

Fairy Tales

A true family musical filled with all your favourite characters

A musical play by Cenarth Fox
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Fairy Tales in Traralgon – Grey Street PS

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Orchestrations and CD

Fairy Tales is scored for piano [this book], guitar, bass, percussion, drum-kit, flutes, clarinets, strings, trumpets and trombones. The orchestrations are available for hire. There's a digital CD with a rehearse and perform version of all the songs. The perform version contains full orchestration and is ideal for choreographers, advanced rehearsals and, of course, all your performances.

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Reviews

Some reviews of this popular musical staged by adults, primary, middle and secondary schools and youth theatre in the USA, UK, Australia and New Zealand

Fairy Tales is a delightful musical. **Moonee Ponds Central School**

Proud, proud and extremely proud are the feelings I have following the performances of *Fairy Tales* last weekend. The show entertained two very large audiences. All our students – actors, chorus, backstage, lights, sound and ushers – performed at their top and I'm sure my pride is shared in the community.

Quairading District High School

We really enjoyed performing *Fairy Tales*. It came out very well with most people pleasantly surprised at how much fun and how interesting it was. Thanks again for all your help and support. **Derby Stock Theatre Company Vermont USA**

I was so very impressed with our production of *Lollies* last year and thought no school production could be better. How wrong I was! *Fairy Tales* this year was superb. It was a great pleasure to have the writer and composer of *Fairy Tales* and *Lollies*, Mr Cen Fox, in the audience for the final performance.

David Jenkins, Principal, Traralgon Primary School

We had a wonderful time exploring your script and many of the audience enjoyed the humour. The girls appreciated the story and sang the songs with gusto. We had the Preps [aged 4] as Dwarfs and the Year 1 girls as a variety of forest folk. Our senior students had the speaking and solo roles. The script was great and we all enjoyed working with it. Thank you for your shows.

Seymour College, Adelaide

Fairy Tales was a huge success with both evening performances being sold out. Extra performances were scheduled to enable everyone to see the show. It was a great experience and a lot of fun for all involved.

Traralgon Express

Fairy Tales was very successful. **McLaren Flat PS**

Fairy Tales is a great show. We loved the music and we had a great time doing it. **Matthew Players, Baltimore MD**

It was a great performance. Thank you so much for a great script for the kids who had so much fun doing the show. We had close to 50 in the cast.

River City Players, Ohio

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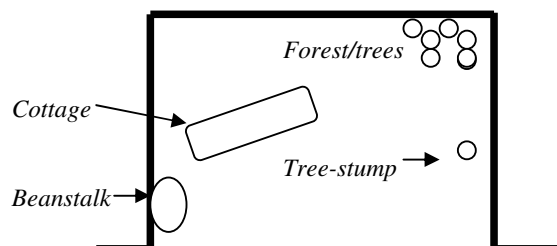
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Synopsis

Welcome to the annual convention of the F.T.A. – the Fairy Tales Association. Every year in some fairy tale location, the fairy tale characters meet to discuss their lives and tales. It's just like any other type of convention. There are workshops and plenary sessions and the odd social get-together. But this year, things start to get a little out of hand. Mind you, everyone's there. It's a who's who from the world of mystery, magic and myth. There's even a weird witch and rumblings above from the giant of all ogres. Now the best way for you to get all the goss from the world of fairy tales is to actually attend the convention. So just go through the woods, past the castle and head for the cottage by the beanstalk. Look, you can't miss it. It's right in front of you! Have fun! Oh and by the way, make sure you live happily ever after.

Set

A pretty cottage is the main feature. It has ground and first floor windows through which different characters appear. The cottage becomes the home of different characters e.g. Cinderella's stepmother's house, the Witch's cottage in Hansel and Gretel, Grandma's house in Red Riding Hood, etc. Pretty plants are beside and/or on the cottage. Maybe there's a chair on the front verandah or a seat in the garden. There's a tree-stump to one side. There should be different levels so that the set can be fully dressed on varying heights. Safe of course. To one side and upstage is a forest [through which some characters enter and exit] and on the other side is the base of the beanstalk to be climbed by Jack. Hidden rungs enable characters to appear to climb the beanstalk before disappearing behind it and thus into the wings. In the background is a pretty fairy tale rural scene. The set should be as pretty and as realistic as possible. The cottage needs to be as solid as possible and is in constant use. Further set ideas are in the free *Production Notes*. Here is a basic sketch of how your set might look.



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Characters

CINDERELLA [C'RELLA] - modern, with-it, trendy, hip, cool, sociable
RED RIDING HOOD [RRH] – full of ideas, bright spark, a thinker, outspoken
WOLF - softie, comic, practical joker, friendly
SNOW WHITE – perfectionist, strong personality, organiser, a leader
PRINCE - good-looking, vain, thick, easily-tricked
BEAUTY – prim 'm proper, very polite, much attention to manners
BEAST - sincere, sensitive, all round nice guy
HANSEL – protester, greenie, change the world type
GRETTEL – tom-boy, bubbling, energetic, full of beans, take on anything
JACK - immature, friendly, likeable, uneducated
WITCH – very important role of many moods, characters and voices

There are any number of minor characters - all optional. They form the chorus. You may have as many as can be accommodated. For example.

Ugly Stepmother, Ugly Stepsisters, Grannie, Woodsman, Seven Dwarfs, Wicked Queen, Mother, Giant, King, Queen, Father, Stepmother, Jack's cow

Musical Numbers

1.	Overture	Orchestra
2.	Fairy Tale	Company
3.	Fairy Tale Reprise	Company
4.	Dance The Night Away	Cinderella & Company
5.	The Kiss	Snow White & Company
6.	Recognition	Jack
7.	A Pretty Face	Prince & Company
8.	Mister Grimm	Hansel & Gretel
9.	A Sheep In Wolf's Clothing	Wolf & Beast
10.	Progress-Tradition	RRH & Beauty
11.	The Grass Is Greener	Company
12.	The Grass Is Greener Reprise	Company
13.	Entr'acte	Orchestra
14.	Be Content	Prince & Company
15.	Scary Music	Orchestra
16.	Hurry Music	Orchestra
17.	Fall In Love	Witch & Company
18.	Happily Ever After	Company
19.	Curtain Calls	Company
20.	Playout	Orchestra

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No. 1 Overture

[Curtain is down and lights black. Overture begins. Suddenly at about bar 37 a wicked laugh is heard. WITCH appears. Where is she? A spot picks her out. It's dim. Who is she? What is she? WITCH could enter in front of the curtain and move centre. She could enter via theatre but beware of frightening patrons. Adults in particular scare very easily. The witch laughs her wicked laugh and makes her way centre-stage. She is stooped and wearing loose black garments. Her pointy hat and lank, dank hair add to her scary demeanor. She faces the audience. All is dark except for her one light. She appears to be casting a spell. Suddenly she pulls back part of one of her garments to reveal a small tray. This is on a strap around her neck. WITCH stands tall and uses a completely unexpected voice. "Drinks, lollies, ice-cream." She wanders off calling as she goes. "Drinks, lollies, ice-creams." Kill Witch's light and wait till the Overture finishes.

It does. Brief pause. As one, the curtain rises and the introduction to the opening song begins]

No. 2 Fairy Tale

[Introduction]

[Some/most of the company are spread about the set. It's bright and sunny in the beautiful outdoor setting. The annual Fairy Tale Convention has begun. We see several delegates who are there early. They chat amongst themselves. "Good to see you again ... How are you? ... Darling, you look wonderful!" etc. Almost immediately, SNOW WHITE enters in a flap. She is on the committee organising this year's convention and has a million things to do. She slows about centre and calls to anyone and everyone]

SNOW WHITE Group photo, everyone! By the cottage!! *[She dashes off still calling]* Tell the others! *[Exits in flap].*

[Those on stage now move to their place for group photo. A couple could move to the sides and beckon to others not seen. Others then enter and move to their position. This moving to position all takes place during the introductory music. Build it sensibly and well. During their moving and once in position, delegates could turn to their neighbour/s and chat. They may shake hands, hug, even wave to someone in another position. One character could see a friend in the upstairs window of the cottage and wave. They could tell a friend who also waves. One character could be in the wrong place and be re-directed by another. SNOW WHITE re-enters, still in a rush]

SNOW WHITE Anyone seen my dwarfs? *[If dwarfs not used, substitute "Prince". There is no reaction so SNOW WHITE continues to exit but bumps into dwarfs – or PRINCE – who are entering]* There you are! Come on! Come on!

[The last characters enter and move to their group photo position. The aim is to dress the beautiful set with beautiful and interesting characters. SNOW WHITE directs/ushers dwarfs or PRINCE and any other stragglers. Dress entire set with a variety of fairy tale characters - in front of cottage, inside cottage, on tree-stump/s, in the forest, on the beanstalk, everywhere. Time this well. It should be busy but not frantic. The music changes tempo at bar 16. Now almost everyone is in position. But they are not necessarily frozen and facing front. They chat to their neighbours. "This should be fun ... Snow White's a bit bossy" etc. SNOW WHITE checks everyone at bar 17 or close thereto then rushes to her position. This is the signal for everyone to get ready for the photo]

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SNOW WHITE *[Dashing to her place] Right, places everyone. [EVERYONE stops chatting and adjusts their dress, position, forms pose etc] And ... face front! [On this final instruction, all heads snap as one and the entire company is frozen. A second later they sing. The only body part which moves at first is their lips. It's a pop-up picture-book scene. A more stunning lighting change could occur on the beat of the first sung note]*

No. 2 Fairy Tale

COMPANY *Fable, legend, myth and old wives' tale
Saga, story of the holy grail
Fiction, faction, from beyond the veil
All tossed together makes for certain stormy weather
And a perfect fairy tale
And a perfect fairy tale.
You're bound to find high adventure
In our sumptuous, scrumptious pantomime
There's nothing gained until you venture
To a happy ending every time.
Get set to cheer all the goodies and jeer at every crook in jail
There are witches and snitchers and beauty and riches
In your favourite fairy tale.*

WOLF *I'm the Wolf, a crim and a nasty type as the woodcutter will say*

RRH *I'm Red Riding Hood with a cautious word
From the path you should not stray*

BEAST *I'm the awful Beast with an ugly face in a castle hideaway*

TRIO *We're the famous folk who are okey-doke in this jokey cabaret.*

SNOW WHITE *I am fair Snow White with a well-known life and an apple rosy red*

JACK *I am Jack the lad of the beanstalk fame from the ogre I have fled*

C'RELLA *Cinderella, moi, with an ancient tale and a Prince I love to wed.*

TRIO *International stars, international spars in the pars so often read.*

BEAUTY *I'm the Beauty type with a sickly Pa and a Beastie in a spell*

Hansel/Gretel *We're the Hansel, Gretel, the sibling team,
Brother, sister, can't you tell?*

PRINCE *I'm the handsome Prince with a magic kiss and a hairstyle full of gel*

TRIO *We're the acting crew, here we are on view
We're the panto personnel.*

[The song ends with everyone excited. The opening song is bright and catchy and the convention is well and truly underway. Lots of hubbub and greetings. SNOW WHITE steps forward. She's polite but firm. She clears her throat]

SNOW WHITE *Could I have everyone's attention please? [Hubbub stops] Thank you. I'm Snow White and on behalf of the Organizing Committee, welcome to our annual Fairy Tale Convention. I hope we all benefit from the workshops and the plenary sessions.*

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WOLF Hey! Don't forget the social get-togethers. *[Laughter]*

SNOW WHITE Yes, thank you, Wolf. We all know about you and your famous midnight lemonade parties.
[Murmurs and more amusement]

BEAUTY *[Polite interruption]* Excuse me, Snow White.

SNOW WHITE Yes, Beauty?

BEAUTY I wish to discuss the dress code. *[Hubbub]* Some of the more polite characters feel standards have slipped. Some of us would prefer *two* venues for the finale. *[Buzz. Oooo]* Perhaps those who know about fashion and style could attend a separate function. *[Hubbub]*

WOLF Yeah, snobs and pompous twits may now depart.
[Laughter and some anger. BEAUTY is upset at being mocked]

SNOW WHITE Quiet! *[To BEAUTY]* Thank you, Beauty. *[To COMPANY. Holding screed aloft]* Now please read the workshop timetable and don't be backward in having a say.

JACK I've got somethin' to say.

BEAUTY *[Telling SNOW WHITE]* He's not wearing formal attire. *[She is ignored]*

JACK I'm Jack of Beanstalk fame and I can't understand a darn thing.
[Murmurs] Why don't we have plan 'n simple workshops?

