

PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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The Golden Goose

By

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The Golden Goose was commissioned and first produced by The Liberty Theatre, UK, in 2006.

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Characters:

Christina

Boris

Dummling

King Conrad

Birgit

Dajona

Fairy King

Fairy Queen

Humble

Meek

Hermit Siebenstien

Witch of the White Mountains.

Prince Charles

Music. Bewitching music from the fairy world. Enter The Fairy King and Queen, Humble and Meek. Humble and Meek present themselves to the fairy. King brings a large book..

FAIRY KING Once upon a time, in old Europe, in the days when folk and fairy folk lived side by side there was a castle and in this castle, lived a King. *[He turns the page and the King Bops up - it is a popup book.]* There he is. And this King had two daughters, Dajona and Birgit. *[He turns the page and up pop the two daughters.]* Dajona was the oldest, and she was the saddest person whoever breathed. She was so sad she refused to laugh. She would not laugh; she could not laugh. So one day her father, sent out a proclamation, 'The man who makes my daughter laugh will be free to ask for her hand in marriage.' What? What?

FAIRY QUEEN You've started at the wrong place.

FAIRY KING I have not.

FAIRY QUEEN That's chapter two.

FAIRY KING No. No - this is chapter one.

FAIRY QUEEN No my sweet- it's chapter two.

FAIRY KING What?

FAIRY QUEEN The princess who wouldn't laugh- chapter two.

He looks and realizes his mistake and shuts the book snappily. The magical music is repeated.

FAIRY KING Once upon a time, in old Europe. In the days when folk and fairy folk lived side by side. There was a poor cottage.

FAIRY QUEEN Ah. I know it well husband. We have turned the milk sour there many times this past year.

FAIRY KING It is a humble dwelling.

FAIRY QUEEN As you can see. With rough furniture.

FAIRY KING In this poor cottage lived two young men, with their mother. Dummling and Boris. [*He turns the page and up they pop.*] It was so very far into the woods that the King's proclamation which I didn't mention earlier never reached the cottage and it is here that the story begins.

FAIRY QUEEN At chapter one. Now all they need, my lord is life.

Together-they sprinkle/blow golden dust onto the pop up scene. Behind them lights fully rise on the life size scene.

CHRISTINA Where did all this dust come from?

DUMMLING I don't know Mother.

CHRISTINA As if I didn't have enough work to do.

DUMMLING It's all - golden.

CHRISTINA Golden? Don't talk rubbish -dust isn't golden-not round here.

DUMMLING But this is- look- all shiny and golden.

BORIS Do shut up Dummling.

DUMMLING But I'm---

BORIS An utterly stupid person without a sensible thought in his head.

DUMMLING That's not true-

CHRISTINA Yes it is.

DUMMLING Is it mother?

CHRISTINA Well-

BORIS Exactly.

CHRISTINA We are what we are Dummling.

BORIS And you are stupid.

CHRISTINA Boris!

BORIS Golden dust we have now.

DUMMLING But it is---was.

BORIS Duh.

CHRISTINA Stop it! If you keep on at each other- you shall go without supper –
the pair both.

She turns away and Boris pours a cup of water over his own head.

BORIS What on earth—

CHRISTINA What now?

BORIS Dummling poured water over my head.

DUMMLING I never.

BORIS Well who did then?

DUMMLING You did.

CHRISTINA Oh Dummling, what kind of fool would pour water over his own
head?

BORIS Just cos I told you the truth.

CHRISTINA No rain for three months, and here's you throwing water away as if
we had lakes of it to wallow in. Well we don't. Clear it up, now.

DUMMLING But I - it was-

BORIS And no supper for you. That's what you said Mother.

CHRISTINA I know what I said.

DUMMLING Forgive me Mother. Please don't be upset.

CHRISTINA Upset? A woman with two lads to feed, and no husband to help me through this dreadful drought. Do you know what a human being is without water Dummling?

DUMMLING Well - dry. [*Boris laughs*]

CHRISTINA Dry? Are you making fun of me?

DUMMLING No.

CHRISTINA Without water we are dead Dummling, dead.

DUMMLING I know that - I just didn't want to say.

CHRISTINA When your father were alive the fields were full of food. Now what do we have? Dry bread and moldy cheese. [*Boris leans forward to take Dummling's plate.*] You leave his plate alone.

BORIS But you said—

CHRISTINA I know what I said. You are not the master here Boris.

BORIS One of these days I'm going to leave this hovel and go on a really big adventure - a really big one - the size of this - table. And I'm going to meet a princess and marry her - and, and, and have lots to eat. What are you smiling at?

DUMMLING I had the very same dream. That one day I would be king.

BORIS No you didn't.

DUMMLING Yes I did.

BORIS You're lying again, just to be like me.

DUMMLING No I'm not.

BORIS Besides there's no country on earth would ever have a king with a face like yours. I've have seen better looking cowpats.

DUMMLING What, in the mirror?

CHRISTINA Oh Dummling, how could you be so spiteful?

DUMMLING Hey?

BORIS Because he's ugly mother -that's why. It's damaged his character.

DUMMLING But I'm not ugly - am I?

CHRISTINA Well...

BORIS Exactly. I'll be the best looking King this country ever had. And a thousand times better than the one we've got now.

CHRISTINA Boris.

BORIS Its true Mother - our King can't even feed his own people.

CHRISTINA It's hardly his fault it hasn't rained. I'll have no more talk against our King you'll have us hanged for treason.

