward sonata steps to the end. That's what you said, right?

RAPUNZEL

(breaking the pattern)

I said a lot of things. I said I'd never love you.

MADAME KLOO

You love me?

RAPUNZEL

I said I didn't like to fall, but this, this is different. Yes, I love you. I --

(MADAME KLOO reaches safety and takes her bows. TADA!)

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

The Astonishing Madame Kloo!

MADAME KLOO

You broke the pattern. Clarisse.

RAPUNZEL

But we -- but what about what we just did? We were airborne. It was beautiful.

MADAME KLOO

Yes. Clarisse and Madame Kloo. Not you. Not me. A grande finale, but you've got to end it.

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

The Fabulous Madame Kloo!

MADAME KLOO

You're being ridiculous. Go back to the safety box.

RAPUNZEL

There is no safety box. Not for me. And that's just fine, cause I don't need to feel safe anymore.

(lunges toward KLOO)

Talk to me.

(RAPUNZEL moves wildly.)

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

The Stupendous Madame Kloo!

MADAME KLOO

You were right. I am in love with the feeling. And I didn't have the feeling. When you kissed me it felt like the end, the splat, the breaking of my bones. The fall was in the distance between us. It wasn't there when you got so close. I didn't expect it to happen this way, but we are performing. I'm sorry.

RAPUNZEL

Now it's my turn to break.

(RAPUNZEL looks down.)

MADAME KLOO

Don't do that. You'll fall. That's not the message we want to send the audience.

RAPUNZEL

I don't care about the message. I am saying good-bye to my heart. It fell right through the net. Smashed into a thousand fragments, splintered like candy apple shards among the sawdust and peanut shells. I'm not going to worry about falling anymore. And I'm not going to give Wanda what she wants.

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

The Fantabulastic Madame Kloo!

MADAME KLOO

All Wanda wants right now is for you to finish the act!

RAPUNZEL

That's what I mean. It's my finale, and I can do whatever I want. I've already fallen. My fears, my heart, my vanity, pride -- all gone. The only thing left now is nothing to lose.

MADAME KLOO

You wouldn't.

RAPUNZEL

I'm going to keep my balance for as long as I can.

(RAPUNZEL maintains her balance completing a series of elegant moves with great confidence. If she was shaky before, she is now graceful and assured. She moves on the tightrope as if she has no fear of anything.)

QUEEN DEE

Enough! As Queen of the Castle and Sovereign of the Village, the Circus is now over. Thank you. Go home. Get it all packed up -- chop chop! -- and on to the wedding! Mayor? Mayor Puckerer, where is Our daughter?

MAYOR PUCKERER

She's on her way, Madam.

QUEEN DEE

On her way? With whom? By what conveyance? Where is My Beauty?!

MAYOR PUCKERER

Dish...? Dish!

QUEEN DEE

Beauty! Beauty! I know you've got her,
and we made a deal.

DISH

Coming!

(BEAUTY enters.)

QUEEN DEE

Beauty!

BEAUTY

Mama, stop it!

QUEEN DEE

We were so worried. Did they feed you, slake your thirst, let you rest and wake you gently?

BEAUTY

Mama, I lived like everyone else does. I got a job.

SMELL

I hired her, Your Majesty. She was a waitress at my diner.

QUEEN DEE

Villainy!

BEAUTY

I signed the lease for a fifth-floor walk-up in a run-down part of a far-away town, and I paid rent.

SMELL

For three months in a row. I can vouch for it.

QUEEN DEE

Treachery!

BEAUTY

I bought a broken-down rust-bucket of a car. I changed the oil with my own hands.

SMELL

I taught her how to do that!

QUEEN DEE

Sodomy!

BEAUTY

I cleaned my own bathtub! I scrubbed my own oven! I invested in roach motels and watched as they checked in and out. I slept on the floor on a mattress I found on the street. I used milk crates for tables. I lit bare bulbs for lamps. I ate mac and cheese from a mix in a box for breakfast and cereal with milk for dinner. I struggled Mother, and I liked it!

SMELL

She didn't struggle that hard, Your Majesty.

BEAUTY

I struggled, Smell, and you know it.

QUEEN DEE

Everything I worked for, everything I tried to give you, destroyed!

BEAUTY

Mother, please try to understand.

(QUEEN DEE has a conversation
with HER INNER MOTHER.)