HANSEL Hey, Jack. Speeches come later, old son. *[Friendly laughter]*

JACK I'm working-class. What am I gunna do with the psychology of morality? I can't even spell it.
[Murmurs and laughter]

C'RELLA Jack's right. Once upon a time our fairy tales were passed from parent to child. Now they're zapped round the universe through cyberspace. *[Big hubbub from OTHERS]* Let's discuss global communication. *[Hubbub]*

SNOW WHITE Look, you were asked to submit topics and not one of you did.

JACK I'm too busy goin' to the market and climbin' beanstalks.

GRETEL Well I think we should have some down-to-earth subjects.

PRINCE Yes like why fairy tales can't exist without a handsome prince. *[Groans]*
Well they can't!

SNOW WHITE *[Calling]* Thank you! *[They settle]* By the stream there's the romance of fairytales. *[Grumbles. Boring. Little interest shown]*

WOLF I thought that was the workshop on fishing. *[Amusement]*

SNOW WHITE In the old castle there's translating ancient Chinese fairy tales. And in the forest there's the psychology of morality. Is that clear?

RRH Very clear and very boring. *[Hubbub]*

SNOW WHITE *[Miffed]* Well thanks for nothing, Little Red Riding Hood.

RRH The topics are irrelevant. We might as well go home now. *[Buzz]*

JACK Isn't that wot I said?

SNOW WHITE But you don't know they're irrelevant till you discuss them.

Fairy Tales 7

RRH Every year we discuss stuff. Why? *[OTHERS agree]*
C'RELLA It's got us absolutely nowhere. *[More agreement]*
RRH All our requests, complaints and protests have been rejected. *[OTHERS agree]* The Brothers Grimm won't even acknowledge our Association. *[More agreement. "That's right" etc]*
HANSEL She's right. We *have* been ignored for centuries.
RRH So whatever we decide, it won't make the slightest bit of difference.
WOLF I vote we go straight to the midnight lemonade party! *[Ignored]*
SNOW WHITE *[Getting annoyed]* Look, for the last time, the workshops are optional. No-one's forcing you to go. If you don't like the stupid topics then go play in the woods.
JACK Best thing you've said all day.
SNOW WHITE *[Upset]* I've tried very hard to organise this convention and now you all think it's a waste of time. *[OTHERS upset. "No we don't"]*
C'RELLA Oh, Snow White, don't be like that.
SNOW WHITE I'm a volunteer. I do this out of the goodness of my heart.
RRH Well I'm sorry, Snow White but right now all I care about is skipping through the woods and saving my grannie from that wicked old wolf.
WOLF Hey, hey, hey, hey! Not so much of the old, thank you. *[Some are amused but RED RIDING HOOD is in full flight]*
RRH Let the world change and go mad. Let this convention trot out ridiculous workshops. The main thing, the *only* thing is that we're okay. *[Murmurs of support]*
C'RELLA Our fairy tales have stood the test of time. They're wonderful, they're historic and long may they reign.
RRH *[Leading the OTHERS]* Well? Do you agree?
OTHERS *[Enthusiastic]* Yes! *[Everyone is stirred by RRH and her enthusiasm]*
RRH And we'll survive forever because fairy tales are friendly.
BEAST They're fearless! *[Dialogue builds in volume and speed]*
GRETEL And fresh-faced.
JACK They're financial.
BEAUTY Absolutely fabulous.
PRINCE Certainly famous
SNOW WHITE And fantastic.
HANSEL They're feisty and forceful.
C'RELLA Don't forget forgiving.
WOLF And free! *[MUSIC BEGINS. Everyone cheers and sings reprise]*

No. 3 Fairy Tale Reprise

COMPANY *You're bound to find high adventure
In our sumptuous, scrumptious pantomime
There's nothing gained until you venture*

Fairy Tales 8

*To a happy ending every time.
Get set to cheer all the goodies
And jeer at every crook in jail
There are witches and snitchers and beauty and riches
In your favourite fairy tale.*

[Reprise ends and everyone is feeling better. Almost immediately WITCH appears in some unusual place – perhaps on the beanstalk - and appears to be casting a spell. She is spotted even before the applause has faded]

GRETEL Look! The Witch!

[OTHERS all turn and face WITCH. They regard her with awe. What will she do next? WITCH is a strange character who does this sort of thing every convention. Pause. Suddenly she again throws back part of her garments and produces a megaphone. OTHERS look, point, murmur]

WITCH *[Through megaphone in another voice]* Refreshments are available behind the beanstalk. Refreshments. Behind the beanstalk.

[Tension released. COMPANY characters exit for refreshments chatting as they depart. PRINCIPALS mingle. WITCH could direct stragglers]

SNOW WHITE *[Addressing PRINCIPALS]* Well you heard the Witch. Doesn't anyone want some tea or coffee?

C'RELLA You've gotta be kidding. It's worse than the stuff they serve in theatres at interval.

BEAUTY It's not the tea or the coffee. It's those terrible polystyrene cups and those cheap, plastic spoons. *[Agreement]*

RRH And if we go over there we'll finish up in one of those boring workshops.

SNOW WHITE Well we can't just stay here and do nothing.

BEAUTY Perhaps we could have our own workshop. Why not *The decline and fall of fairy tale dress standards*. *[OTHERS groan]*

PRINCE Well before we start, I've got a very important question. In fact I should have asked this the moment I arrived. *[Pause. OTHERS look at him]* Is there a full-length mirror in my room? *[OTHERS disgusted]*

SNOW WHITE Actually there is a topic we could discuss. How can we improve? *[OTHERS puzzled/scoff]*

C'RELLA *[Scoffing]* Improve? Improve what?

SNOW WHITE Our lives and our fairy tales? *[Big reaction]*

BEAUTY Well, I'm sorry but everyone knows my fairy tale is perfect.

WOLF Oh, pardon me for breathing.

PRINCE Exactly. My fairy tale is perfectly perfect. I couldn't possibly be any more handsome. *[Ignored again]*

GRETEL *[To SNOW WHITE]* What do you mean, improve ourselves?

SNOW WHITE I mean how can we make sure our fairy tales remain fresh and alive.

HANSEL Our fairy tale *is* fresh. *[OTHERS agree]*

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SNOW WHITE The only way to be sure we're fresh is to examine our tales and, if necessary, admit we're unhappy. *[Big reaction]*

OTHERS *[Big shock]* What!

BEAUTY Unhappy!?

WOLF *[Defensive]* Who says we're unhappy?

BEAST Oh come on, Wolfie. Everyone's unhappy at some time in their life.

C'RELLA But even if we *are* unhappy, we can't change things so, once again, what's the point?

JACK Oh I get it. *[OTHERS turn]* Just by talking about it, just by getting it off our chest, that will remove the frustration which makes us unhappy.

SNOW WHITE Exactly. Well spotted, Jack. *[JACK'S pleased with himself]*

GRETEL *[She's caught on too]* And talking about it helps us understand ourselves and appreciate others. And that may even help our fairy tale.

BEAST And maintain our freshness.
[EVERYONE starts to get genuinely excited]

HANSEL And we don't have to write letters or organise petitions. We can help ourselves *by* ourselves.

SNOW WHITE You've got it in one.

WOLF Hoo-jolly-ray. At last a workshop topic that actually means something.
[OTHERS agree]

RRH *[Genuine apology]* I'm sorry, Snow White. For once there is a relevant topic. Mind you it's a first for the Fairy Tale Convention.

SNOW WHITE Right, are we all agreed on the topic, "Unhappy Fairy Tale Characters"? *[Agreement]* Great. Let's get started.

BEAST *[Pause]* So all we need now is for someone to admit they're unhappy.
[Pause. Who will be first to bare their soul?]

C'RELLA Okay, I'll stick out my neck. *[OTHERS shocked]* My fairy tale does not always fill me with the greatest of pleasure. There. I've said it.

BEAUTY Well I'm sorry but this is never going to work. I mean how can Cinderella possibly be unhappy? She has the quintessential rags to riches story. From scullery maid to belle of the ball. Swept off her feet by a dashing prince. *[PRINCE upset]*

PRINCE What?! That's not true. I don't appear in Cinderella's fairy tale.

GRETEL *[In close/ish]* It's not you this time, Petal. *[HANSEL from other side]*

HANSEL *[In close/ish]* You're not the only handsome prince in the world. *[PRINCE horrified]*

C'RELLA Oh of course I have a wonderful fairy tale. There's the magic carriage, the freedom from slavery, the mortified faces of my horrid step-sisters and of course the drop-dead gorgeous prince.

PRINCE *[Horrified]* Drop dead gorgeous!?! W W W W What do you mean?

BEAUTY *[Shocked]* I can't believe I'm hearing this.

C'RELLA My one teensy-weensy complaint concerns my footwear.

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RRH *[Shocked]* Those glass slippers are simply divine.
GRETEL They're handmade Italian stunners!
C'RELLA Yes but are they appropriate?
SNOW WHITE Glass slippers are perfect for elegant occasions. Chandeliers, footmen, cellos, fine wine and glass slippers.
BEAST I've heard people refer to the plural of cellos as celli. Is it cellos or celli.
PRINCE It's celli. Definitely celli. *[OTHERS look at Dumbo. How the heck would he know?]* I often have celli. My favourite is ice-cream and celli.
[Groans but instantly the real discussion resumes]
JACK But Cinderella, the glass slipper is the key to your fairy tale. That's how the prince finds you. That's how we get the happy ending.
C'RELLA I know but I still think they're wrong. I mean if you'd just won the lottery, fallen in love and become flavour of the universe, wouldn't you feel just a little excited?
GRETEL Excited? I'd be delirious.
C'RELLA I *am*. It's bliss. And that's my point. How do I celebrate in my phenomenal happiness? How do I demonstrate my over-the-moon, tickled-pink, high-as-a-kite euphoria?
JACK Well you could start by speakin' English.
C'RELLA *[Sarcastic send up]* Why, I demurely sip a sweet sherry, smile then elegantly tippy-toe round the dance floor.
BEAUTY That's exactly the way you should behave.
C'RELLA Aw, gimme a break. I wanna go wild. *[MUSIC BEGINS]* I wanna let m'hair down, I wanna kick up m'heels. *[Emphatic]* I wanna celebrate!
[COMPANY members. You could bring some – all if you have a small chorus – out for some/all musical items. Or some COMPANY members only for each item. Or no COMPANY members. After all there are plenty of chorus appearances. You decide. If used, their entrance should not seem contrived. They are delegates at the convention who enter this part of the grounds at that time. In this case some dancers at the ball could enter and simply be part of the ball. Couples merge dressed for and ready to dance. At the end of the number they could simply exit gracefully in couples just as they arrived]

No. 4 Dance The Night Away

CINDERELLA *There are a million reasons why life for me's brand new
I've fellahs, fame, fun, fashion, fads and a five-star fortune too.
But at the ball to celebrate I suddenly feel blue
Those classy, glassy slippers have got me in a stew.
I dare not shout or race about, in fact the whole thing's grim
Fan-Cinderella-tastic? No way, meet little Ms Prim.
I'd really like to paint the whole town red
But in those shoes I'm forced to say instead.*

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*I've got a reason to be glad, I've struck it rich, I'm going mad
I wanna dance the night away.
I've got a reason to enjoy, I've met a hunky, spunky boy
I wanna dance the night away.
Oh let me kick, kick, kick up m'heels
I love to spin, spin, spin some cartwheels.
I've got a reason to go wild, I'm number one, the new Rothchild
I wanna dance the night away.
No more prim 'n proper dances
None of this [demonstrates prim 'n proper dance]
Never this [demonstrates another prim 'n proper dance]
No more prim 'n proper stances
None of this [demonstrates prim 'n proper stance e.g. holding glass]
Never this [demonstrates another prim 'n proper stance e.g. curtsy]
Time to let my hair hang down
Time the red paint hit the town.*

[Starting her dance at bar 75, CINDERELLA calls on PRINCE to join her]

C'RELLA

Come on handsome, let's dance the night away!

[PRINCE is not keen. He's half shoved by others half grabbed by CINDERELLA. She dances well but PRINCE at first is not sure as he tries to copy CINDERELLA. She is a great mover. PRINCE improves and by the end they make a snappy couple. OTHERS are impressed and join in repeat of chorus. Song finishes on a high and PRINCE is relieved. He cops a bit of friendly stick. COMPANY members, if used, could exit from the ball]

GRETEL

[Impressed like many of the OTHERS] Cinderella, that was fantastic. Would you teach me to dance?

C'RELLA

Sure. Any time.

