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Product Code Y610-A

MASTER CAT: The Tale of Puss in Boots

by
Bob May

Suggested by the Classic
The Master Cat, or, Puss in Boots
by Charles Perrault

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MASTER CAT:
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CHARACTERS
8 F / 3M / 3 Any Gender
(In order of appearance)

SIMON: *A cat*
CEDAR: *A woodcutter*
ASPEN: *A princess*
ABINA: *A servant to Enchantress*
ENCHANTRESS: *A sorceress*
QUEEN: *Mother to Aspen*
LADIES IN WAITING:
LUPINE
LILY
HEATHER
MARIPOSA
BUTLER: *To Enchantress*
TWO SERVANTS: *To Enchantress*
WILLOW
LOCUST
A LION

SETTING

*The Royal Palace and the forest, streams and lake nearby;
The Royal Garden; and The Enchantress' Castle*

SCENES

SCENE ONE: *A clearing by a stream in the forest, lunchtime*
SCENE TWO: *The Servant's Quarters at the Enchantress' Castle, later that afternoon*
SCENE THREE: *The Enchantress' Castle, later that afternoon*
SCENE FOUR: *A lake near the Royal Palace, the next morning*
SCENE FIVE: *The Royal Garden, that same morning*
SCENE SIX: *Near the Royal Garden, later that morning*
SCENE SEVEN: *The Enchantress' Castle, that evening*

PRODUCTION NOTE

The play is written so scenes two, four, and six may be played in front of the main curtain or in a light special to cover the shifting of scenery going into scenes three, five, and seven.

**In Memory of
Carl Wick
Case Western Reserve University**

MASTER CAT:
The Tale of Puss in Boots
by Bob May

SCENE ONE

SETTING: *A forest and stream near the Royal Palace.*

AT RISE: *SIMON, a cat, enters. He is out of breath. CEDAR, a handsome young woodcutter, enters, toting an ax over one shoulder.*

CEDAR

Did you catch the rabbit?

SIMON

Almost. It sure would have been a treat for lunch. For both of us. But the brambles slowed me down. Cedar, my boy, please get me a pair of boots. Then the brambles can't hurt my paws, and I can catch all the rabbits, squirrels, and mice we could ever want.

CEDAR

I could do without the mice.

SIMON

I must admit, the mice are for me. And I'm so good at catching them. Just get me a pair of boots, and we could eat like royalty.

CEDAR

You've asked me this before, and you know the answer.

SIMON

I know. The little bit of money you make as a woodcutter keeps us in bread, milk, and cheese. If your brothers weren't so greedy, you could afford to get me some boots.

CEDAR

Dear old dad only had the lumber mill, the mule, and you. You know, my older brother got the mill, and the other received the mule. And being the youngest, I got you.

SIMON

You got the best deal. A mill can't catch a mouse, and a donkey can't climb a tree.

CEDAR

That's right, Simon, my fine Siamese feline friend.

SIMON

I'm still begging you to please get me some boots. I will never ask for anything else.

CEDAR pets SIMON's head.

CEDAR

You're a good cat. And I promise you that I will get you some boots when I can afford them. But for now, we have a dry cabin made of logs cut by me with my ax.

SIMON

If you could find a wife, our house would then be complete.

CEDAR

Yes, a wife for me and boots for you.

(Beat)

Our dinner would be complete if you could work your magic in this stream and catch us some fish. Meanwhile, I'll gather some firewood to cook those tasty fish.

CEDAR exits.

SIMON

(Speaks as he watches CEDAR exit)

He is a fine young man. I shouldn't beg him for the boots all the time, but catching rabbits would be so much easier with some dashing leather boots. Oh well, some fresh fish will take my mind off the boots, and the water will feel good on my paws.

SIMON moves to the stream, looking and listening. He runs his front paws into the water. After a bit, PRINCESS ASPEN enters. She is a lovely young girl carrying a basket full of flowers. She wears a locket around her neck. Several LADIES IN WAITING enter with her. She spots a flower.

ASPEN

Oh, look, Ladies, there are some beautiful wildflowers.

ASPEN picks some wildflowers.

LUPINE

And cattails too.

LUPINE picks some cattails.

ASPEN

I hope Mother will like the wreath I'm making her.

LILY

I'm sure she will.

SIMON

Good afternoon.

ASPEN and LADIES

(Alarmed)

Ohhh!

HEATHER

A wild animal!

MARIPOSA

A lion!

ASPEN

Oh, my!

ASPEN drops her basket, and she and the LADIES begin to run.