BORIS He'd have to hang the whole country mother - for everywhere I go people speak against him.

CHRISTINA Well I don't. Poor man.

BORIS We should rise up brother - and cut off their heads.

CHRISTINA Boris! You have no idea what you're saying.

BORIS And then mother - if you could choose; which of your sons would make the better king? Go on for fun. For the good of the country – me or Dummling?

CHRISTINA Oh Boris - you know the answer.

BORIS Yes, and I'd make a great King an all, strong as an ox and free of spots. Unlike you Dummling...

DUMMLING I haven't got spots. I haven't. [*Boris laughs and gives him a mirror.*] Where did they come from?

CHRISTINA It doesn't matter Dummling.

DUMMLING But why doesn't Boris have spots?

CHRISTINA Because, spots don't choose a handsome face, it's well known, but of no importance - one day they will just vanish. I promise.

BORIS And I heard an old woman in the village say spots only land on the faces of cowards.

CHRISTINA Now that's enough. How can you two prattle on so when we are only one meal away from the grave? [*Silence*]

DUMMLING One day mother, there'll be food again, and plenty of water, and wine too, and you'll be happy, we'll all be happy.

BORIS Oh yes - and one day folk will walk on the moon.

DUMMLING Maybe they will, one day.

CHRISTINA Well I have had as much of your argurmentearing as I can stomach. Boris I have job for you.

BORIS But Mother - you know how much I hate jobs - and it's so hot.

DUMMLING I'll do it Mother.

CHRISTINA No Dummling. I don't want you cutting your hand off - like your father did. It wasn't easy you know being a one handed carpenter. Boris -take the axe and go into the woods and chop down a fine oak tree and bring it home upon your shoulders, and we will use that tree to make a new door - and new roof - and some walls. Can you do this?

BORIS Of course I can do it - I can do anything - I haven't got spots.

CHRISTINA Father was such a fine carpenter. You remind me of him Boris – so tall, handsome and brave. But the house he built with his own hands - hand - will not survive another winter. Take this with you into the woods.

BORIS What is it?

CHRISTINA A little something, to keep you going.

BORIS But Mother - this is a fine cake, and the last of the wine.

CHRISTINA I have been keeping it aside - especially for this day.

BORIS What's so special about this day Mother?

CHRISTINA [*Firmly*] The day you begin 'work'.

BORIS Work - what's work to someone like me – but –

CHRISTINA What?

BORIS You know how I feel about the woods.

CHRISTINA But you are older now.

BORIS But the woods are full of - wood - that hide all manner of creatures.

CHRISTINA But Boris - I can see by your 'spotless face' that you are brave and will overcome whatever confronts you. Remember the rhyme I taught you - when you were little.

BORIS No. Yes.

DUMMLING Good luck brother. [*Exit Boris*]

CHRISTINA What?

DUMMLING Do I not remind you of father?

CHRISTINA No.

Act One, Scene Two: The Woods

The woods. Very light 'Fairy music' can be heard. The Fairy King and Queen watch Boris, but Boris cannot see them or Humble and Meek.

BORIS *[Sings]* Do not be afraid of the woods.

HUMBLE & MEEK La la la!

BORIS Hello - anyone there? Hello. Who's there? *[Sings]* The woods are full of wood, And its good.

HUMBLE & MEEK La la la!

BORIS Who's there? *[Sings]* The beasts and the birds, Would think you quite absurd, If you really were afraid of the woods.*(Said)* That's better.

FAIRY KING Good Morning.

BORIS *[Yells in fright]* I have an axe. I have an axe. Where are you – show yourself?

A light rises on the Fairy King, so that Boris now sees him. He steps back. The Fairy Queen watches - invisible to Boris.

FAIRY KING Don't be afraid. I'm not a wolf, nor a bear, just an old soul in search of company.

BORIS I never saw you there - and I must have walked right by you.

FAIRY KING You were busy singing. 'Do not be afraid of the woods.'

BORIS Yes - thank you! What do you want anyhow?

FAIRY KING It's been a dry season.

BORIS So?

FAIRY KING And I'm thirsty.

BORIS Aren't we all old man.

FAIRY KING And you have a wine sack there and a nice bit of cake I shouldn't wonder, in your pocket. Your mother makes a good cake.

BORIS How do you know that?

FAIRY KING Just a little wine and cake is all I ask.

BORIS But if I give you my cake and 'my' wine I shall have little left for myself, so be gone, and leave me be.

FAIRY KING As you wish.

BORIS Aye, as I wish, now go, before I cleave your head in two. *[He lifts the axe, and the Fairy King vanishes.]* A thief - that's what you are - were. One oak. That's all I have to do.

He raises his axe and then a high-pitched note is heard. Hands come out from the tree and the roots and grab his feet. He cries out and then watches in terror as the axe is removed from his hands by someone he cannot see [Humble and Meek] and lifts itself into the air before coming down on his leg.

Act One, Scene Three: The Cottage

Boris enters, his leg wrapped in a bloody bandage.

DUMMLING Brother, back so soon?

CHRISTINA Good lad - where's the wood?

BORIS The wood? *[Boris collapses]*

CHRISTINA Boris?

DUMMLING His leg is all bloody—

CHRISTINA Oh Boris.

DUMMLING A nasty gash - and some strange looking scratches too.

CHRISTINA [*Slapping his face*] Boris. Boris.

BORIS The woods. The woods are alive - and closing in - closing in.

CHRISTINA Do something Dummling.

DUMMLING Yes Mother.