SNOW WHITE

Thank you, Cinderella. I'm sure we all see what you mean.

JACK

And I bet she feels better for gettin' her complaint out in the open.

SNOW WHITE

Which is what we *all* must do. Speak up, say what we think and hope it makes us feel better and keeps our fairy tale fresh.

C'RELLA

But please, I don't want any radical changes.

WOLF

Well if that ain't radical, sister, I'd hate to see your over-the-top routine.

BEAUTY

Of course this discussion is total fantasy. We're not being serious.

SNOW WHITE

No-one's forcing you, Beauty..

RRH

I think what Cinderella just did took a tremendous amount of courage.
[OTHERS agree]

SNOW WHITE

And she's not alone. I've got a complaint about my fairy tale.
[OTHERS shocked]

OTHERS

You!

SNOW WHITE

Of course. Why not?

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PRINCE Now that is really silly. *[To SNOW WHITE]* You, Snow White, have the best fairytale of all and it's simply because you receive the greatest *thrill* of all. Me. *[OTHERS groan/shake heads]*

SNOW WHITE Is that before or after I make seven beds seven days a week and for lunch get to enjoy a delicious poisoned apple?

PRINCE Ah yes, but you forget you have the indescribable pleasure, the unbelievable delight, the bliss of a kiss from me.

SNOW WHITE Which brings me to the subject of my complaint. The kiss.

PRINCE *[Aghast]* Complaint!? How dare you! I am Prince Lovely Lips.

SNOW WHITE Why is it that every thing is resolved by just a kiss? I mean, apart from your occasional halitosis, do you have some form of magic mouth?

PRINCE Halitosis!?

SNOW WHITE And why is it only *blokes [guys]* who get to deliver the super smooch?

RRH Exactly. And especially when the fellah is just another pretty face.

PRINCE Oh now really. I didn't come here to be insulted.

SNOW WHITE The life-saving kiss is a great idea but why not a simple role change? *[MUSIC BEGINS]* It's simple, straightforward and way overdue. *[Maybe the seven dwarfs could be the COMPANY for this song]*

No. 5 The Kiss

SNOW WHITE *Lots 'n lots of stories seem to end like this
A fellah comes along and then he sweetly plants a kiss [Blows kiss]
He's definitely romantic, this gallant Romeo
But maybe once or twice it might be nice to end like so.
Oh why must the kiss from the mister to the miss
Be the kiss that saves the day?
Oh why can't the chap be the one who has the nap
Till the princess comes his way?
We could try a role reversal, change the famous old plan
Have the clever lady help the helpless man
Oh why must the kiss from the mister to the miss
Be the kiss that saves the day?*

[Dialogue during song. SNOW WHITE takes PRINCE by the hand]

SNOW WHITE *[Leading PRINCE to tree-stump]* Now come along, Prince, sit yourself down. *[PRINCE sits on stump]* That's the idea.

PRINCE *[Not sure]* You promise not to hurt me?

SNOW WHITE Of course.

PRINCE And don't touch my hair. *[PRINCE adores his hair]*

SNOW WHITE I promise. Now I want you to imagine something strange has happened and you can't move.

PRINCE *[Starts to rise]* But that's

Fairy Tales 13

OTHERS Prince! *[He sits in fear and fright]*

PRINCE Oh all right, don't shout.

SNOW WHITE Suddenly a young maiden approaches. What will you do?

PRINCE Why I'll kiss her of course. That's my job.

SNOW WHITE But Prince, you're helpless. You can't move.

PRINCE *[Distressed]* Can't move!? Oh this is terrible. I need help.

SNOW WHITE And you shall have it. The young maiden can save you ... with a kiss.

PRINCE What! Kiss me! But that's my job.

SNOW WHITE You're so right, Prince. It's jobs for the boys!!
[Laughter as PRINCE is hauled to his feet and the COMPANY repeats the chorus. PRINCE is not too happy but realises they're not vindictive and so joins in. Song ends. But before they can start discussion, WITCH appears and is noticed. Dwarfs, if used, could gather round WITCH]

BEAST Look, she's back. It's the Witch. *[OTHERS watch]*
[WITCH approaches and appears to be casting a spell. Suddenly she reaches into her garments and produces a notepad]

WITCH *[Unusual voice]* Does anyone here own a pumpkin and six mice, registration Bravo Alpha Lima Lima twelve midnight? *[Murmurs]*

C'RELLA Ah, that might be mine.

WOLF Might be? How many of us get round in a mouse-powered vegetable?

WITCH Well would you mind moving it, you're blocking the drive.

C'RELLA Sorry. *[CINDERELLA makes hasty exit followed by WITCH and Dwarfs]*

HANSEL Blimey. I thought our Witch was an evil, murdering monster but this one's far, far worse. She's a parking cop!

RRH Forget the Witch. Let's get back to our discussion.

JACK Yeah well I'd like to thank Snow White for raising the osculation issue.

PRINCE The what?

GRETEL Osculation. Kissing. *[Makes several kissing sounds. PRINCE unsure]*

PRINCE Oh.

JACK I only know two big words. That was one ov 'em. And I'd like to say that kissing can be very nice. My dear old mother always kisses me. *[Others "ahh". JACK tense]* Except when I come back from market. *[Laughter. CINDERELLA re-enters and joins the group]*

RRH *[Teasing]* Oh yes. Minus the cow but mit da beans.

JACK The more I told her the beans were magic, the more she blew her top. Would she believe me? Not on your Nelly. "But Ma," I said, "these beans are magic. They're going to make us rich!"

BEAST She changed her tune though when you brought home the gold.

JACK Yeah but then she said it was a fluke. A *fluke!!* I'd climbed the beanstalk, found the gold, survived the giant, made it safely back to earth and all she could say was, "You were very lucky, Jack". Very lucky? Ma, I'm a flippin' genius.

Fairy Tales 14

- C'RELLA** Oh come on, Jack. Did you really believe they were magic?
- JACK** Of course I did. And that's my complaint. No-one gives me credit for my cow deal.
- HANSEL** Credit! You were dead-set lucky.
- JACK** *[Frustrated]* Y'see what I mean? I take a financial gamble, I put m'money where m'mouth is and then get ridiculed. That's me second big word. I mean, it just ain't fair!
- RRH** But it wasn't your money, Jack. Your mother owned the cow.
- JACK** Yeah but it was my reputation. I take a punt, make a fortune and then get rubbished. I'll bet if stockbrokers knew about my deal they'd give me some award. But not me Ma. Not you lot. Not in my fairy tale. And that gets right up my nose.
- BEAST** You're just paying the price of fame, Jack. Anyone successful is rubbished by those who've tried and failed. And especially by those who've never tried at all. Just like the beanstalk, Jack, we cut down our tall poppies.
- JACK** Well it ain't funny and it sure ain't fair. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*
- RRH** But that's not a genuine complaint. I mean none of that appears in your fairy tale.
- JACK** My point exactly. It should. Jack Financial Whiz Beanstalk. *[Laughter]* And stop laughing. It definitely wasn't a fluke.

No. 6 Recognition

- JACK** *What more can any person do, when all their talent's shining through
When all their skills are out on view - today?
I've done me best and good it is, I passed the test, I won the quiz
A genius, I is a whiz - but stay.
My final draft is subject to an audit,
I never get my due, I miss the plaudit.
Recognition, that's all I ask.
Recognition now I've finished the task.
Recognition, achievements unmask
Recognition, that's all I ask.*
- JACK** *[Spoken over 2nd last bar]* It's not a lot, y'know.
- JACK** *[Spoken from bar 25]* Now if someone invented a magic wand which turned mice into horses, you'd say "well done". And if someone left a trail through the forest or revived grannies who've been devoured, you'd congratulate them. So why is it when I turn tuppence into a triumph, nobody even says, "Jolly good, Jack"? I want ... *[Song continues then concludes with others speaking their mind. JACK is congratulated but the discussion is now on in earnest. This is the best workshop they've ever attended]*

Fairy Tales 15

RRH Now Jack, do you feel better for getting things off your chest?
JACK *[Not certain]* A little. But I'd feel fantastic if you'd recognize my economic expertise.

GRETEL *[Teasing]* That's *three* big words! *[Laughter]*
JACK Now you're takin' the mickey. Now you're sendin' me up.
PRINCE I know how Jack feels. People have been sending me up for years. *[A few tease PRINCE]* And I've been unhappy for years.
[OTHERS turn and concentrate on PRINCE. That shuts up the teasers]

PRINCE Well don't stare. Just because I'm vain and stupid doesn't mean I haven't got feelings.

BEAST Of course you've got feelings, Prince. Everyone has feelings.
HANSEL It's just that yours tend to be a little self-centred.
PRINCE *[Trembling lip]* Every time I come to these conventions, people call me ... handsome but hollow.

BEAUTY *[Upset at such rude behaviour]* Oh dear. Whatever can they mean?
PRINCE You know, nothing upstairs. A sandwich short of a picnic. As thick as three short planks.

WOLF Two.
PRINCE What?
WOLF It's two. The saying is, you're as thick as *two* short planks.
PRINCE *[Upset]* See, *another* insult! And now I've lost a plank.
BEAUTY You have nothing to be unhappy about, Prince. You mustn't be ashamed of being beautiful.
PRINCE It's terrible. I hate it when people say, "You're just a pretty face".
SNOW WHITE But you *are* a pretty face. *[PRINCE still upset]* I mean it. *[To OTHERS]* He is beautiful isn't he? *[OTHERS agree. "Oh yes" "Definitely" etc]*

PRINCE *[Despairing]* Yes but nobody seems to understand how cruel it is being beautiful. There are times when I wish I were plain and ordinary.
BEAUTY *[Distressed]* Oh Prince! You must not think such thoughts.
WOLF Well if we're going to be honest, Prince, you are a touch on the ordinary side. I mean when was the last time you read a book? I bet you haven't even read your own fairy tale.
PRINCE *[Defensive]* Yes I have. I read the bit about the handsome prince.
[OTHERS shake their heads and quietly despair]

SNOW WHITE If you've got a complaint, Prince, now's the time to say.
[Pause. PRINCE looks like he's about to cry. MUSIC BEGINS. His face slowly develops into a bawl but instead of the sound of crying he instantly starts singing on cue. He could maintain his "crying" face until the instant before he sings]

No. 7 A Pretty Face

PRINCE *I've (He's) got looks that lots of you (us) try for
I'm (He's) a knockout, an eyeful, a dish.*

Fairy Tales 16

*I've (He's) got looks that lots of you (us) sigh for
Even die for, make a wish.
But sadly Apollo is pining, Adonis is feeling quite blue.
The grace of my (his) face is just part of the case
Which I (we) now present to you.
I'm more than just a pretty face
Examine my mind you'll see.
I'm more than just a pretty face
I can count up to three. (Counts on his fingers)
My dimples and my lovely locks
Tis said mask an empty space. (Indicates head)
Call me a ding-bat but I know the earth's flat
I'm more than a pretty face.*

[When the song is repeated, the OTHERS join the singing. Maybe include COMPANY from Let Me Dance. When PRINCE counts up to three, he doesn't quite make it. One, two No, try again. He dismisses the exercise as stupid and resumes singing. Song ends and OTHERS congratulate PRINCE. "Well done" etc. COMPANY members drift away – use various exits]

- GRETEL** Congratulations, Prince. I think you're very brave telling us your innermost thoughts. *[OTHERS agree]*
- BEAST** Which only goes to prove you can't be a two-dimensional dummy. You do have thoughts and you *can* express them.
- PRINCE** *[Pleased]* Really? You mean I can think? I really do have a brain?
- HANSEL** Well let's not go overboard.
- RRH** Of course you do. It may operate somewhat slowly and infrequently but you're definitely one of us.
- PRINCE** You mean, I'm not one of them? Oh bliss. A handsome prince is every young woman's dream. *[Laughter]*
- SNOW WHITE** That's right, Princey. You stick to your fantasy.
- HANSEL** And speaking of fantasy, I wonder if we could talk about the exact opposite, about the real world and the nitty-gritty of everyday life.
- WOLF** Real life!?! You stay in an edible house. How many cottages have candy curtains and digestible doors?
- C'RELLA** We're supposed to be talking about things which make us unhappy.
- GRETEL** We are. Hansel and I feel strongly about someone in our fairy tale.
- BEAUTY** That's nice. How lovely to be thinking of others.
- RRH** Does this other person make you unhappy?
- GRETEL** Well you could say that. She tries to kill us.
- OTHERS** *[Not HANSEL]* What!?
- GRETEL** Regularly. *[More hubbub]*
- HANSEL** Gretel and I have been worried for ages about our stepmother.
- GRETEL** We've even started a society.