SIMON

Don't run, my ladies. Can't you see that I am just a cat? You're surely not afraid of a cat?

ASPEN and the LADIES stop.

ASPEN

Of course not.

SIMON

You've dropped your basket. Let me get it for you.

ASPEN

You *are* just a cat.

LUPINE

But such a large one.

LILY

And you talk so well.

ASPEN

Do you have a name?

SIMON

An excellent name, indeed. Simon, at your service. And what is your name, young lady?

ASPEN

I am Princess Aspen.

SIMON

A name that comes in two pieces. Wouldn't just one name be enough?

HEATHER

Princess isn't her name. That's a title.

ASPEN

It means I'm of royal blood, and someday I will be queen.

SIMON

Is it good to have a title?

ASPEN

Yes, I guess so.

SIMON

What does a princess do?

ASPEN

I study hard, I'm polite to everyone, and I feed the poor.

SIMON

I see. My companion studies all the time. He is very polite. And he always shares his bread and cheese with me, a very poor cat. So that must make him a princess, too.

ASPEN

No, Simon. Only girls are princesses. But he could be a prince.

SIMON

Could he? Then that's what he is ... a prince.

ASPEN

What is his name? Perhaps I've heard of him?

SIMON

His name is Cedar.

ASPEN

Named after a tree, just like me. Prince Cedar. I don't think I know him.

SIMON

I will introduce you to him.

(Calling)

Cedar, come at once. I've found a princess who would like to meet you.

CEDAR enters with his arms full of firewood.

CEDAR

A princess? In these woods?

When CEDAR and ASPEN see one another, they both take an audible intake of breath and then look out to the audience with an audible outtake of breath. In other words, they fall instantly in love.

CEDAR (*Cont'd*)

Your majesty.

CEDAR drops the wood as he bows.

SIMON

(Whispering to CEDAR)

She is the girl for you.

LUPINE

He's a woodcutter, my Lady.

ASPEN

(Disappointed)

Oh, goodness gracious.

(To SIMON)

You said he was a Prince.

SIMON

He fits the criteria. He studies hard. He is polite, and he feeds me.

CEDAR

Hush, Simon. This is Princess Aspen, the only daughter of our good Queen.

ASPEN

(With a sigh)

Simon, I'm sure that Cedar is very nice, but I can't speak to him.

SIMON

Can't speak to him? Why? Cat got your tongue?

SIMON giggles at his joke.

CEDAR

Simon.

ASPEN

No, the court's rules forbid me to speak to anyone below the title of Marquis.

SIMON

A Marquis?

CEDAR

A nobleman, ranking below a Duke and above an Earl or a Count.

SIMON

Oh my.

ASPEN

Yes, what a pity. I would really like to talk to Cedar. Will you tell him that for me, please?

SIMON

Cedar, the Princess, has asked me to tell you –

CEDAR

Yes, I heard. And I thank Her Highness for her kindness. If I were a Marquis, I would gladly listen.

SIMON

Hold on. I have the solution. It's very simple. You must become a Marquis. What does he have to do to become one?

ASPEN

Well, a Marquis usually has great riches along with a castle. And fine clothes

SIMON

A castle, great riches, and fine clothes?

ASPEN

That's correct.

CEDAR

I have none of them and never will.

ASPEN

Please tell Cedar that perhaps if he works hard and chops lots of wood, he –

CEDAR

I could buy a castle? No, you might as well say finding a five-leafed clover will make me a Marquis.

ASPEN

I think he means a four-leafed clover.

SIMON

Yes, they're believed to be lucky charms, but they are very rare.

CEDAR

No, I meant what I said. If a four-leafed clover brings luck, then a five-leafed clover would bring extreme fortune to its owner.

(Bowing)

My respects to Your Highness. I have to get back to gathering wood for a fire.

ASPEN

Must you – must he leave?

CEDAR

I must.

SIMON gets down on all fours looking at the grass.

ASPEN

I should like us to meet again.

CEDAR

Goodbye, Princess.

CEDAR exits.

ASPEN

Oh, dear. The talking rule is silly. If I could change it ... I would.

SIMON springs up with a cry.

SIMON

Look. I found one.

ASPEN

What, Simon, what did you find?

SIMON

A five-leafed clover. Just now – in the grass. See ... one-two-three-four-five. Now, you and Cedar can be friends.

ASPEN

Oh, Simon.

SIMON

Didn't Cedar say finding a five-leafed clover would bring fortune ... make him a Marquis? Well, I found one.

SIMON gives the clover to ASPEN.