BORIS The trees had hands, and eyes and the music - and the hands - and the axe was taken from my hands - oh the hands-- [*Dummling throws water in his face. Silence.*] Dummling! You see mother, you see -throwing water over me for no reason.

DUMMLING I was only trying to—

BORIS What?

DUMMLING Help.

BORIS You'll need help when I get hold of you - that's if I ever walk again.

CHRISTINA Stop it! You Boris -have had too much wine to drink.

BORIS No mother I-- [*She lifts the wine sack - it 's empty*] I only had a little on my way home - to give me strength. Oh mother - will I live?

CHRISTINA Aye - live to avoid another days work. The woods indeed. Well if a jobs worth doing it's worth doing yourself. Give me the axe.

DUMMLING But let me go. I know the woods well.

CHRISTINA Don't argue with me. What kind of Mother gives an axe to a Dummling? Look after your brave brother. Tend to his leg.

DUMMLING Yes Mother. [*Exit Christina*]

BORIS Fetch me a mug of water brother. [*He throws it in Dummling's face*]
There see - clever me got you back. Now you may tend to my leg.

Dummling touches the wound and Boris yells out. The cry can be heard by Christina who is now entering scene four. Humble and Meek prepare to guide her toward the Fairy King.

Act One, Scene Four: The Woods.

CHRISTINA My sons, my sons. One tree is that too much to ask? I ask you my husband, my dear departed husband. Is that too much to ask?

HUMBLE & MEEK La la la!

CHRISTINA But be quiet woman and seek out that sound.

HUMBLE & MEEK La la la!

CHRISTINA So strange and-- Hello. Hello there? Why this tree looks as fine as any I have seen. [*She lifts the axe.*]

FAIRY KING Hello there to you.

CHRISTINA Who's there? Who's there? I have an axe.

A light rises on the Fairy King so that she now sees him.

FAIRY KING Don't be afraid good mother. I'm not a wolf nor a bear, just an old soul in search of company.

CHRISTINA So it was your music.

FAIRY KING You recognized it I suppose.

CHRISTINA I'm not sure.

FAIRY KING It has sent you to sleep the many nights of your long grief.

CHRISTINA My grief! What do you know of my grief you - interfering little man?

FAIRY KING I know you miss your husband sorely.

CHRISTINA Yes, yes I do. It's been a long year without him.

FAIRY KING And apart from your tears, a dry one.

CHRISTINA What do you want?

FAIRY KING A taste of the elderberry wine you made last autumn, would be pleasant, and a slice of the cake you have in your bag, for I am sure I helped the cherries ripen.

CHRISTINA How dare you, no one has helped me - this past year - no one. I have slaved and toiled for the little I have, and what I give to you I cannot have for myself – be gone you evil little creature. [*She raises the axe in a threatening manner and he vanishes from her sight.*] My husband indeed - who are you to speak of him? [*She lifts the axe and the music turns a little sour, and now sounds like bees.*] What's that? Bees - be gone an all – you... Ow! Why you stung me you - ow!

The music gathers intensity as a great swarm of bees [Humble and Meek] chase her away. She runs straight back to the cottage.

Act One, Scene Five : The Cottage

DUMMLING Mother? What is the matter?

CHRISTINA I have been stung, by an army of bees. Look at my arm.

DUMMLING You must have disturbed a hive.

CHRISTINA Oh well there's a thought.

BORIS Duh.

CHRISTINA Chased me through the trees they did - like they hated me - and what have I ever done to them?

BORIS So you didn't get the wood then?

CHRISTINA Shut up Boris. We will make do with what we have.

DUMMLING But we cannot survive the winter without repairing the house and the wood must have time to dry before we use it. Mother - I know where all the hives are, and how to avoid them.

BORIS You know how to show off an'all.

DUMMLING Then let me do something else. I will go and cut the wood for us.

BORIS If we two could not - what chance have you - the Dummling of the family?

CHRISTINA Boris is right. You and the axe would make a dangerous dance.

DUMMLING I know how to use an axe Mother - Father taught me.

CHRISTINA How dare you mention your father! What is it today, that everyone feels as if they can walk across his memory without a by your leave? You will never be the man he was - never.

BORIS Now you've upset her.

DUMMLING Then I shall make amends. I shall go and fetch some wood for us, so that we can repair this cottage - if we don't we will freeze this winter as we have burnt this summer. *[Silence]*

CHRISTINA Go on then.

BORIS But Mother.

CHRISTINA But nothing. Here, take this Dummling.

DUMMLING What is it Mother?

CHRISTINA The last of our food.

BORIS But Mother.

CHRISTINA Stop saying that. It is only a little oatmeal baked in the ashes and a bottle of sour beer. Would you deny your brother that?

DUMMLING I hope the stings relent. Goodbye brother, may your leg heal quickly.

CHRISTINA You are a pleasant fool Dummling. Be gone. [*Exit Dummling.*]

BORIS What's that?

CHRISTINA Something I hid behind the fireplace - something special I have been keeping back for a time such as this.

BORIS More wine?

CHRISTINA Do our wounds not cry out for sustenance?

BORIS Yes. My leg would torment a saint.

CHRISTINA And my stings are singing like banshees.

They take an enormous swig each, and then spit it out in great distaste.

Act One, Scene Six: The Woods

DUMMLING The woods do not scare me. Nor the bee shall me sting. The snake will not bite, or the bramble scratch me. For the woods I do love above anything, I worship the woods. Where the oak is the king. Aye Father - you see I have not forgotten your words. Nor shall I ever.