Fairy Tales 17

- HANSEL** We think stepmothers in fairy tales are ... evil. *[Reaction]*
- C'RELLA** He's right. My stepmother treats me like dirt.
- SNOW WHITE** So does mine. She even tries to poison me.
- HANSEL** Exactly. And that's our point. Our real mother was sweet and kind.
- GRETEL** She was just like Red Riding Hood's mother. Loving, caring, nice.
- JACK** Hey, my Mum's not a bad stick too, y'know.
- HANSEL** Of course she is. But why are fairy-tale stepmothers monsters?
- BEAST** What was that society Gretel mentioned before?
- GRETEL** It's called SMAS *[rhymes with jazz]* and SMAS stands for the *Society for Moderately Awful Stepmothers*. *[OTHERS react]*
- HANSEL** We can understand stepmothers not being madly in love with their adopted children, maybe even fighting and arguing. But isn't wanting to murder them just a little bit O.T.T.
- PRINCE** O.T.T.?
- BEAUTY** Over The Top. *[PRINCE nods. He "thinks" he understands]*
- GRETEL** Okay, kids aren't perfect. My room's a mess, I sometimes yell at my brother and we all need the odd reprimand.
- HANSEL** But in fairy tales while mothers might turn-off the TV or ground you for the day, stepmothers reach for a gun! It's crazy.
- GRETEL** *[Indicates her brother]* So far, SMAS has only got two members.
- HANSEL** SMAS is *[Produces petition/letter]* writing to Mister Grimm asking for a reduction in the nastiness of stepmothers.
- GRETEL** We'd like you all to sign our petition.
- RRH** I suppose you know there are two Mister Grimms.
- C'RELLA** And they're not the only ones who wrote fairy tales.
- BEAST** And often the writers didn't create the stories in the first place.
- HANSEL** Yes, yes, yes, we know all that.
- PRINCE** I didn't.
- RRH** Has it occurred to you that the brothers Grimm may no longer be with us? *We* might be immortal but the humans who wrote us actually grow old and drop off the twig.
- HANSEL** Well somebody is still publishing our fairy tale so the petition can be passed on to them.
- GRETEL** Now you asked what makes us unhappy. Well for us it's vindictive stepmothers.
[MUSIC BEGINS. HANSEL and GRETEL produce their petitions – perhaps a sheet each during introduction. During song, petitions are referred to and maybe even examined by OTHERS]

No. 8 Mister Grimm

- HANSEL & GRETEL** *Mister Grimm and Mister Grimm, a mother is a saint
A person we adore, we're sure her love has no constraint*

Fairy Tales 18

*But now we find your stepmothers need locking up, restraint
Oh Mr. Grimm and Mr. Grimm, herewith a small complaint.
The difference twixt these women causes pain
Your mums are fine, your stepmothers are all insane!
We'd like a stepmum only moderately awful
We'd like a stepmum only marginally insane
We don't object to rude or mean, even sullen or unclean
But a psycho on the scene is such a pain.
We'd like a stepmum who is loopy not demented
Who thinks that "hemlock" means a stitch in time saves nine
You see a stepmum with a gun playing murder just for fun
Is a stepmum sending shivers up me spine!*

GRETEL

*You make them vicious and pernicious
They are evil, sick and vile*

HANSEL

*You make them torture, what a scorcher
Things of beauty they defile*

GRETEL

*You make them greedy, hate the needy
Spreading misery and bile.*

HANSEL

Well now we ask that this petition be included in our file

HANSEL & GRETEL *Oh Mister Grimm, a new stepmum would be so fine!*

[Song ends. PRINCIPALS are now really involved in each other's problems and could immediately approach either sibling willing to sign. They mime so doing. "I'll sign ... Me too" etc. Maybe petitions placed on siblings' backs as OTHERS use feathers to sign their name. SNOW WHITE keeps on talking]

SNOW WHITE *[As OTHERS sign]* Goodness me. I never realised how others were feeling. This has been a real eye-opener.

OTHERS Me too ... Same here ... *etc*

JACK *[Spies WITCH upstage in the trees]* Oh no, there's that crazy Witch again. *[WITCH enters from forest and approaches group in sneaky fashion. They watch uncertain. She stops and prepares to cast spell. Suddenly from under her garments she produces small watering-can and mimes watering a plant/s. This takes only a moment or two. She continues off stage, cackling/muttering. OTHERS watch fascinated]*

BEAST She's getting worse. Last year she played trick or treat on everyone.

BEAUTY I was wondering if we could finally discuss the dress standards for our formal dinner dance.

RRH No, no, no, that's not important. *[BEAUTY shocked]* We have to discuss what's making us unhappy.

BEAUTY That *is* what's making me unhappy.

RRH But it's not in your fairytale.

BEAUTY But it's important to maintain standards.

Fairy Tales 19

SNOW WHITE *[Breaking up the squabble]* All right, all right. You two aren't sisters are you? *[Laughter releases the tension]* Now, is there anyone else who would like to comment on their fairytale?

WOLF Yes, me.

RRH *[Sarcastic]* Oh this'll be good.

WOLF I'm unhappy about appearance being linked to behaviour.

BEAST Hear, hear. *[OTHERS confused. "What?"]*

JACK You've lost me, Wolfie. Speak English, mate.

WOLF Why is the character with nasty teeth or horrible face always the baddie? Why does the goody-goody prince have to be handsome?

PRINCE *[Misunderstands, of course]* How dare you!

BEAST Wolf is spot on. The Beast is ugly ergo the Beast is rejected.

JACK You've done it again. Who or what is ergo?

RRH It's a show-off's way of saying therefore.

PRINCE *[Likes it]* Ohh. I like that. I am gorgeous, ergo I am gorgeous. *[OTHERS despair]*

HANSEL *[Thrown away]* Ergo drongo.

WOLF But *why* am I nasty? *Why* do I do horrible things? Did my parents abandon me as a little wolf? Was I force-fed junk food or made to watch *Sixty Minutes*? Did somebody tell me that girls in red cloaks deserve to be punished?

RRH *[Offended]* Hey! I deserve nothing, Buster.

WOLF Exactly. You're pretty, sweet and innocent. I'm a slobbering nasty. Why must baddies be ugly?

JACK But there has to be a baddie. Stories are all about good and evil.

BEAST Yes but why can't an ugly geezer be good?

SNOW WHITE I've never thought of it like that.

PRINCE Hey! I'm the one who doesn't think.

BEAST Wolf and I are two-dimensional. We're despised and ugly.

WOLF And to make matters worse, Beast only gets the big tick when he changes into Mister Spunkaroozle.

BEAST If we could change our fairy tale, we'd tell the world how we really, *really* feel. *[MUSIC BEGINS. Pats heart]* Here, right here.

WOLF *[Pats heart]* Here. Inside.

No. 9 A Sheep In Wolf's Clothing

WOLF & BEAST *I'm really a sheep inside wolf's clothing
A sheep in wolf's clothing I am.
I may look ferocious, atrocious and mean
But really I'm the softest softie you've ever seen.
I hate being beastly to any creature, I'm gentle as a lamb*

*I'm really a sheep inside wolf's clothing
A sheep in wolf's clothing I am.
Don't only look on the outside
The cover's just a part of the book.
Think past your first impressions
It pays to have a second look.
I know I appear formidable
With a face that would stop a clock
But come a little closer and you'll find
You're in for a pleasant shock.*

[The "baddies" softshoe and sing with feeling. At song's end, OTHERS are affected and congratulate them, even applauding the old song and dance operators. Their applause is interrupted by a worried HANSEL]

- HANSEL** Look out, here's that Witch again!
[OTHERS gasp, look at WITCH who enters cackling and wringing her hands. She approaches and OTHERS move back in fear. She's about to cast a spell when she suddenly withdraws a small gong. She gongs]
- WITCH** *[Another voice perhaps plummy]* This is the first call for luncheon. *[Exits gonging, cackling]* First call for luncheon.
- RRH** Well I never thought I'd feel sorry for the Wolf. *[Gives him a hug or pat]*
Well done, Wolfie.
- WOLF** Thank you, Red Riding Hood. But please don't tell your grandmother. She thinks I'm nasty pretending to be nice when really I'm nice pretending to be nasty. *[OTHERS amused/touched]*
- BEAUTY** Of course I've always known Beast was really nice underneath. And I've always felt sorry for him.
- C'RELLA** And speaking of nice, a happy ending is what makes fairy tales so popular. *[OTHERS agree]*
- SNOW WHITE** *[Starts to exit]* Well come along, it's time for lunch.
- RRH** Hang on. *[SW returns]* I haven't told you what makes me unhappy.
- SNOW WHITE** Oh Red Riding Hood, I'm so sorry. Please, the ground is yours.
- RRH** I hate repetition, the monotonous over and over again sameness.
- JACK** But repetition keeps us alive. Because we're repeated everyone remembers us.
- BEAUTY** The most important thing is tradition. Quality fairy tales have a dignified and timeless tradition.
- RRH** We're repetitious and boring. Even modern versions are creaky.
- BEAUTY** But the beauty of fairy tales is their tradition of being passed from one generation to the next.
- RRH** And don't change that. But what's wrong with a variation? Why not a different route through the forest or different goodies in my basket, even a different demise for dear old Wolfie.
- WOLF** *[Not impressed]* Oh thanks very much for nothing.

Fairy Tales 21

RRH Whatever happened to poetic licence?
BEAUTY I don't think we should tamper with tradition.
RRH But variety's the spice of life. Nothing stays the same forever.
BEAUTY Fairy tales do. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*
[If you have a large chorus, you could have some wander in and observe this song, maybe passing through to lunch. Slowly re-build the on-stage numbers]
RRH We need a bit of fine tuning, tweak a tale or two. Keep us on our toes.
BEAUTY We need stability.
RRH Modification.
BEAUTY Consolidation. *[They verbally fight each trying to out-do the other]*
RRH Transformation.
BEAUTY Familiarisation.
RRH Progress.
BEAUTY Tradition.

No. 10 Progress - Tradition

RRH *All the world is changing, nobody is standing still*
BEAUTY *We shouldn't be, no we shouldn't be.*
RRH *Always re-arranging, moving ever on until*
BEAUTY *We shouldn't be, no we shouldn't be.*
RRH *Let's advance and start today*
BEAUTY *You'll leave behind a better way*
DUET *Progress and tradition*
Would like to have their say.
RRH *Progress*
BEAUTY *Tradition.*
DUET *It means so much to me.*
RRH *Progress*
BEAUTY *Tradition*
DUET *Support it steadfastly.*
BEAUTY *I love the old and proven things*
RRH *It's great to go and spread your wings with progress*
BEAUTY *Tradition*
DUET *It means so much to me.*
RRH *[Dialogue during song. They are like politicians debating, trying to win voters]* We need progress. It's no good living the same old life day after day. Initiative, discovery, enrichment, development. Let's make this a better world.
BEAUTY *[Dialogue during song]* What beauty there is around us. What marvels of timeless achievement. Let us protect and preserve these time-honoured values. Let's make this a better world.
RRH I've a tradition of progress.