QUEEN DEE

You screwed up royally!

HERSELF

Please, try to understand.

QUEEN DEE

She ran away and left us here to rot!

HERSELF

She's rejected her princess-itivity!

QUEEN DEE

She did what? How could she?

HERSELF

She rejected you!

QUEEN DEE

But why? Should We take this Personally?

HERSELF

Ask her.

QUEEN DEE

Is it true? In the entire three months you were gone, did you ever faint or get hysterical? What about unexplainable illness or malaise? Did you whine? Did you whinge? Did you ever consider even one of the fears I tried to instill in you?

BEAUTY

What fears?

QUEEN DEE

Bright Lights, Total Darkness, Bugs, Grease, Fat and Fried Foods, and the Fear of being Poorly Served!

SMELL

You had a fear of that?

QUEEN DEE

Oh it's no use. You're hardly the princess We raised.

BEAUTY

I wish I could agree with you Mother, but I still make demands. I have high expectations and even higher standards and a staggering weakness for extravagant lingerie.

QUEEN DEE

We'd like to believe you, but what about those boots?

BEAUTY

Spot brought them to help me disguise myself. He said he got them off a truck.

QUEEN DEE

Boots off a truck? Our daughter wearing... ? If you want Us to believe that you really and truly are Beauty, Our daughter, then off with those boots!

BEAUTY

But is that really necessary? They don't really come...

(As EVERYONE helps BEAUTY remove the boots, there is a magical sound.)

BEAUTY

...Off! What was that sound?

QUEEN DEE

Thank Goodness, you are still my Beauty!

(BEAUTY and QUEEN hug. SMELL grabs the boots and tosses them to SPOT as WANDA enters.)

SPOT

The boots, the boots, that fell off the truck, the truck!

(WANDA sees the boots and starts to put them back on.)

SMELL

I watched over her, I did. I mean I know how independent she is, and I wouldn't want to get in her way, but there's a special place in my... , I mean when I think about Beauty, I get all..., what I mean to say is... the way I feel about Beauty... that's the sort of thing people write songs about and poetry and airplane pilots go up in the air and write stuff in the sky, cause it's.... you know what I'm saying, ok? It's big.

QUEEN DEE

Isn't he the fellow we threw into the dungeon?

BEAUTY

That's his cousin, Swill. Smell saved lives. He's a hero. You should knight him.

(to SMELL)

I feel so different in my bare feet, I just want to run my hands all over you!

QUEEN DEE

Will the two of you live happily ever after in the bliss of holy matrimony?

BEAUTY

You mean get married? No.

SMELL

Maybe we could live together for a while. See how it goes.

QUEEN DEE

But I have the Mayor to make it official, a catered sit-down dinner with a forty piece orchestra, and a Demented ice cream sculpture that will only melt once!

BEAUTY

Falling is fine when you feel very small
cause the smaller you feel then the less far you fall,
but now that I fell -- and I'm glad I know Smell --
I want to be tall in a new way, that's all.
I want a degree from the university.
I want a degree that's all mine.
And if this is love, then we'll know soon enough,
but some lust, get my thrust, is just fine.

(Magical sound as WANDA's boots are now on. KLOO enters.)

KLOO

Wanda, Sweetie, give me those boots.

SPOT

The boots, the boots, the boots, that fell off the truck, the truck, the truck!

KLOO

Wanda, take them off.

WANDA

But you gave me these boots, and I was thoughtless and scattered and I lost them and our whole relationship got shot to hell. And I miss you, I miss our love, and I want to say vows. I want to give you a til-death-do-us-part tongue down your throat in front of all these people and mean it forever.

KLOO

I know you don't mean that. You don't love me.

WANDA

Yes, Claire, I do.

KLOO

You're only saying that cause you're wearing those boots.

(KLOO struggle to remove the boots.)

SPOT

...the boots, the boots...

KLOO

I gave you these boots outside that little house where those seven little men lived, the night you almost choked to death on that poisoned apple. I gave you these boots so we'd live happily ever after, and we did, for a time, but when you took the off, what did we have? Arguments, jealousy, fighting like cats and cats.

(The boots come off -- magic sound.)

WANDA

I knew they were enchanted cause whenever I took them off I heard that sound. And I did take them off occasionally.

(SPOT falls on the boots in a merciless attack from which he soon passes out.)