HUMBLE & MEEK La la la!

DUMMLING Why, what pleasant music's there?

HUMBLE & MEEK La la la!

DUMMLING Hello? Hello Old man.

FAIRY KING Oh? You can see me?

DUMMLING I can.

FAIRY KING Well don't be afraid. I'm not a wolf nor a bear.

DUMMLING My eyes don't deceive me then. You're an old man sitting on a log.

FAIRY KING That's right.

DUMMLING Just a lonely soul in search of company I suppose.

FAIRY KING And you might be?

DUMMLING Dummling. I've come to cut down a tree.

FAIRY KING Before you do so would you give a parched old throat a draught out of your bottle, and a bite or two of cake perhaps?

DUMMLING Forgive me sir. I have only a poor cake made of oatmeal and a bottle of sour beer - but if they suit you, let us sit down and together we will drink and eat.

FAIRY KING Aye, that will do.

DUMMLING You seem familiar to me. Have I seen you before?

FAIRY KING Aye - but you were nothing then but a babe in arms.

DUMMLING You know me then?

FAIRY KING It was in the days of plenty, your father were alive then, and he and I got on well enough. Every night he would leave a bowl of broad beans and clotted cream outside the door for me.

DUMMLING [Remembers] And every morning it would be gone.

FAIRY KING You almost left the world as soon as you saw it, and your parents wept a storm thinking that you might die.

DUMMLING You were there - the night I was born?

FAIRY KING The night you were named.

DUMMLING Dummling. I curse my name - for all who meet me think I am as my name implies -a fool and it seems there's nothing I can do to make them think otherwise.

FAIRY KING Dummling you have a good heart, and have willingly shared what you had, therefore we will make you lucky.

DUMMLING We?

The Fairy King makes a spell and a light rises on the Fairy Queen, Humble and Meek.

DUMMLING What are you?

FAIRY QUEEN I am she who has lived three hundred years.

FAIRY KING I am he, whom the morning banishes,

FAIRY QUEEN Who runs after shadows

FAIRY KING Plays tricks and tunes

BOTH Becomes a dream then disappears
Swifter than the wandering moon.

FAIRY QUEEN Now give me your axe.

DUMMLING But it belongs to my mother-

He gives it to the Fairy Queen - who turns round once and when the axe is seen again it is golden.

FAIRY QUEEN Now Dummling - cut down this tree and take your luck.

DUMMLING Which tree? [*A light rises on the tree in question*]

FAIRY QUEEN The tree that sings from the sap. Cut me down it sings.

HUMBLE & MEEK Cut me down. Cut me down. Cut me down.

DUMMLING And so I shall.

He raises the axe and lets it fall- there is a tremendous wood splitting crack/cry and he is thrown back. From the split in the tree shines a golden light. And in the light sits a golden goose.

FAIRY QUEEN There Dummling - is your luck -take it - before the tree repairs its wound.

FAIRY KING Be swift Dummling - or the chance will be lost.

BOTH Now Dummling now. [*Just in time Dummling takes it and the tree closes.*]

DUMMLING But - whatever shall I do with such a - a goose?

FAIRY KING Listen close.

HUMBLE & MEEK Listen. Listen.

FAIRY QUEEN Three eggs it will lay -three golden eggs.

FAIRY KING And when the three eggs be laid, you must return the golden goose to me, and I will return it to that other place, where all the geese be golden, which is its home.

FAIRY QUEEN Have you heard and understood?

DUMMLING [*Nods*] But - when - when will she lay them?

FAIRY KING When you have need of them.

FAIRY QUEEN And when you have made the most of your luck—

BOTH Remember us.

DUMMLING I will.

Voices off can now be heard. It is Christina and Boris calling out, 'Dummling! Dummling!'

FAIRY KING Oh - and tell your mother not to drink from the wine sack she hid behind the fireplace - for once in a foul temper I did turn that to horse pee. Farewell Dummling. [*He vanishes*]

DUMMLING Farewell to you.

Act One, Scene Seven: The Cottage

Enter Boris, limping, and Christina.

CHRISTINA When I catch that boy I will wring his neck.

BORIS The woods have eaten him mother. The hands have grabbed him. The hands - oh the hands.

CHRISTINA Shut up Boris.

Exit both - enter Dummling into the cottage, and he swiftly hides the goose under a coat. Enter Boris and Christina.

BORIS Here he is mother.

She rushes to him and hugs him - then pushes him away.

CHRISTINA You ungrateful boy - where have you been all this time?

DUMMLING All this time?

CHRISTINA I was frantic with worry.

BORIS I wasn't.

CHRISTINA Two whole days. I thought you'd been eaten by a wolf or a bear.

DUMMLING Two days? Why it seems only a few minutes, since I left.

BORIS What's that up your jumper?

CHRISTINA And where's the wood?

BORIS And where's the axe?

CHRISTINA Oh Dummling, don't tell me you've lost the axe.

DUMMLING Well I - must have mislaid it.

CHRISTINA You are the most forgetful boy in the world.

BORIS You even forgot to be eaten.

CHRISTINA And what is - that - up your jumper?

DUMMLING What? Oh that.

CHRISTINA What are you hiding Dummling?

DUMMLING T 'was a gift - to me - and no one else.

CHRISTINA What's in my house is mine. Put whatever it is on the table, this instant.

BORIS Well go on.