Fairy Tales 22

- BEAUTY** And I'm progressively traditional. *[Song continues]*
[Lukewarm applause from OTHERS as song ends. Lukewarm because everyone is depressed. They've had their say and all are unhappy. Each has a complaint or concern. Any COMPANY members not on stage now could drift on from various directions. They become part of the scene. Pause. The following dialogue is quiet and not hurried. The following scene sees mood swings. Depression followed by enthusiasm and hope. Timing of the mood swings is important. They need to wash over the group. They are like a crescendo and decrescendo in music. Orchestrate the atmosphere]
- GRETEL** Well would you believe, we've all got a gripe.
- C'RELLA** I never knew we were all so unhappy. *[Sad agreement]*
- SNOW WHITE** *[Addressing entire COMPANY]* Fairy Tale colleagues, I hope you've had a good session. Our group certainly has.
- RRH** *[Flat]* Good? We're all miserable and depressed. *[Buzz from OTHERS]*
- COMPANY 1***[Likewise miserable]* Same here. We had a session on complaints.
- COMPANY 2** Same here. Everyone was upset about one thing or another. *[Reaction]*
- WOLF** Incredible. So we all reckon our fairy tale could be improved.
- COMPANY 3** Same with us. We're all gloom and doom.
[What a co-incidence. OTHERS sadly agree. A mood of depression]
- BEAST** *[Mock dramatic]* "If you have tears, prepare to shed them now."
[Shakespeare]
- SNOW WHITE** Hey, chin up, folks. Our complaints are out in the open. And confession is good for the soul.
- C'RELLA** *[Unhappy]* Well how come I feel so lousy?
- RRH** The worst bit is not being able to do anything about it.
[OTHERS agree. "That's right" ... etc]
- JACK** And as we're miserable, we may have lost our sparkle. *[Despair]*
- GRETEL** *[Distressed]* Oh no! That could make us unpopular? The famous, traditional fairy tale characters are finally feeling their age. *[Concern]*
- BEAUTY** We must do something. We can't disappoint our millions of readers.
- SNOW WHITE** *[At a loss to help]* I can't think of anything to help us. *[More depression]*
- HANSEL** *[Sarcastic]* My neighbour feels helpless ergo I feel helpless.
- PRINCE** *[Happy]* Ergo! That's my star sign. I'm an Ergo!
[Some groans but even PRINCE'S unintentional pun doesn't help. EVERYONE is miserable. The convention is looking decidedly shaky]
- BEAUTY** Is this the time to discuss dress standards for our black-tie dinner?
- RRH** The way we feel, Beauty, there won't be a dinner. As of now this convention's kaput. *[BEAUTY upset. OTHERS likewise]*
- C'RELLA** She's right. We've got a huge problem and no solution.
- BEAST** *[Pause. Quietish]* We could do a swap. *[Ignored]*
- SNOW WHITE** *[Trying to lift morale]* Please don't lose heart. I'm sure someone will think of something. *[No response]*
- HANSEL** The publishers might respond to our petitions and letters.
[Little response. A few shake heads and mutter. "No way" etc. It's useless]

JACK If I had my magic beans, I'd use them to make us all happy.
[No response. The ideas to brighten things have no appeal. Misery reigns]

C'RELLA *[To BEAST. Almost casual]* What did you say?
HANSEL *[Thinks she means him]* I said I've written to the Brothers Grimm. You know, the petition.

C'RELLA No, not you. Beast. What did you say before?
BEAST I said we could do a swap.
[Some look up. Beginning of gradual crescendo of mood change]

GRETEL What do you mean, swap?
BEAST Swap our lives. Change places. Beast becomes Wolf, Wolf becomes Hansel et cetera.
[Reaction all-round. Murmurs, buzz of conversation]

BEAUTY *[Shocked]* You can't swap fairy tales? That's monstrous.
[EVERYONE now hooked on the conversation]

WOLF Beauty's right. That is definitely O.T.T.
SNOW WHITE *[Likes the idea]* No, no, no! It's brilliant. We only swap *here*. This is *our* Convention. We can do what we like.
[Enthusiasm spreading. Crescendo is crescendoing]

RRH *[Fired up]* Swapping roles will give a new look at unhappiness. We can live out our fantasies and give our fairy tales that magic freshness.

BEAUTY *[Uncertain. Slight brake]* Are you sure? I don't think we should ever tamper with tradition?

HANSEL Gee, it sure sounds like tremendous fun. I vote we do it. *[Supported]*
GRETEL It could be our annual highlight. Come to the Fairy Tale Convention and recharge your batteries. *[Enthusiasm is infectious]*

BEAST Characters who are baddies could be goodies and those who are ugly could be beautiful. *[You beauty!]*

PRINCE *[Loud]* No way! *[OTHERS look at him]* I'm just a pretty face. I have to be handsome.

C'RELLA And the dummies could be intellectual giants.
GRETEL Prince, you could be a PhD.
PRINCE *[Excited but confused]* Really? Is that good?
HANSEL It's better than an ergo? *[PRINCE happy again]*

SNOW WHITE Much better. Now come on. I propose we swap roles just for the convention after which we resume our normal characters in our traditional fairy tales. Agreed?

COMPANY *[Enthusiastic]* Agreed! *[BEAUTY not quite so keen. OTHERS are buzzing]*

SNOW WHITE It'll give us a whole new outlook on life. We can even see how the other half lives.

C'RELLA And loves! *[Wow! Enthusiasm spreading]*
HANSEL I can be somebody else. A new character in a new fairy tale.
GRETEL Yes and you could have another sister to boss around.
HANSEL *[Sounding bossy]* I am not bossy!

OTHERS *[Mimic Panto style] Oh yes you are. [Laughter. MUSIC BEGINS]*
PRINCE I could prove I'm more than just a pretty face. I could be Ah, um, ...
another pretty face? [PRINCE laughs with everyone]
[Excitement builds. OTHERS catch on and like the idea]
JACK I could prove my financial wizardry. I could back another winner.
WOLF I'd get a chance to show my hidden feelings, the real me.
BEAST I could have a new personality and truly express myself.
RRH I could experiment with new, progressive ideas.
C'RELLA I could wear some groovy footwear and dance the night away!
HANSEL It'd give this boring Convention a real shot in the arm.
BEAUTY And as it's only for a day, it won't spoil our glorious traditions.
SNOW WHITE Goodbye dull and boring characters.
RRH And hello adventure! *[Big cheer/excitement]*

No. 11 The Grass Is Greener

COMPANY *The other side's grass is so much greener
It's greener on the other side.
The other side's car is a stretch limousiner
What a way to take life's ride.
In someone else's shoes you'll lead a better life
Across the road, let's do a swap
And get away from strife.
The other side's grass is so much greener
It's greener on the other side.*
JACK *I'd like some recognition*
GRETEL *Please change through my petition*
WOLF *Behold my heart's condition*
TRIO *Being someone else will do it.*
BEAST *No need of a beautician*
C'RELLA *No dancing inhibition*
RRH *Bring progress to fruition*
TRIO *Being someone else will do it.*
SNOW WHITE *Let's change the status quo now*
HANSEL *Nice stepmums are the go now*
BEAUTY *Traditions out on show now*
TRIO *Being someone else will do it.*
PRINCE *[Dialogue in song] I'd like to be smarter. Not that I'm not smarter already.
But I'd like to be handsomer and smarterer. Not that I'm not handsomer
and smarterer already. But I'd like to be ... [Pulled into line] Hey!*

*[PRINCE doesn't get to finish his speech during the song. When it's time to re-
commence singing, one or more characters grab PRINCE and "help" him into
line. He doesn't complain because, like everyone else, he's super-happy.*

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Song ends and EVERYONE talks at once. "Great idea" "This'll improve my personality" "A change is as good as a holiday" "Who will you be?" etc]

SNOW WHITE *[Calling]* Hold it, hold it. *[They settle]* We need to decide who goes where.

PRINCE *[Jumping with excitement]* I bags be a handsome prince, a prince, a prince, a handsome prince!

GRETEL *[Grabs/points at the dopey royal]* Hey! Hey! Hey! *[PRINCE settles]* You're already one of those.

C'RELLA *[Worried]* I've just had a terrible thought. If I stay as Cinderella I could get you know who as my new Prince Charming.

SNOW WHITE Everyone *has* to change. Agreed?

OTHERS Yes.

JACK Well I reckon the character we become should be someone who helps us remove our unhappiness. *[Agreement]*

BEAUTY But I couldn't possibly be someone rough and ill-mannered.

BEAST Beauty, that's the point. Learn how the other half lives.

RRH Exactly. And let's *enjoy* ourselves. Let's get a buzz out of being in someone else's shoes.

C'RELLA In my glass slippers you'll be flat out standing let alone getting a buzz.

SNOW WHITE Okay, let's get started. Who wants to go where? *[Pause. No-one moves]* Well, come on, I thought we all liked the idea.

JACK We do. But no-one wants to go first.

HANSEL It's typical. No-one wants to sit down the front, no-one wants to start.

GRETEL Oh for heaven's sake, it's only a game and it's only for a day. I'd like to be Snow White. *[Hubbub]*

SNOW WHITE Thank you, Gretel. An excellent choice. Now, who's next?

PRINCE Hang on, hang on. What if someone else wants to be Snow White?

SNOW WHITE Oh yes, sorry. I'm jumping the gun. Thank you, Prince. Are there any other takers for yours truly, the splendid character of Snow White?

PRINCE I need more time. What exactly happens in your fairy tale?

[Groans all round]

WOLF Listen Princey, that *is* your fairy tale. *[Almost angry]* If you become Snow White you'll have to kiss yourself.

[Laughter. PRINCE confused]

JACK Come on. Are there any more takers for Snow White? *[Pause]* Okay, Gretel, for this year's Convention, you are ... *[Dah-dah]* Snow White!

[Applause. GRETEL and SNOW WHITE mime fun chat. Perhaps a slight pause before each character names their new name. "I'm Whatever"]

WOLF Hey, I've just thought of something. How are we going to know who we are? I mean Gretel doesn't look like Snow White.

HANSEL We could use name tags. And maybe a hat or wig.

SNOW WHITE We'll think of something. It'll be fun introducing ourselves.

RRH I'd like to make a complete change. I'd like to be wealthy and fashionable and meet a handsome prince.

GRETEL You're too late, I've already chosen Snow White.

RRH But not Beauty. *[Hubbub]* She gets to marry a prince too. So I choose ... Beauty!

WOLF *[Joking to RRH]* Why Beauty, what big eyes you have!
[Laughter and applause]

BEAUTY Well, family and elegance are important to me so I choose ... Cinderella!

C'RELLA Good luck, Cinders. But *I'd* like to get out in the open, smell the flowers, bask in the glorious sunshine. I'm ... Gretel! *[Applause]*

HANSEL I fancy a complete change. I fancy ... Wolf!
[More applause and conversation. This is fun and exciting]

WOLF That's fine by me. How about a straight swap? I'm ... Hansel!
[They shake hands amidst hubbub and applause]

SNOW WHITE And I think it's time I chose. I'd like to be ... Red Riding Hood!
[Happiness, excitement]

HANSEL I second the motion. Now, what's for lunch? *[Laughter, teasing]*

JACK I'm really a bit young for all this but if there are no objections, I'd like to be ... Prince! *[Applause. PRINCE upset]*

C'RLLA It's only for a day, Prince. Tomorrow you'll be back as the star.

PRINCE Well he may be a prince but he'll never be handsome.

BEAST Now I know this may sound a little crazy but I've always fancied a bit of adventure. I reckon climbing a giant beanstalk and facing all sorts of dangers might just be the ticket.

JACK Beast, I'd be honoured, kind sir. I propose Beast becomes ... Jack!
[Applause, hubbub. Everyone is excited]

SNOW WHITE Now remember these new characters are just for today. Right, let's get started. *[Hubbub and some start to move]*

PRINCE Excuse me. *[No response so calls louder]* Excuse me. *[OTHERS stop]*

RRH Oh pipe down, Prince. You're always interrupting.

GRETEL That's all you ever do.

PRINCE *[Trembling lip]* But I have to interrupt. I haven't got a new character.

OTHERS *[Genuinely sorry for PRINCE]* Ohhhh. *[Some comfort him]*

C'RELLA Well come on, slow-coach, choose someone. We haven't got all day.

PRINCE I'm not sure. I have to choose someone with a very pretty face.

HANSEL Forget it, mate, Snow White and Beauty are already taken.

PRINCE But I have to be terribly, terribly handsome.

WOLF Bad news, old bean. There's only one character left.

PRINCE *[Shocked at WOLF]* Not you! No! Impossible! I refuse! I'm not going to be a horrible, nasty Wolf.

WOLF Relax. Hansel's the Wolf.

PRINCE *[Relieved]* Oh, of course. I forgot. What a relief.
WOLF You're going to be someone much prettier than Wolf. You're Beast!
[PRINCE horrified. OTHERS highly amused]
PRINCE Beast!! Oh no! I can't! I won't! That's outrageous. I won't do it!
SNOW WHITE Now come on, Prince. We all agreed to play. And it's just for today.
BEAUTY You can do it, Prince. Remember that beauty is only skin deep.
RRH *[In close]* Don't worry, darlin'. Beast turns into a handsome prince.
PRINCE He does? *[OTHERS nod]* Oh that's wonderful. *[Suddenly suspicious]* How handsome?
C'RELLA Stunning. *[PRINCE impressed]*
GRETTEL Gorgeous. *[PRINCE likes this]*
PRINCE Oh my. Will I be ... dishy?
SNOW WHITE You will be ... *[Mock theatrics]* breathtaking.
PRINCE *[Looks around, smiles]* All right. I'll be ... Beast!
[MUSIC BEGINS. Big cheer from everyone]

No. 12 The Grass Is Greener Reprise

COMPANY *The other side's grass is so much greener
It's greener on the other side.
The other side's car is a stretch limousiner
What a way to take life's ride.
In someone else's shoes you'll lead a better life
Across the road let's do a swap and get away from strife.
The other side's grass is so much greener
It's greener on the other side.*

[Everyone is happy and excited. They exit chatting excitedly about their experiment. Lights begin to fade. "Who are you?" "I'm so-and-so." etc. Lights dim. The stage is empty or just about so when a spot picks out front door of cottage. It opens. Suddenly WITCH'S head appears. She cackles then appears then creeps forward to the very front of stage. Fade to black except on WITCH. She cackles and makes as to cast a spell. She raises one hand and speaks]

WITCH It's interval! *[Snap]*
[She finger snaps which is the lighting cue. She's flicked the switch. Instant blackout. WITCH exits in darkness. Slowly bring up house lights]

End of Act One

No. 13 Entr'acte

[Entr'acte ends. Curtain rises on sunny afternoon at the Fairy Tale Convention. PRINCIPALS, except WITCH and SNOW WHITE, are spread out in front of or near the cottage in small groups chatting about their new characters. Note. There are no props, hats, wigs, garments, etc to denote the new characters. They remain as themselves. This challenges the characters to re-introduce themselves and challenges the audience to concentrate!]