ASPEN

Yes, you have. Maybe this is our lucky charm. But to be a Marquis ...

SIMON

I know, a castle ... riches ... and fine clothes. I will find a way to make him a Marquis.

ASPEN

Do you think you can?

SIMON

I found a five-leafed clover, didn't I?

A strange older woman, ABINA, hurries on. Her dress is that of a beggar woman. She carries a large basket.

ABINA

Did I hear you correctly? What did you find?

SIMON

A five-leafed clover.

ABINA

Please give it to me. I want it. I must have it.

SIMON

Who are you?

ABINA

I am called Abina. I will pay you for it. Gold.

ASPEN

For my five-leafed clover? No.

SIMON

I found it for Princess Aspen.

ABINA

Princess Aspen? Your Highness. I beg your pardon.

(Bows)

I need the clover for a recipe my mistress is preparing. Here, see the list.

She sets the basket down and unfolds a very long list.

ABINA *(Cont'd)*

It has taken me two years, but I have found each thing on this list—all but one.

SIMON

You serve your mistress well.

ABINA

It's worth it for my freedom.

SIMON

And all you need is a five-leafed clover?

ABINA

Yes. My mistress is a woman with a violent temper. She told me I better not fail again to find a five-leafed clover. Please, Your Highness, give me that one in your hand. It could be the only clover of its kind.

ASPEN

I want to help you, but I need it for myself.

SIMON

If there's one, I'm sure there will be another.

ASPEN puts the clover in her locket.

ASPEN

For its safekeeping, I'm going to put it in my locket. I believe it will help Cedar and me to become friends.

ABINA

My mistress will be so angry when I tell her.

SIMON

What is this meal she's making that calls for clover?

ABINA

It's not a recipe for eating; it's for –

(Clapping her hand over her mouth)

I have said too much. If you will not give it to me ... This is a sad day for all of us.

ASPEN

Who is your mistress? Why are you so afraid of her?

ABINA

(Not listening)

I must continue my search.

(Begins to exit but stops and turns)

But if that is the only one, who knows what she may do? My mistress is a strange and dreadful woman.

ABINA exits.

ASPEN

Brrrr. Does that woman make you shiver, too, Simon?

SIMON

Yes, very much so.

ASPEN

I'll warn my mother.

(Beat)

And I'll tell her about Cedar. Maybe she will know a way to change the rule about whom I may speak to.

(Beat)

Come, ladies.

ASPEN and the LADIES start to run off. SIMON leaps toward the basket and calls.

SIMON

Princess, don't forget your basket.

SIMON hands the basket to ASPEN.

ASPEN

Oh, thank you, Simon. I hope that I see you and Cedar soon.

ASPEN kisses the cat's head, and she and the LADIES exit. SIMON swoons in ecstasy, rolls and purrs.

SIMON

She kissed me. She might even scratch behind my ears if I had boots.

(Admires himself in the stream)

I am a handsome cat; there's no denying it. My fine, straight ears ... my silky whiskers. My pink nose.

(Sees something in the stream)

What's that? A fish? Yes, and quite a large one at that. Perfect for a meal.

(Looks over the edge)

Now, to watch and wait.

SIMON crouches, watching and waiting. He sees an imaginary fish swimming back and forth. He jumps into the stream and pulls up a large black and scarlet fish.

SIMON *(Cont'd)*

Ah-ha, I got you.

FISH / ENCHANTRESS' VOICE

No. No. I beg of you, free me.

SIMON

What? A talking fish?

FISH

No stranger than a talking cat. Free me!

SIMON

I need you for our lunch.

FISH

No. If you let me go, I'll grant you anything you wish.

SIMON

But how can a fish do that?

FISH

Release me, and I'll show you.

(Coaxing)

Anything you wish. You have my promise.

SIMON

I don't know ...

FISH

What is the one thing that you want more than anything else? Money?

SIMON

No, not money.

FISH

Name it.

SIMON

A pair of boots. Boots of red leather. Can you get them for me?

FISH

Red leather boots? Of course. I can do that. But hurry ... I can't breathe out of the water. Let me go, then in a moment, look behind the bushes to your left.

SIMON

Okay, I'll do it for the boots

(Throws the fish back into the creek)

Wow, she sure swam out of here fast. Now, will I really find the boots? Or was it just a trick, and I let our lunch get away for nothing? I'm afraid to look.

(Creeping to the bushes)

She said, behind these bushes.

(Looks)

I don't see ... yes! Yes, here they are!

SIMON pulls out the boots and hugs them to himself, dancing about full of happiness.