Dummling puts the goose on the table. Music. Slowly he pulls of the jumper to reveal the goose, which steadily gets more golden. Boris and Christina stare, open-eyed and drop jawed.

CHRISTINA Heavens above.

BORIS What is it?

DUMMLING It's a goose brother, a golden goose.

BORIS But how can a goose be golden?

CHRISTINA Unless it is - magic. Who gave you this?

DUMMLING A friend, I swear.

CHRISTINA A friend? What kind of 'friend'?

DUMMLING *[Dreamily]* Not a wolf or a bear - just an old soul in search of company.

CHRISTINA Oh Dummling, is that where you have been - to the fairy world?

DUMMLING No - I was just in the woods.

BORIS With the fairies.

CHRISTINA Oh -how many times must I tell you? We are good-right people. We do not converse with their kind, not no more.

BORIS What did they do to you Dummling, experiments?

DUMMLING No.

CHRISTINA Oh Dummling - since your father died you have become stranger and odder and—

BORIS Spottier—

CHRISTINA By the minute and disobedient too.

BORIS We must kill it Mother - now.

DUMMLING No, you cannot kill it - for one day I must return it as I promised.
[Boris picks up his knife.]

CHRISTINA Oh Dummling - what have you done?

DUMMLING Don't touch the Goose brother.

BORIS As I am your older, stronger, more handsome brother you will not tell me what to do.

CHRISTINA Boris! Put it down. Dummling, we will have no communion with their sort. Now take that obnoxious into the woods and put it back where you found it. What's the matter?

DUMMLING My legs. I have the strangest sensation in them, as if, they are speaking to me.

BORIS It's begun Mother -the magic.

DUMMLING Run they say - run run.

CHRISTINA I am your Mother, and you will stand still if I say so, in my house you will stand still.

DUMMLING Can't.

CHRISTINA Can't? Give me the goose - give it to me!

She goes to grab the goose, which Dummling is now holding, and she grabs Dummling and is suddenly stuck fast to him and starts running also.

BORIS What is it Mother?

CHRISTINA I can't, I can't, I can't let go. Dummling, what have you done to me?

DUMMLING Nothing.

CHRISTINA Stop running.

DUMMLING I can't

CHRISTINA Boris! [He gets her by the waist] Pull me away Boris.

BORIS I can't.

CHRISTINA Don't be foolish, you're as strong as an ox.

BORIS I'm stuck -Mother. I'm stuck.

DUMMLING My legs. My legs.

CHRISTINA Dummling?

DUMMLING Run they say, and run I must.

He begins to run. The two figures are pulled along by Dummling with a yell. Lights rise on the Fairy King reading the book.

FAIRY KING And off they went over ditch and dale—

FAIRY QUEEN And Dummling's legs never seemed to tire.

FAIRY KING Try as he might—

FAIRY QUEEN And as much as his mother pleaded—

FAIRY KING He could not stop his running. Faster, Dummling, faster.

In the book we can see the three pop up figures, and this is echoed behind the Fairy King, as the three live characters, are silhouetted running against the skyline.

CHRISTINA Dummling! Dummling!

FAIRY QUEEN Don't be too harsh on them husband.

FAIRY KING Why not? Let them run and run.

FAIRY QUEEN The Mother is not so young.

FAIRY KING What do I care - for what do she care for us? Ha ha. *[The family continue running and exit.]*

FAIRY QUEEN How changed you are - how angry. It makes you small and—

FAIRY KING And what?

FAIRY QUEEN Unattractive.

FAIRY KING It is your lips that are dry wife -not mine. Do I hide beneath moss -
when I hear your step? No. Do I bind my bed around with briars
and thorns to keep you out? Have I had a headache for seventy
three years? No not I.

FAIRY QUEEN Husband, one day, perhaps soon-[*She touches his face tenderly.*]

FAIRY KING If all goes well?

FAIRY QUEEN Yes - and for that reason you should not torture the woman too
much - it holds up the narrative.

FAIRY KING She can run for a - week. Dummling will not feel tired. [*Pause*]
Meanwhile.

He turns another page and three more figures pop up and the scene is transformed to the palace.

FAIRY QUEEN Chapter two. Again.

Act One, Scene Eight: The Palace

FAIRY KING At the palace of King Conrad, If you recall - his oldest daughter
Dajona would not laugh.

FAIRY QUEEN And his youngest, Birgit would not stop.

BIRGIT [*Laughs*] Father, there's an English prince here to make Dajona
laugh. [*She laughs*]

KING Why are you laughing Birgit?

BIRGIT [*Laughs*] I don't know. Shall I fetch him in?

KING Dajona?

DAJONA What now?

KING Oh Dajona, please save us this embarrassment -just one laugh will do.

DAJONA There is nothing to laugh about Father. Besides if I am to marry I shall marry whom I please, whether they make me laugh or not - which no one will, ever.

KING But I have made a public proclamation, that you shall marry the man who makes you laugh.

DAJONA Your mistake - not mine.

KING And if you don't, I will –

DAJONA What?

KING Cut off your head.

BIRGIT *[Laughs]* Ding Ding...

KING And I should cut off yours if I had the slightest hope it would stop you laughing in that ridiculous manner. *[Birgit laughs.]* Stop it, now. I am the King. Stop it.

BIRGIT Ding, Ding.

KING Oh-

BIRGIT Father, seriously *[She giggles]* the reality is, that anyone who comes here looking for a princess is going to find me more attractive than her, because I'm so happy and that shines right through to my inner soul and makes me very beautiful, whereas dear Dajona is so unhappy, with dandruff, it makes her exactly the opposite, ugly bugly.