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SNOW WHITE *[Comes skipping in]* Hello everyone. *[They stop their chatting and pay attention]* All set for our little game of swap the fairy tale?
[OTHERS agree. Yes, yes, yes]

RRH I'm ready. Let's start.

SNOW WHITE Enjoy yourselves and I look forward to catching up with you later.

HANSEL Catching up with you later?

GRETEL What are talking about?

SNOW WHITE I'm Little Red Riding Hood. *[Indicating]* This is my grandmother's cottage. *[Buzz from OTHERS. SW bossy]* So move. You're in my fairytale.

OTHERS What!

BEAST *Your* fairy tale! I'm Jack. *[Indicating cottage]* and this is my Mother's cottage. She's inside right now waiting for me. I've just sold the cow!
[Reaction]

GRETEL Oh I'm sorry, Jack. I'm Snow White and inside that little cottage are seven little chairs and seven little beds. It belongs to seven little miners and I'm their housekeeper.
[Buzz from OTHERS]

RRH This is ridiculous. Surely you know fairy tales are all about magic, fantasy and imagination. That isn't a cottage, it's a castle!

OTHERS *[Stunned]* A castle!

RRH I'm Beauty and inside the castle lives a horrible Beast. He's ugly and grumpy and mysterious and he's expecting me right now. So please, move along. *[More reaction]*

BEAUTY No, no, no. There's been a terrible mix-up. I'm Cinderella and this is where my stepmother and stepsisters live. This is where my fairy godmother comes to visit. Around the back is a giant pumpkin for you know what. *[More reaction]*

WOLF There aren't any vegetables here. I oughta know, I'm Hansel.

C'RELLA And I'm Gretel. We discover this cottage after being lost in the forest.

WOLF This cottage is made of gingerbread and belongs to the wicked witch.
[Upstairs window flies open and WITCH'S head appears]

WITCH *[Wicked laugh/cackle]*
[OTHERS are momentarily scared, gasp and move closer to one another. Window closes or WITCH disappears. Confusion reigns]

C'RELLA *[Uncertain]* This is crazy. In fact, I don't think this game is such a good idea after all. *[Some agreement]*

SNOW WHITE Nonsense. It'll be fine. We've just got off on the wrong foot.

RRH Why don't we all go for a walk and when we come back, whoever's here can be in their new fairy tale? *[Agreement]*

BEAST What a good idea.

SNOW WHITE Okay. Everyone go for a walk, take your time and when you come back, it'll be your turn at the cottage.

RRH You mean the castle.

SNOW WHITE Call it what you like. Come on. *[Exiting]* Let's go.
[They exit in different directions chatting as they go. Lights dim. Sound effects of wind/wolves howling. Not too dark but certainly a change and a tad spooky. Stage is empty. Suddenly WITCH scampers on or out from cottage, stops, faces front, gives evil cackle and speaks with WITCH voice]

WITCH So they think the grass is greener on the other side, do they? A change is as good as a holiday, is it? Well, we'll soon see about that.
[Horrible laugh and then with flourish moves to cottage and enters. Pause. Lights slowly resume their previous sunny disposition. We hear singing off-stage. Unaccompanied. "The other side's grass is so much greener". BEAUTY enters, skipping. "It's greener on the other side." She stops singing and looks at cottage. Much of the following solo dialogue is thinking aloud. The audience learns what is happening because the characters – playing someone else – think aloud]

BEAUTY This must be my stepmother's house. I can't wait to go inside and try on my gorgeous new ballgown. And those glass slippers will be just divine.
[Looks around] I wonder where my coach and horses are?
[BEAUTY goes to door and knocks. Door flung open and WITCH appears]

WITCH *[Evil]* Yes?

BEAUTY *[Shocked]* Oh, stepmother, you gave me a fright. It is I, Cinderella.

WITCH *[Still super nasty]* You haven't cleaned the fire-place.

BEAUTY *[Uncertain]* Is my fairy godmother was inside?

WITCH You haven't cooked the supper.

BEAUTY *[Distress starting]* I think it's time I put on my beautiful clothes.

WITCH And you haven't even swept the path.

BEAUTY *[Stunned]* What!?! *[BEAUTY takes over]* I mean, pardon?

WITCH *[Thrusting broom at BEAUTY who takes it]* Here. Get sweeping.

BEAUTY Sweeping? But I'm Cinderella. I have to go to the ball.

WITCH Sweep! Or else! *[Slams door]*

BEAUTY *[Shell shocked]* House work? But I'm Cinderella.

WITCH *[Flings open door and scares BEAUTY again]* And hurry up with that broom-stick. I'm going flying tonight! *[Slams door]*

BEAUTY *[Miserable, starts sweeping in front of cottage]* This is not what I expected. This is horrible. I'd much rather live with the awful Beast. *[Sweeps as she exits]* I don't want to play this game. *[Crying]* I want my old fairy tale back. *[Exiting]* Help! Help! *[Exits]*
[Pause. WOLF and CINDERELLA enter through the forest. They are distressed and hungry]

WOLF Come on, Gretel. Don't give up yet. Look! Over there.

C'RELLA Oh, Hansel. It's a cottage. We're saved!
[They move towards front of cottage]

WOLF I'm sure they'll be someone here who'll look after us.

C'RELLA Our stepmother tried to murder us, Hansel. She left us in the forest to be eaten by wild bears.

WOLF But now we're safe. *[Sniffs]* Can you smell something? *[Mimes breaking off a piece of the house. Sniffs and eats]* Hey! This is food.

C'RELLA Food!? *[Mimes breaking off piece of cottage and eating]* It's gingerbread.

WOLF *[More mimed eating]* This is brilliant. An edible house.
[They tuck in but WITCH throws open door and WOLF screams]

C'RELLA *[Has her back to door]* What? What's happened? Is it poison?
[WOLF points in fear. CINDERELLA turns around and screams]

WITCH *[Evil]* Hello, children.

C'RELLA *[Terrified]* Oh no! It's a wolf! *[sic]*

WOLF No, I'm the Wolf. That's the witch.

WITCH Won't you come inside? I've got oodles of lovely food.

C'RELLA Ah, thank you, but we're quite happy with your window-sill.

WOLF Yes. Your downpipe is delicious.

WITCH But there's wonderful food inside. I'd love to fatten you up.

C'RELLA Oh, okay. If you insist. You're very kind. *[The children move inside]*

WITCH Nonsense. We can't have little children outside where it's dangerous.
[Children inside, WITCH looks either way, cackles then closes door. Pause. Sudden simultaneous screams from all three. Door flings open. Screaming, WOLF and CINDERELLA burst out and close the door. Screaming stops]

WOLF That's incredible! She's a cannibal.

C'RELLA So are you! You eat Grandma and Little Red Riding Hood.

WOLF No I don't. I'm your brother, Hansel.

C'RELLA Oh that's right. I'm sorry, I forgot. *[Back to dilemma]* What'll we do?

WOLF Report the Witch to the R.S.P.C.A.

C'RELLA And then go back to our own fairy tales.

WOLF Darn good idea. Come on.
[Takes CINDERELLA'S hand and they flee in earnest. Pause. We hear singing inside cottage. Unaccompanied. "The other side's grass is so much greener ..." Door opens and GRETEL appears with smallish table-cloth. She shakes then folds it as she continues to sing. "It's greener on the other side"]

GRETEL There now, let's see. I've made seven beds, cooked seven suppers and now I'll set seven places at the table.
[Sings to la as she enters house, closes door. WITCH appears from behind cottage. Face first. Checks coast is clear then sneaks towards door. Cackles]

WITCH This time I'll really kill her. This time, Snow White is dead! *[Cackles]*
[WITCH knocks on door]

GRETEL *[Calls from inside]* Who is it?

WITCH *[Phoney voice]* Greengrocer Avon calling.

GRETEL *[Calling]* Thank you. I don't want anything today.

WITCH But I've got some delicious rosy red apples. You may try one for free.

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- GRETEL** *[Door opens in a flash. As GRETEL]* You beautie. *[Takes apple. As SNOW WHITE]* How kind. Thank you very much.
- WITCH** *[Wicked glee]* Enjoy. *[Exits cackling]*
- GRETEL** *[Mimes big bite of apple. Chewing]* This is scrumptious. It's ... *[Suddenly clasps throat]* Oh no! I've been poisoned! I'm going to die!
[GRETEL staggers then collapses on chair against cottage or on ground. Head slumps forward, she's dead. Pause. Unaccompanied singing offstage from JACK. "The other side's grass is always greener...". JACK enters from forest. "It's greener on the other side." He stops, thinks aloud]
- JACK** Gosh, being the handsome Prince is very tricky. First I have to find Snow White. Then I Ah, that's the tricky part. *[Turns towards cottage and sees GRETEL]* Oh my goodness! *[Goes to GRETEL]* Hello. Are you all right? *[No response]* This must be Snow White and I have to save her. *[To GRETEL]* Can you hear me? I'm the handsome Prince. I was just passing in the hope I might find a beautiful young maiden who needed to be revived. Is that you? *[No response]* I can fix everything you know, just by giving you a kiss.
But I've got a little problem. *[Looks around to see if anyone might hear this embarrassing admission. The coast is clear. Whispers]* I've never kissed a girl before. *[Pause]* If you could just give me a few pointers, you know, a tip or something. I mean, do I close my eyes? Do I stop breathing? *[No response]* Oh please help me. I can't save you if you won't help me. *[No response]* Do I just go *[Makes three pucker sounds/movements]* Or is that too much? My mother gives me a very sloppy kiss, especially when she's had a glass or two of sherry. Would you like a *sloppy* kiss? *[No response]* Oh please help me. *[Getting distressed]* I've never done this before. In fact, I think I'm an Ergo. *[Frustration mounts]* Oh please help me. Oh ... tarnation! *[JACK takes GRETEL'S hand and slowly raises it to be kissed. A bit of stop-start. Just as her hand is about to be kissed, GRETEL giggles]*
- GRETEL** *[Giggles]* Ohhh. That tickles.
- JACK** *[Relieved]* Thank goodness, you're alive. *[Suddenly full of pride]* Oh my! Oh goodness! I've saved the Princess. *[Helps her to her feet]*
- GRETEL** *[As GRETEL]* Not quite, buster. All you've done is tickle the tomboy.
- JACK** *[Upset]* But you're alive. That's what the Prince has to do.
- GRETEL** And I suppose you want recognition for your super seductive skills. Jack the lad, sexy superstar! *[JACK panics. GRETEL starts to exit]* Wait'll the others hear about this.
- JACK** *[Follows in a flap]* No, wait. Oh please don't tell the others.
- GRETEL** *[Stirring]* The financial whiz who tickles his girlfriends.
- JACK** No. I don't want recognition. I want to be anogalous [sic] or a Nicholas or anything. Please. No recognition!

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[They exit babbling, GRETEL teasing, JACK distressed. Pause. Unaccompanied singing offstage from SNOW WHITE. "The other side's grass is so much greener ..." SNOW WHITE enters through the forest carrying small cane basket. She skips downstage but stops in fright when HANSEL steps out either from behind cottage or from the wings]

HANSEL *[Oily voice/nature]* Hello little girl. And what's your name?

SNOW WHITE *[Child-like]* Oh, you startled me. My mother said I should never talk to strangers.

HANSEL Strangers yes but rangers, no. You see, I'm the forest ranger. And where might you be going?

SNOW WHITE I'm going to visit my Grandmother. She's not very well and I have a basket of goodies for her.

