

(SAMPLE)

THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA

CAST LIST

King Harold

Queen Hortense

Prince Richard

Maid 1

Maid 2

The Footman

Princess Lavinia

Princess Eglantine

The Palace Fairy

3 Villagers (*could be more*)

2 Village girls (*could add more non-speaking*)

Melinda

15 speaking parts. Non-speaking parts could be added.

THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA

SCENE 1.

The Palace throne room. There are two thrones and, to the side, a small table with two chairs. The King is sitting on one throne, reading the newspaper. The Queen is sitting on the other chair, knitting, and the Prince is sitting at the small table playing "Patience" with a deck of cards.

KING

I see that Prince Rupert of Malarkia has got married.

QUEEN

Oh dear! That's another princess out of circulation then.

PRINCE

Mother! Why do you always have to look on the black side!

QUEEN

Well it's true, my dear. If we don't get you married off soon, there'll be no princesses left.

KING

Oh come now, my dear. There are still plenty of princesses around.

QUEEN

Maybe. But they are not what I would call "proper" princesses. Some of them are positively vulgar.

PRINCE

Mother, you're such a snob!

QUEEN

I am *not* a snob! I just think that a princess should be refined and sensitive. What's the point in being a princess if you are, say, loud and vulgar? A princess is supposed to be elegant, able to engage in polite conversation, play a musical instrument, sew beautifully and have all those accomplishments one would expect of a girl who has been brought up in a royal household.

KING

But times have changed, Hortense. Modern girls are independent and free-thinking. People don't lock them up in towers anymore, or feed them to dragons, or change them into swans, so that some young prince or knight can save them.

QUEEN

And more's the pity, Harold. More's the pity. Why, when I was a young girl we didn't consider that we were proper princesses unless we'd had our hair singed by a dragon's breath, or we could grow our hair long enough for some young prince to climb up.

PRINCE

Well, nowadays, there are precious few dragons around. Most of them have become movie stars. And as for marrying someone who had spent their life being a swan and swimming around some muddy lake eating insects – yuk!

QUEEN

Well, anyway, I have taken steps.

KING

What sort of steps, dear?

QUEEN

I've invited one or two promising princesses to come for tea.

PRINCE

Oh, no!

QUEEN

I'm sorry, Richard, but you really are getting too old to sit around the palace and play cards. It's about time you were married. Your father's not getting any younger...

KING

Thank you dear.

QUEEN

You know what I mean. Eventually, you will need Richard to take over the reins of this kingdom and, when he does that, he'll be far too busy to look for a wife. No, he must get married now, before all this responsibility falls on his shoulders.

KING

Whatever you say, dear.

PRINCE

So who are these Princesses you have selected?

QUEEN

(Looking in a notebook) Let me see. The first one is Princess Lavinia of Belvedere. Very promising this one. She's been under a spell by a wicked fairy since she was born.

PRINCE

What sort of spell?

QUEEN

Well, her parents didn't fully explain but they did say that it was something to do with a transformation into some sort of creature.

PRINCE

Hang on a minute – I'm not expected to sit here and have tea with a swan or a frog, am I?

QUEEN

Don't be silly dear. Princesses don't get transformed into frogs. Only princes. If she is a swan, I'm sure she'll be very lovely. Don't be so prejudiced.

(The footman enters)

FOOTMAN

Princess Lavinia of Belvedere is here, your Majesty.

QUEEN

Ah, splendid! Harold, put away that paper! Richard, put away those cards! Let's make a good impression on this young lady.

FOOTMAN

Excuse me, your Majesty...

QUEEN

Yes?

FOOTMAN

Would you be intending to have cheese sandwiches for tea?

KING

Of course! We always have cheese sandwiches, don't we dear? Tea wouldn't be the same without cheese sandwiches.

QUEEN

Why do you ask?

FOOTMAN

It's just that Princess Lavinia especially requested them.

QUEEN

Oh, well, that's fine. Show her in then and tell the maids to bring the tea.

FOOTMAN *(bowing)*

Yes Your Majesty.

(The footman leaves)

PRINCE

Why does she like cheese sandwiches?

QUEEN

Richard, stop being so suspicious. It's perfectly natural to like cheese sandwiches.

(The Footman enters with Princess Lavinia. She is dressed in a lovely dress, with a tiara on her head. Unfortunately, she has a mouse nose and whiskers, mouse ears and a mouse tail. She also tends to bare her top teeth and nibble, in between sentences and when she laughs, she squeaks like a mouse. Everyone looks suitably startled.)

FOOTMAN

Princess Lavinia of Belvedere, Your Majesties.

QUEEN *(Getting up from her throne and going over to the princess)*

Welcome my dear! This is my husband, King Harold, and this is my son, Prince Richard.

LAVINIA

(Squeaking loudly) I'm so pleased to meet you! It's lovely for me to get an invitation to tea. I hardly ever get out nowadays.

PRINCE

Please come and sit down.

(Lavinia sits down and squeaks/giggles nervously)

QUEEN

Tea will be here in a moment. Tell us a little bit about yourself my dear.

LAVINIA

Well, there's not much to tell really. My father, the King of Belvedere, upset a wicked fairy at my christening party by not having cheese sandwiches at the christening tea, so the fairy turned me into part mouse, part princess and condemned me to eat cheese sandwiches for the rest of my life.

QUEEN

Oh, isn't that just typical! It's always the men who upset the wicked fairies and who pays for it? Their daughters. It makes me so cross.

LAVINIA

Well, I don't mind really. Things could be a lot worse. I went to boarding school with two princesses who turned into lizards every night.