KING If only your mother were here, she'd talk sense into both of you.

DAJONA Well she's not here father because she ran off with that other King you called your best friend. [*Birgit laughs*] The someone of something O'Grad.

KING That's enough Dajona.

DAJONA And the reason she ran off, according to her parting words were that you were mean, malicious, morose, manipulative, malfunctioning and for some reason on Mondays, malodorous.

KING She runs off and I'm to blame?

DAJONA She ran off because, **A** you would not kiss her.

KING How dare you.

BIRGIT Ding.

DAJONA **B**, Because your people are hungry and there is no food for them.

KING For pities sake it isn't my fault it hasn't rained.

DAJONA And **C**, because you wouldn't listen to her very sensible solution.

BIRGIT Irritation.

DAJONA Irrigation.

BIRGIT Alright -

KING Stop arguing. You don't argue in front of a king as if he isn't even there, you pay him some respect. Respect.

BIRGIT Ding, ding. [*She laughs*] Oh father how funny you are. Shall I bring on the amusing Englishman?

KING What? Prince Oxymoron?

BIRGIT What?

KING Just bring him in. And Birgit - try not to laugh. It's Dajona who has to laugh - not you - you can stop.

BIRGIT Can't. [*Exit Birgit laughing.*]

KING Dajona, you know in my heart of hearts - I only want you to be happy. [*Birgit Enters laughing.*]

BIRGIT May I introduce Prince um - seriously - Charles.

Enter the English prince who is naturally very straight faced and deliberate of speech.

KING Yes.

BIRGIT Prince Charles.

KING You have come here to make my daughter laugh?

CHARLES Yes.

KING Have you ever made a princess laugh before?

CHARLES Not intentionally, your highness.

KING If you are successful you will of course proceed to the next round, where we meet your family and so on. Please proceed, but don't bother with puns -they don't even make Birgit laugh. Well - go on.

CHARLES Um - Knock Knock.

KING Pardon?

CHARLES Knock - Knock - your highness.

KING What do you mean, Knock - Knock?

CHARLES Who's there? You say who's there.

KING Who's there? I'm here - and the princess is here - we're all here waiting.

CHARLES It's a joke my lord.

KING You're telling me. Stop laughing Birgit. Start again. Try something more - visual.

CHARLES Yes your highness. [*He thinks, and with his hand mimes*] Knock Knock.

KING For Pities sake. [*Birgit is on the floor hitting it with her fist*] I mean Prince, something without words.

CHARLES Yes, your highness.

The Prince proceeds to do a very odd dance. Dajona is poker faced. Birgit convulsed with laughter.

KING Thank you Prince. Now please return to England, but do get your head cut off before you leave - it'll make no difference to your looks – or your exam results - [*yells*] but it will make me laugh like a drain. [*Exit Prince*]

BIRGIT He was so funny. Where are you going Father?

KING I'm going to confession for a thousand years.

BIRGIT Why, what have you done?

KING I have failed Birgit - failed - you all, your Mother, your sister, and worst of all - the country as a whole.

BIRGIT --No you haven't

KING Yes I have.

BIRGIT No - you haven't.

KING Yes - I have. [*They continue in this vein. Suddenly Dajona starts laughing*] What's that?

BIRGIT She's laughing.

KING Dajona?

BIRGIT Sister?

KING Why are you laughing? [*She points out into the distance and laughs again.*] Fetch the expensive doctor Birgit.

BIRGIT But this is what you wanted.

KING I did not want her to laugh into mid air. She's gone mad. What?

BIRGIT There look. There's something—

KING Be my eyes Birgit - for I can see no further than my nose.

BIRGIT There's a man-running over ditch and dale carrying, what seems to be a goose.

KING A goose?

BIRGIT A golden goose. And there's someone behind him - a woman. And holding on to her for all he's worth is someone else - a young man - about my height - rather muscular - and ooh nice - but he too is quite unable to stop the boy with the golden goose. And everywhere they go the people are laughing and cheering.

KING But it's not funny.

DAJONA Oh yes it is - it's very funny indeed.

BIRGIT And they seem to be coming - closer, and closer and closer. Oh my.

KING You mean?

DAJONA Let them in. Let them in.

Boris, Christina and Dummling enter, and Dummling 's legs begin to slow down. Dummling looks pristine but the other two are completely covered in mud and their hair is a sight to behold. They all collapse. The King runs for cover thinking a revolution has started. Dajona and Birgit are drawn to the golden goose but before they can touch it Dummling pulls it away and stands. Silence.

DUMMLING Sir. Ladies. Are you alright mother? [*Christina gasps for breath*]

KING How dare you - barge in here covered in mud and muck without my permission. How dare you indeed!

BIRGIT Ding.

DAJONA Take no notice of my Father.

BIRGIT He always says 'How dare you' –

DAJONA Because he's the King –

BIRGIT Every time he does we just go—

DAJONA Ding.

BIRGIT Like a bell.

DAJONA Its one of his stock phrases—

KING Have you no respect?

BIRGIT Ding.

KING This is the royal palace. Appointments must be made. Rules must be obeyed.

BIRGIT Ding, ding, ding. [*Birgit laughs*]

DUMMLING Forgive me Sir, my legs - would not be stopped. But now at last they have.

DAJONA They have indeed and I am almost sad. I have never laughed so much in all my life. [*She kisses him*]

KING Dajona!