HANSEL How kind you are. And where does the dear old lady reside?

SNOW WHITE In a cottage not far from here. *[Points to cottage]* It's quite like that one. *[HANSEL looks and nods]* If you follow this path you will come to her place.

HANSEL Splendid. Now, would you like some pretty flowers for your Grannie?

SNOW WHITE Oh yes please.

HANSEL They're over there. *[Pointing offstage]*

SNOW WHITE But isn't it wrong and illegal to pick wildflowers?

HANSEL *[Slightly thrown before recovering]* Normally yes but these are special flowers which must be picked ... *[Finger-snaps]* or they'll die!

SNOW WHITE *[Frightened]* Oh, all right. *[Exiting]* I'll go and pick some. Thank you very much, Mr Stranger. *[Exits worried]*

HANSEL *[Calling]* That's Ranger. Bye.

[HANSEL waves then changes suddenly and rubs his hands with glee. He moves to/turns to cottage]

HANSEL This must be the old dragon's lair. I'm feeling peckish. How about Grandma as a starter with Little Red Riding Hood to follow?

[Wicked laugh. Knocks on door]

WITCH *[From inside. Old lady's voice]* Who's there?

HANSEL *[Mimicing RRH]* Grannie, it is I, Little Red Riding Hood.

WITCH Oh come in, child, come in.

HANSEL *[Has trouble with door]* Ah, I can't, Grannie. The door is locked.

WITCH Oh dear. That's my fault. Just a minute.

HANSEL Can you hurry up. I'm very hungry. *[Faces front, rubs tummy and grins]* Very hungry.

[Door opens revealing WITCH. HANSEL turns, sees WITCH with her arms raised and fingers extended looking mighty evil. HANSEL nearly dies. He screams as WITCH lunges at HANSEL who manages to escape and dash off in opposite direction from that taken by SNOW WHITE. Furious WITCH closes door. SNOW WHITE enters skipping and goes to door. She knocks]

WITCH *[From inside. Old lady's voice]* Who's there?

SNOW WHITE Grannie, it is I, Little Red Riding Hood.
WITCH Oh that's wonderful. Come in, child, come in.
HANSEL *[Has trouble with door]* Ah, I can't, Grannie. The door is locked.
WITCH Oh dear. That's my fault. Just a minute.
[Suddenly HANSEL races in and up to SNOW WHITE]
HANSEL *[Racing on. He's still scared]* No, don't go in there. *[Leading her away]*
SNOW WHITE But that's my Grannie's house. She wants to see me.
HANSEL Believe me. Not in *this* fairy tale.
SNOW WHITE Let me go. You're not the ranger. You're the Wolf.
HANSEL That's as may be, kid, but your Grannie's the Witch!
[SNOW WHITE more alarmed]
SNOW WHITE The Witch! I don't like this game. I'm leaving.
HANSEL Come 'ere!. *[They scamper off, HANSEL chasing]*
[Pause. Unaccompanied singing offstage from BEAST. "The other side's grass is so much greener ..." BEAST enters carrying small cloth bag. He is very happy. "It's greener on the other side". Stops outside cottage]
BEAST Oh boy, have I just pulled off the greatest financial transaction ever. I have just sold our one and only elderly, dried-up, pensioner cow, for the incredible sum of five magic beans. Just wait till my dear, sweet old mother hears the fabulous news. She will be over the moon. *[Calls. Sing song]* Oh Mother. It's your clever little boy. Jackie Whackie is home from market. And have I got some news for you. *[Door flung open and WITCH appears. BEAST is thrown. He was expecting grey hair and an apron]* M M M M Mother? Is that you?
WITCH *[Snaps]* Have you sold the cow?
BEAST *[Recovering. Slowly]* Yes. Yes, I've sold the cow.
WITCH Have you made a million?
BEAST *[Back to being excited]* Oh yes, Mother. It's the deal of the decade.
WITCH Fifty?
BEAST What? *[Corrects himself]* I mean, pardon?
WITCH Sixty?
BEAST Ah no. Not sixty.
WITCH Seventy?
BEAST No, mother. It's only five but ...
WITCH *[Going berserk]* Five!! Five!!! You moronic imbecile!
BEAST *[Under serious threat of physical damage]* Mother, wait! It's five beans.
WITCH Beans! Not money?
BEAST Magic beans! *[Holds out bag]* They're magic, Mother!
WITCH *[She grabs the bag]* I'll give you magic. Come here!
[BEAST starts to back away. She mimes taking bean from bag and mimes throwing it at BEAST. He panics and runs. If you have explosive effects, these could go off at side of stage near BEAST. He doesn't sprint madly. He runs away then cautiously moves back to her to try and explain.]

Then she throws another bean and he's off again. He's in a bad way. WITCH keeps yelling and miming throwing the beans. Only five throws.

If you have no effects, pretend that BEAST is being branded with the beans and he mimes being hit. He keeps yelling, especially when he pretends to be hit. He's trying to explain the magic properties and avoid being hit and screaming in fright when the beans explode or he is hit. Phew!]

BEAST *[Exiting]* No, mother. You don't understand. Ow! *[Continues ad lib]*

WITCH *[Miming throwing]* You dunderhead! I'll give you beans! *[Continues]*

[BEAST eventually escapes, the explosions cease, the smoke drifts and the WITCH enters the cottage and slams the door. The stage is empty. Pause. We hear RED RIDING HOOD singing off stage. "The other side's grass is always greener ..." She enters full of eager anticipation. She moves towards castle. "It's greener on the other side." She stops and surveys the castle]

RRH Oh this is wonderful. I know the Beast is horrible and ugly but something deep inside tells me he's not really bad. I'm sure he looks revolting but somehow, some way, I think I'd like to be his friend. Apparently he's got a fantastic kitchen staff so at least the grub'll be good. Now, how do I get inside? And more importantly, where is the repulsive, gargoyleian monster? *[Looks about. Calls]* Oh Beast? Hello? *[Moves to other side]* Must be over here. *[Calls]* Hello? Beastie? Where are you? *[Frustrated]* Talk about not welcoming your guest. *[Calls]* Oh Beast? *[Nothing]* This is ridiculous. Ah! Maybe he's inside. *[Opens door and calls]* Hello? Monsieur Beast? *[Nothing]* Probably upstairs watching telly. *[Enters house. Pause. We could hear her calling inside. Suddenly she appears at upstairs window]* Well this is really spooky. There's a table in here, laden with grub, there's a bed turned down and yet there's not a soul to be seen. Great food, five-star accommodation and no-one to talk to. *[Retreats inside. We hear her call once or twice. Then she appears at door and comes out]* This has gotta be a wind-up. I can't marry the gorgeous prince till I meet the hideous house-husband. *[Exasperated]* But where is he? I've been duded. He doesn't exist. *[Starts to exit]* I'll kill that Beast. *[Calls en route]* Forget marriage, Bad Breath. How does homicide sound? *[Exits]*

[Pause. PRINCE is heard singing off-stage. Incorrectly. "The greener grass's side is browner on Sunday ... " PRINCE as BEAST enters full of himself. "It's browner on the green green grass of home." Looks around]

PRINCE Aha. My castle. This is where I, the ugly, deformed Beast, play host to the ravishing Beauty. I'll bet she's inside right now frantic to gaze upon my splendid exquisiteness. I bet she'll love my Ergo. Now, I wonder which fairy tale character is pretending to be Beauty. They were all desperate to play opposite Beast knowing that he's really a prince and they get a kiss from my splendiferous lips. *[Looks around]* Right. On with the osculation. *[Goes to door]*

Who is the lucky damsel about to be kissed by Mister Wonderful?
[Knocks on door] Come out, come out, whoever you are. Come for a kiss from the fabulous star. *[Door flies open and WITCH appears]*

WITCH Somebody knock?
PRINCE *[Gobsmacked]* Ah, is that you, Beauty?
WITCH Wadda ya want?
PRINCE I must say, your costume and make-up are fantastic.
WITCH Who are you?
PRINCE *[Recovering a little]* Ah, sorry. I know it's impossible to believe but I am the ugliest person in the world.
WITCH You can say that again. *[PRINCE momentarily miffed]*
PRINCE But underneath this revolting exterior is a dashing, handsome prince.
WITCH *[Moves in]* Prove it.
PRINCE Sorry?
WITCH Give us a kiss.
PRINCE *[Holding up hands]* Hey, hey, just a minute. First I ask you to marry me, then I change into Mister Stunning and *then*, I'll give you the honour of one of my mind-blowing kisses.

WITCH You mean it?
PRINCE Of course I mean it.
WITCH You're really going to kiss me?
PRINCE I'm really going to kiss you.
WITCH On the lips?
PRINCE *[Chuckles]* Oh I get it.
WITCH You will if you kiss me, buddy.
PRINCE You think I don't know how. You think I'm an Ergo. Well rest assured, sweet Beauty, I am the King of Kissing. I've puckered and pecked more princesses than you've had hot dinners.

WITCH How much?
PRINCE *[Shocked, amused]* How much?! Dear Beautie, I don't charge for kisses. I enjoy it. I love getting a reaction.
WITCH You'll get a reaction all right. Listen Turkey, I've got a few spells to cast so can we get this over with – like now!
[Other PRINCIPALS followed by COMPANY drift on from various directions. They don't interrupt or disturb the kissing couple. They notice them and point them out to each other]

PRINCE *[Deep breath]* Never let it be said the Handsome Prince refused a damsel's demand. *[Takes WITCH safely in his arms and she leans back a la Sigmund Romberg scene]* Darn your make-up's good. And who does your hair? That's the best disguise I've ever seen.

WITCH Come on, come on. I haven't got all day.
PRINCE Of course. Well here comes the thrill of your life.

WITCH Ditto, Dingbat!

PRINCE *[PRINCE does a few exaggerated lip movements to front and is about to kiss when he sees OTHERS]* Oh hello, Beauty.
[Resumes kissing stance then suddenly realises] Beauty!?! And Cinderella. And Red Riding Hood. *[Turns in other direction. Starting to worry]* And Gretel. And Snow White. And ... *[Nervous. To WITCH]* Who are you?

WITCH Kiss me, Gorgeous ... *[Suddenly loud]* I'm the Witch!
[Scream from PRINCE who safely releases WITCH then takes off for a lap of the stage pursued by the WITCH. PRINCE screams "Save me! Help me!" etc while the WITCH screams, "Kiss me! Kiss me!" The OTHERS laugh, point and get out of the way. After a lap, even less, WITCH keeps running and exits while PRINCE is rescued as he hides behind some other characters. Everyone is highly amused, enjoying themselves]

PRINCE *[Greatly relieved]* Oh thank you, thank you. You've saved me from the Wicked Witch. Oh that was terrible.

SNOW WHITE Terrible? You looked like you were having a ball. *[OTHERS amused]*

RRH *[Annoyed]* It serves you right, Prince. You were supposed to be Beast. I spent ages in your castle and couldn't find a soul.

PRINCE I was Beast. But I thought you were Beauty disguised as a Witch.
[Reaction. OTHERS amused. BEAUTY annoyed]

BEAUTY Oh thanks very much. You mean you couldn't tell?!

PRINCE *[Still in shock]* It was terrible. I nearly kissed her!

BEAST I don't mind telling you she frightened the life out of me. I was Jack and when I came home with the magic beans she went deadset berko.

GRETEL She was evil with Snow White. I got a poisoned apple.

SNOW WHITE Yes but Gretel, the Prince comes along, kisses you and saves the day.

PRINCE No I didn't. I was Beast.

RRH Who didn't turn up on time! Where were you?

JACK *[Worried]* No, I was Prince. And I brought Snow White back to life just as her fairy tale tells us. *[Subtle plea to GRETEL]*

GRETEL *[Let's JACK off the hook]* Oh that's right. The Prince is the world's greatest kisser. He saved my life! *[JACK sighs with relief]*

WOLF We had the worst time of all. I was Hansel.

C'RELLA He's right. I was Gretel. It was diabolical!

WOLF And you'll never guess. The Witch is a *cannibal*.

C'RELLA She's a monster. *[Agreement]*

HANSEL Exactly. I was Wolf and you should have seen Grannie. Mama Mia!

SNOW WHITE I was Little Red Riding Hood and I never got to meet my Grannie. It was awful. My fairy tale has its faults but my new one was a shocker.

BEAST I think you're speaking for all of us. *[Agreement]*

BEAUTY Well I will *never* play that stupid, stupid game ever again.
[Silence. Pause. Following speeches are softer, quieter. Sombre mood]

WOLF I think you're right, Beauty. To be honest, I hated it.