KLOO

You knew I put a spell on you?

WANDA

I wanted to be under your spell. I still do. But then you wanted everyone under your spell, and there wasn't room for me anymore.

KLOO

I want you to want me for real.

WANDA

You can't have it both ways. Love is handed out in the quantity you deserve and right now you haven't earned much love from me.

KLOO

See, I knew you didn't love me.

WANDA

You chase women and capture them right in front of me. And it hurts. So if you want all the love I have for you, stop running around trying to prove how lovable you are, cause the only person who can do that is the person trying to love you, and in case you hadn't noticed, that would be me.

KLOO

I'm sorry.

(KLOO and WANDA share a BIG KISS and both lift a foot into the air.)

QUEEN DEE

It's -- that's -- oh look everyone, they're !!! --

(CINDERELLA enters in an apron.)

CINDERELLA

I have slaved over a hot stove all day long cooking for you people, and nobody cares.

SPOT

I care. I care.

(PRINCE enters.)

PRINCE

That was such a great circus. I was hoping you would sign my program.

KLOO

Sure. Who should I make it out to?

PRINCE

To me, Prince Charming.

CINDERELLA

Sure, no problem. I can wait. I'm just the caterer. I see it all so clearly now. I am here to satisfy everyone else's needs, and my own? Stuffed down the garbage disposal with the melon rinds and the fattier parts of the prosciutto. I don't have to take this. I deserve to indulge myself. I deserve to make my demands heard. And I deserve to eat real food. Dinner is served!

(CINDERELLA exits.)

PRINCE

Have you seen that girl from the tightrope?

KLOO

I was on the tightrope.

PRINCE

No, the other one, the one who wore those shoes.

WANDA

She's gone. Ran off. Wouldn't even stick around for her pay.

PRINCE

I've got to find her. Which way did she go? Did she leave alone? Do you think she'd be interested in a Prince like me?

KLOO

You know -- now that you mention it --

PRINCE

I used to go around looking for a girl to fit a certain mold. An idea I got stuck to, like a song in my head, and now I think I'm ready to branch out, meet different people, circus performers, women with lives of their own, and she seems so together.

WANDA

She's probably on her way to that lily pond at the edge of the Green, but you can beat her to it traveling on human legs.

KLOO

Wanda, you turned her into a frog!

WANDA

I had to do something!

(Lights up on RAPUNZEL, now a frog.)

RAPUNZEL

Rabbit, are you my Prince?
Rabbit, where have you been?
I don't like waiting, and I don't like to swim.

PRINCE

I used to be a frog. I know just how it feels. A cold-blooded creature at the mercy of the weather with a craving for a blue-bottled fly.

RAPUNZEL

If you are my Prince, then why don't you say?

PRINCE

I used to believe our eyes would lock, our lips would meet, the time would tock, and we would find our sea-feet, set off and sail away, but I think love takes a tadpole longer these days. Sometimes a Prince doesn't know what he wants til he misses it, so how can I know what I want unless I get to kiss it?

RAPUNZEL

Don't do me any favors. Don't kiss me if it's only to savor the sea water on my lips. Don't bother giving me hot stock tips. I am not afraid to fall anymore and I won't be upset if you adore me, but I want you to be sure before you kiss me.

PRINCE

With an attitude like that, you'll be a frog for a day and a decade.

RAPUNZEL

I'll take my chances. A Prince is a matter of opinion.

PRINCE

A frog is a frog.

RAPUNZEL

I'm not waiting for you to save me.
If it takes ten years, a frog I may be,
but I'll be a busy frog, a happy frog,
a frog with needs and worries,
but I won't settle for the first Prince I meet,
and I won't be transformed by the first lips I greet,
and I may not be ready to leave my lily pad
until I am sure that you'll be true,
so I want you to be sure too.

(PRINCE kisses RAPUNZEL.)

PRINCE

You can't expect a Prince to make up his mind blind.

RAPUNZEL

Kiss me again -- I still feel a bit amphibious.

(PRINCE and RAPUNZEL kiss again. This
time RAPUNZEL lifts her foot.)

QUEEN DEE

Oh I just love to see clitoral erections!
Even if times change, and we have to hold elections,
and love doesn't always lead to weddings and fuss,
another happily ever after is happening to Us!

END OF PLAY