DAJONA Forgive me father - but I can feel a huge weight lifting from my heart.

BIRGIT [*Claps her hands*] Oh father. Don't you see what this means? You're not such a failure after all.

KING Shut up Birgit. What is your name?

BIRGIT Birgit.

KING Not you. You.

DUMMLING Dummling.

BIRGIT [*She laughs*] Don't be silly - no one's called Dummling. Oh. Sorry. And this is my Mother, and my brother, Boris.

CHRISTINA Your High-

BORIS Maj-

CHRISTINA --ness.

BORIS --ty. [*Birgit laughs*]

KING And what do you want?

DAJONA Do not be nervous. Please state clearly why your legs brought you here - they seemed to know their destination - surely it was something to do with the 'proclamation'?

DUMMLING The Proclamation?

DAJONA That the man who makes me laugh may ask for my hand in marriage?

KING Yes, yes. Anyone, who isn't called Dummling.

DAJONA But I have the proclamation here, and it doesn't say that.

KING And anyone who isn't a subsistence farmer.

DAJONA It doesn't say that.

KING And anyone who doesn't have adolescent spots.

DAJONA It doesn't say that either.

KING It's implicit by its absence.

DAJONA But you are the King and must keep your promise.

KING How dare you.

BIRGIT Ding.

KING Stop that! Now get out and take your livestock with you.

CHRISTINA And how dare you sir, speak to my son like that, can't you see his golden goose!

KING I beg your pardon?

CHRISTINA And so you should sir. What kind of man sees a good woman, dragged through mud and mire for seven days, never able to stop for breath and when at last we do we are not even offered a glass of water. The poorest person in the country would give us better treatment.

DAJONA Yes, father shame on you. Shame on us all.

BIRGIT Yes, shame on every one - except me. [*She smiles at Boris, who clocks her attractiveness*]

KING Well I - Yes. Forgive me madam. I am unused to company - my wife you see—

DAJONA Left. Perhaps we could retire to the garden, where these good folk may rest a while?

KING Yes - um - Birgit, some refreshments.

BIRGIT *[Serenely]* Yes Father. *[Like a fish wife]* Refreshments!

CHRISTINA Thank you your-- *[She collapses with exhaustion and the King catches her.]*

Act One, Scene Nine: The Garden.

Music. The scene transfers to The Garden, where there is a garden seat. Christina and King Conrad sit down as the other two couples remain upstage.

CHRISTINA What a lovely garden.

KING Yes - isn't it. Do sit.

CHRISTINA Thank you.

KING Please forgive my earlier rudeness.

CHRISTINA It's quite all right. It is a great relief not to be - running.

KING Yes - since my wife - 'left' - my judgment seems less than good. I get things - wrong - no one understands of course.

CHRISTINA I understand.

KING It's been a year—

CHRISTINA The same for me, since my husband - passed on.

KING Ah-and-and-and-oh-and-and-um

CHRISTINA Where do I live?

KING Absolutely.

CHRISTINA Seven days running, directly south.

KING Ah - the countryside.

CHRISTINA Yes. Do you know it?

KING Oh no. Though I remember it - as a child.

CHRISTINA It's very dry at the moment -no food. None at all.

KING You do understand, um –

CHRISTINA Christina.

KING Quite - um, Conrad - that ah - golden goose notwithstanding - remarkable creature of course - I cannot let your son marry my daughter.

CHRISTINA Of course not. Dummling? What a ridiculous notion. That would be like me marrying you.

KING Precisely, ridiculous.

CHRISTINA A poor country widow –

KING Ha ha.

CHRISTINA With mud on her pretty face –

KING Yes, good, I'm glad we see eye to eye. After all a princess must marry a prince.

CHRISTINA We wouldn't want to change the 'natural' order of things, would we?

KING You are so right. Change is not good, is it?

CHRISTINA And a relationship between your daughter and a 'commoner' would change our country forever. It would be a kind of - revolutionship.

KING Heaven forbid. A a-a-a revolutionship - must be avoided - at all costs, but it seems I have made a rather rash promise, and I - the King -

CHRISTINA Conrad.

KING Can't be seen to break such a promise.

CHRISTINA Perhaps we could put our heads together -

KING As in -

CHRISTINA On it -

KING And come up with a plan of -

CHRISTINA Action.

KING For the good of the country.

CHRISTINA Yes indeed. For the country's good, I've always thought so. [*They move away as Birgit and Boris sit down.*]

BORIS What a lovely garden.

BIRGIT Yes - isn't it. Do sit.

BORIS Thank you.

BIRGIT My, my - how very - 'fit' -you look.

BORIS Well I do workout.

BIRGIT Workout?

BORIS Outside. [*She giggles*]

BIRGIT Oh tell me, tell me everything about yourself.

BORIS Oh that would take forever.

BIRGIT Really? Are you a deep person?

BORIS I should say. My father used to tell me that my character had two dimensions.

BIRGIT Two whole ones? How wonderful. What's the matter with your leg?

BORIS I hit myself with an axe.

BIRGIT [*She laughs*] Silly thing. You could have hurt yourself.

He laughs and she laughs. They move away as Dajona and Dummling sit.

DUMMLING What a lovely garden.

DAJONA Yes - isn't it. Do sit.

DUMMLING Thank you.

DAJONA So tell me - where did you get this beautiful - golden goose? I have never seen anything so rare.

DUMMLING From an old man - a very old man.

DAJONA Oh yes? How old?

DUMMLING Three hundred years.