RRH I thought the other side's grass was supposed to be greener.
HANSEL It is until you get there. And then it's just the same as yours.
GRETEL It's not the same. It's worse *[Agreement]*
JACK I thought being someone else would solve my problems. But other people have got problems too. *[Agreement]* And sometimes their problems are worse than ours. *[Sombre agreement]*
BEAST Well blame me. I suggested the silly game in the first place.
C'RELLA It's nobody's fault. We all wanted to play. We all thought it would help solve our problems. *["That's right"]*
RRH Not all ideas work, you know. Let's put it down to experience. *[Agreement]*
SNOW WHITE Well folks, it seems none of us has the perfect life and there's not a lot we can do about it. *[Despondency. Pause]*
BEAST And don't forget we still haven't tackled our original complaints.
RRH Terrific. Misery upon misery.
JACK *[Sums up everyone's feelings]* And here we go again. It's the same every year. Another lousy convention. *[Sombre agreement]*
PRINCE *[Pause]* I don't think it's all bad news. *[OTHERS not interested]*
C'RELLA Oh go and kiss a Witch.
PRINCE I mean, at least we now know being someone else is not the answer. *[No response]* We can forget about wanting to be somebody else.
GRETEL We're too tired, Prince. We're tired and miserable and bored. *[Pause. MUSIC BEGINS]*
PRINCE But we're forgetting the most obvious thing. We need to stop thinking about *unhappy* things and concentrate on what's *good* about life.
JACK *[PRINCE is ignored. Yawns]* How about we go home early?
WOLF *[Stretching]* Yeah. Good idea.
PRINCE It's true. We're *choosing* to be miserable. But it is a choice. So let's make another one. Let's be positive. Let's *choose* the good life.

No. 15. Be Content

PRINCE *Be happy with what we've got, content with our current lot
There's no joy in envy, work hard and then be
Happy with what we've got.*
[Slowly, OTHERS listen to PRINCE. They realise he's right. And better still, the dopey one has come up trumps. SNOW WHITE hops up and praises PRINCE. Dialogue during song]

SNOW WHITE Prince, you're a genius. I could kiss you.
PRINCE *[Uncertain]* No, please, not that again.
SNOW WHITE You're brilliant, Prince. You've helped us all *and* saved the convention.
PRINCE Well I'm not just a pretty face, you know. *[Friendly amusement]*

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SNOW WHITE It's the best advice we've ever had. Be positive. Take control of your own life. Prince, you really are my saviour!
[They sing a duet during which the OTHERS start to catch the mood. Then RRH and WOLF get in on the act. The new mood of happiness spreads slowly but surely. It builds]

RRH & WOLF Oh count our blessings, all you've got
Count your blessing
Go count the bloomin' lot.

C'RELLA Take a look at neighbour, see their new car

BEAUTY & BEAST Take a look at best friend, knock-out, a star

RRH & WOLF Take a look at worst foe, make a faux pas

QUINTET You're jealous and jaundiced, resent who you are.

HANSEL & GRETEL Shake yourself and wake up, jealousy's bad

JACK Monster huge with green eyes, mocks, makes you sad

SNOW WHITE Covet and you suffer, make yourself mad

TUTTI Shun other's fortunes, just make yourself glad.
[Chorus repeated in what becomes a lively Latin number. It begins quietly as a solo by PRINCE but finishes with entire company in huge conga line/s of celebration. They're happy because they've rid themselves of their envy of wanting someone else's fairy tale or life. Song finishes with everyone on a high. Before the applause has finished there is a major storm MUSIC BEGINS and is a part of the storm effects]

No. 15 Spooky Music

[During the music, lights flash, thunder claps and everyone is petrified. They scream and huddle together. What is going on. The following dialogue needs to be shouted using sensible voice production. Eerie lighting]

C'RELLA What's happening? What's making that noise?!

SNOW WHITE I don't know! It's some sort of storm.

PRINCE But it's a sunny day!

WOLF It's sounds like something upstairs. *[Pointing above]* Up there!
[More rumbling and pseudo lightning. More fear]

JACK I know that sound. That's the giant! *[Wave of panic amongst delegates]*

OTHERS *[Oh no!]* The giant!!

BEAST We can't have the Giant! Who invited him?

SNOW WHITE I had to invite him!

HANSEL He'll smash all our buildings!

RRH He'll eat all our food.

SNOW WHITE All fairy tale characters must be invited to the annual convention.

GRETEL If he comes down that beanstalk there won't be a convention!

C'RELLA We escaped the Witch, we'll never escape the Giant. *[Distress]*

BEAUTY He's not allowed to hurt us. We're not in his fairy tale.

WOLF He doesn't have a choice! His shoes are size eighty-four! *[Reaction]*

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PRINCE *[Bold for him]* Well why don't we do something?!
[Everyone freezes and looks at PRINCE. Who is this dominant, brave, would-be leader? We all thought PRINCE was a ninny. Gradually storm abates and music stops. Slowly resume sunny lighting]

RRH Prince is right. We must do something.

SNOW WHITE I think standing orders allow us to enact a scene from one fairy tale.

BEAST I vote we enact the final scene from *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Agreed?

OTHERS Yes!
[Lots of activity. The GIANT is coming. The beanstalk must be chopped down. How? By whom? Develop a farce-type scenario – lots of coming and going]

GRETEL Come on, Jack, do your thing.

WOLF Where's your axe?

JACK It's round the back.

HANSEL Well go and get it man! *[MUSIC BEGINS. JACK takes off into cottage or around the back]* And hurry!

No. 16 Hurry Music

[Dialogue again needs to be increased in volume to [a] be heard over the music and [b] to portray the panic and fear. Lots of choreographed chaos]

RRH It may be too late. The Giant's already climbing down.

SNOW WHITE I'll get my poisoned apple. *[She enters cottage]*

WOLF I'll find the woodsman! *[Runs off into forest]*

C'RELLA I'll find my fairy godmother. *[She enters cottage]*

HANSEL I'll find some pebbles. *[Runs off into wood]*

BEAUTY I'll find my father. *[Politely – for her – exits]*
[Time the following entrances well. Keep them coming. It's like a farce. As each character returns with their news, the tension and their distress increases. Each new character should enter BEFORE the previous one has finished speaking. Keep it flowing. JACK is first]

JACK I found the axe. Out of me way!
[JACK, carrying rubber axe, rushes to beanstalk and starts attacking. Add sound effects of axe chopping. Onlookers worried]

SNOW WHITE *[Rushes out with apple]* Here's my poisoned apple. What do I do?

GRETEL Anything. *[Taking apple]* Here, I'll do it?!
[GRETEL tosses apple into upper branches. It sails out into the wings. It lands safely offstage. It is a soft material apple. Any stagehand who catches it wins a kiss from the stage manager!]

WOLF *[Rushes in with model chain-saw]* The woodsman gave me his new saw!
[WOLF goes to beanstalk and joins ther JACK attack. Add sound effects of chain saw operating]

C'RELLA *[Rushing in]* My fairy godmother wants a pumpkin! Has anyone got a pumpkin? *[More distress]*

HANSEL *[Hurrying back]* I can't find the stones. I need moonlight.

BEAUTY *[Enters in a tizz]* My father's too sick to help!

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- GRETEL** *[Pointing above]* You're too late! Here comes the giant!
[OTHERS freeze and look to where GIANT is about to appear. MUSIC STOPS. Pause. Silence. Sudden explosion by beanstalk and everyone screams/cries out and falls back. Huge cackle from WITCH on roof of cottage or from upstairs window]
- HANSEL** *[Pointing]* Look! It's the Witch! *[Everyone turns to look]*
[Another cackle and the WITCH disappears. Down the chimney?]
- JACK** *[Looking up the beanstalk]* The giant is going home!
[Huge cheer. Props are removed and everyone moves back around cottage. They are much relieved. Chatter, chatter, chatter]
- BEAST** Who would've believed it, hey? Saved by the Witch.
- SNOW WHITE** *[Calling]* Thank you, everyone. Quiet please. *[Eventually the chatter stops]* Thank you. Well, what a convention, hey? *[Buzz]*
- WOLF** Best one in years. Learnt heaps, had a ball and we haven't even started the midnight lemonade party. *[Laughter, teasing]*
- HANSEL** There is still one more item of General Business. *[Howls of protest]*
- SNOW WHITE** No, let him speak. *[Noise stops]* Everyone has the right to speak.
- GRETEL** You're not, Hansel. You cannot raise that subject.
- HANSEL** It's too important. I must tell everyone. *[Buzz. What's he on about?]*
- BEAST** I don't like the sound of this. What are you on about?
- HANSEL** I don't like it either but it's happening today, right here, to us, in the world of fairy tales. The P.C.P. have declared war. *[Big reaction]*
- RRH** War? P.C.P.? What you on about?
- HANSEL** The P.C.P. is a group of adults who want to radically change our fairy tales or even have them removed altogether. *[Huge reaction]*
- GRETEL** P.C.P. stands for Politically Correct Parents; people who believe fairy tales shouldn't have violence or sexist or racist behaviour.
- PRINCE** I haven't got a clue what you're talking about?
- JACK** Yes and me me.
- RRH** They want to radically change or even ban us? Why?
- PRINCE** Parents want to ban fairy tales?
- HANSEL** They say we aren't politically correct.
- C'RELLA** But parents are the very people who perpetuate fairy tales.
- JACK** Parents rule the world. You should see my Mum.
- C'RELLA** They can't censor or ban us. We've been going for hundreds of years. *[Agreement]*
- GRETEL** They say some of our tales are unsuitable. *[Reaction]* They object to fairy tales where people are treated badly or reviled because of their appearance or commit terrible things like murder.
- RRH** But that's half the fairy tales in the world.
- HANSEL** I reckon they want to shame us into making changes. *[Reaction]*
- BEAUTY** But we're only the characters. If anyone's to blame it's the writers.

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- BEAST** And what about the fact that nearly all fairy tales have a happy ending?
[Agreement]
- GRETEL** Which is another thing not politically correct. Simple solutions, everything luvvy-duvvy at the wave of a fairy's wand.
- WOLF** But that's a fairy tale. *[Agreement]* They're not like real life.
- SNOW WHITE** I'm sorry my friends. I've known about political correctness for some time. If *they're* correct, maybe fairy tales are finished.
- OTHERS** *[Shocked]* No! What!
- BEAST** That's preposterous!
- RRH** It's outrageous!
- JACK** We've got to fight back.
- C'RELLA** We can't fight back. We have no power. If they want us removed, that's what'll happen. *[Depression]*
- HANSEL** Petitions are no good. We tried them and got nowhere.
- BEAUTY** I can't believe this is happening. It's terrible. I feel so ...
[She breaks down and cries and is comforted]
- C'RELLA** It's pretty ironic. I mean our fairy tales are full of happy endings yet here we are, absolutely shattered.
- SNOW WHITE** *[Defeated]* Perhaps we should call it quits right now.
[Heads drop. Misery. No solution]
- WITCH** *[Pause. From above]* Well, well, well. *[Gasps. Everyone turns and looks up. WITCH is lit. Gradually fade other lights and concentrate on WITCH]* So that's what a bunch of losers looks like.
- PRINCE** You! You tricked us and made our lives a misery.
- WOLF** Come to gloat have we? Got the salt to rub in our wounds?
- WITCH** Actually I've come to help. *[Reaction]* Yes, I know I treated you badly.
- HANSEL** *[Angry]* Treated us badly! You're the worst, most
- OTHERS** Shhhh. *[HANSEL sees they want him to be quiet]*
- WITCH** *[MUSIC BEGINS]* You see in fairy tales, someone has to be evil and usually it's the ugly or revolting and let's face it – I'm both.
- GRETEL** So after almost destroying our lives you now expect us to believe you're trying to help?
- WITCH** *[Shrugs]* Help can sometimes come from unexpected sources. And your problem can be fixed by taking one simple step. You need to fall in love.
- SNOW WHITE** But fairy tales are full of love and romance.
- WITCH** Before you can love anyone, you must do something very important.

No. 18 Fall In Love

- Witch** *You're as beautiful as you want to be
You're as sweet and kind and as nice as can be
You're a joy to know with a heart set free*

PREVIEW ENDS

*You can sink your soaps, your sitcoms and such
We require a smiling face.
You can miss moralities, mysteries, masques
The finale must be bright.
And with this in mind you are sure to find
You'll go laughing home all right.*

[Final number ends. Lower curtain and/or kill lights. Slight pause as some or all leave the stage. Start Curtain Calls. Raise curtain and/or bring up lights]

No. 20 Curtain Calls

No. 21 Payout

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