DAJONA Do you take me for a fool?

DUMMLING No - do you take me for one?

DAJONA No.

DUMMLING It's best not to touch the - the goose. I wouldn't want you to get stuck - forever, would I?

DAJONA No - you wouldn't. I wouldn't. Would I. What kind of man was he?

DUMMLING He didn't say directly, but I believe that he came from the fairy kingdom.

DAJONA How charming.

DUMMLING You don't believe me?

DAJONA I don't wish to mock - but really you should know, in this reasonable age that there are no such things—

DUMMLING As?

DAJONA As faeries, pixies, sprites, goblins, imps, boggarts.

DUMMLING Then how come there be so many names for them.

DAJONA A good reply.

DUMMLING And if there be no such Kingdom, where did the golden goose come from, surely you of all folk can see - it's not of this world?

DAJONA Yes, that's true. And if it is - then all the stories my mother used to tell, about the woods are also true.

DUMMLING There are many things to see in the woods if one has eyes to see them with. You have lovely eyes - to see - them with. I have never seen such, clear eyes.

DAJONA No. No, stop that, stop that at once.

DUMMLING Stop what?

DAJONA That talk - I have heard that kind of talk before from men who came professing love when all they wanted was to be King.

DUMMLING As I am me, I have never thought about being King.

BORIS Oh yes Dummling and I have often talked about what it would be like to be King.

DAJONA You're lying - you lied to me.

DUMMLING I mean to say, I never thought about it with any serious intention.

BIRGIT Being King's a terrible job - which needs real intelligence, and moral fiber.

DUMMLING How could I, a woodsman?

BIRGIT Good looks, and muscles really don't count for much—

DAJONA You knew about the proclamation all the time.

DUMMLING No - it was just a dream I had.

BIRGIT But I like them very much.

DAJONA How ridiculous I am—

BIRGIT And suddenly it seems I could quite easily—

DAJONA To think that I, 'of all folk' could—

DAJONA & BIRGIT Fall In love - at first sight—

DUMMLING But It's not ridiculous -because I—

DAJONA 'Love is said to be a child
Because in choice, he is so oft beguiled.'
I . my case by a boy with a goose - Oh.

DUMMLING Please let me explain.

DAJONA To think I could think of marrying someone just because they made me - laugh - once. How dysfunctional is that?

DUMMLING Then you don't wish me to ask your father if I may marry you?

DAJONA Ask him what you like - it's not his decision anyway.

DUMMLING Perhaps because now you have spoken to me you think me, a roughcast fellow.

DAJONA I didn't say that.

DUMMLING A Dummling, like my name suggests.

DAJONA No.

DUMMLING You who are clever and do not mean to mock and can play the harpsichord blindfold no doubt.

DAJONA That's right - you're right - we've nothing in common, it's clear.

DUMMLING Except I know in my stomach - that we do. Don't you feel the same?

DAJONA ...No.

DUMMLING No?

DAJONA Love always ends badly Dummling - I've seen it - go away. Go away. [*They hear a dirty laugh from Birgit.*]

KING Why Christina, that is a marvelous idea. I shall put it to him now.

DUMMLING Your Highness, with your permission I would like to—

KING Dummling, I have considered your forthcoming request to marry my daughter and I have decided, that considering natural differences between you and she - beyond the purely physical, which are obvious - in her case - that you must prove yourself worthy of her.

DAJONA With respect father...

DUMMLING [*At the same time as Dajona.*] Your Highness if I may...

KING [*With sudden authority.*] Be silent. This is a Kingdom - old fashioned like the ones you find in stories, and I will decide what's best for the country which one day you and your future husband will represent. Your Mother - tells me that the people, are very, very unhappy, and she's one of them. You Dummling - shall give them something to take their minds off their - 'unhappiness', something akin to this, golden goose - but bigger,

DUMMLING But Sir.

KING If you wish to ask for the hand of my daughter in marriage you shall bring back to this castle - a - what was it?

CHRISTINA A boat.

KING A boat!

ALL (*Except King and Christina.*) A boat?

KING A ship - that can sail on sea and land.

DAJONA But Father you know that's impossible.

BIRGIT Oh but wouldn't it be marvelous - a ship that can sail on sea and land.

KING Do you accept this challenge?

DAJONA No, he does not.

DUMMLING Yes - I do.

KING Ah - Yes he does you see.

BORIS What's going on?

BIRGIT Not really sure.

KING How long shall we give to complete this task?

CHRISTINA One year?

ALL One year?

CHRISTINA One year should be plenty long enough - to do what must be done - for the good of the country.

KING Yes - Very well. That is our - my - final word on this subject. Of course in the meantime in the interests of civility and so on and so forth the boy's Mother and Brother will be our guests - here. As I am the King , I command it.

BIRGIT Ding.

DUMMLING Goodbye then - all - everyone. I shall return - with a ship that can sail on sea and land Dajona? *[She turns away from him. The others turn to each other. The scene freezes, all except Dummling.]*
Golden Goose, Golden Goose
I ask and do not beg
Fulfill the pledge
Made to me and lay
One golden egg.

Music - the Goose lays a golden egg. Lights rise on the Fairy King and Queen.

FAIRY KING And with a hopeful heart, Dummling picked up the golden egg and ran into the woods.

FAIRY QUEEN He did not know what to do or which way to go but ran fast all the same.

FAIRY KING Faster and faster he ran.

FAIRY QUEEN Deeper and deeper into another world.

BOTH Our world.