SIMON (*Cont'd*)

Red leather! Oh, how handsome my very own fine red leather boots are. We shall have splendid rabbit meals now, with my hind paws safe from brambles.

SIMON sits on a fallen log and begins to put the boots on.

SIMON (*Cont'd*)

How proud Cedar will be when he sees them.

(Struts about)

It's just like walking on the softest moss. And they do look good.

CEDAR enters with more firewood.

CEDAR

What are you up to, Simon?

SIMON jumps behind a bush so the boots are not visible.

CEDAR (*Cont'd*)

Did you catch any fish?

SIMON

No fish.

CEDAR sits on the log and takes food from his bag.

CEDAR

Come, here is some bread for you and a bit of cheese.

SIMON

What would you say to a tasty rabbit? I can catch one now.

CEDAR

And how are you going to do that?

SIMON

With my new boots.

SIMON crosses to in front of CEDAR. CEDAR looks down at SIMON's feet.

CEDAR

Well, look at that—boots of fine red leather.

SIMON

(Strutting about)

Aren't they handsome?

CEDAR

What mischief have you been up to now? How did you get them, Simon?

SIMON

With my cleverness. She said, "What do you want?" And I said, "Boots."

CEDAR

She? Who has been here?

SIMON

Just a fish.

CEDAR

Explain yourself.

SIMON

I caught a fish, and she cried, "Let me go, and I'll give you anything you want."

CEDAR

A talking fish?

SIMON

Yes.

CEDAR

It wasn't a fish ... it was an enchantress.

SIMON

What's an enchantress?

CEDAR

An evil person with magic powers that can change into a fish, a bird, or an animal.

SIMON

If I were one, could I change into a lion?

CEDAR

Yes.

SIMON

That would be fun.

SIMON roars like a lion.

CEDAR

Do you realize what you have done?

SIMON

Yes, I got a pair of boots.

CEDAR

You caught a great enchantress while she was a fish. She would have given you large sums of gold to set her free.

SIMON

She did offer money.

CEDAR

And all you asked for were boots?

SIMON

So I could catch rabbits for you.

CEDAR

Thank you, my friend.

(Beat)

But with gold, you could have bought six pairs of boots ... and decent clothing for me ... a hat with plumes, a velvet tunic, and a sword. Then, I might have gone into the world to slay a dragon. Then the Queen would say to me, "Rise, good Cedar, and you may wed my daughter, Princess Aspen."

SIMON

(Very sad)

None of that will happen now because I asked for boots instead of gold. I'm sorry.

CEDAR

It's all right.

SIMON runs to the stream.

SIMON

Maybe I can catch her again ...

CEDAR

I'm sure she's gone. It doesn't really matter.

SIMON

Yes, it does. I could have gotten you a castle, riches, and fine clothing. Please forgive me.

CEDAR

Of course, I forgive you. Now, come, eat your bread and cheese.

SIMON

I promise you ... I will find a way to make you a Marquis, and the Princess will be yours.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE TWO

SETTING: *The Servant's quarters in the Castle of The ENCHANTRESS.*

AT RISE: *ABINA is reading from the long list of ingredients.*

ABINA

(Nodding after each)

Toe of frog – and scale of dragon – wing of bat – lizard's leg. Root of hemlock – hair of dog. One leaf of mandrake plucked at midnight. Whiskers of a white-skinned whale – spiders web – and chestnut burr. Petal from a purple rose – shell of a crab – and seven tears.

(Beat)

I have everything but a five-leafed clover.

(Beat)

Ohhh! I have searched for months. And then, today, to see one right before my eyes, perhaps the only one in the world. What should I do? What do I say to my mistress?

(Beat)

She will be so angry. And perhaps turn into something dreadful and eat me up.

(Beat)

Should I run away? No, it would do no good, for she could always find me. As an eagle, she would soar high in the sky until she saw me, then zoom down to earth.

(Beat)

And I'd look up and see a monster before my eyes ... a tiger, dragon, or mighty serpent. Brrr!

(Beat)

And that would be the end of Abina.

(Beat)

No, I should stay here at her castle. She went to take a cooling swim. Perhaps her temper will also be cool, and she will not punish me.

(Beat)

But when she hears I haven't found a five-leafed clover ... oh, who knows what she will do?

(Beat)

I have it. I'll pretend to lose my hearing. Then when she asks me for the clover, I won't have to answer. If I can gain a little time, it may be that I can still find a clover. Oh, I hope so.

(Mumbling)

My mistress is a strange and dreadful person.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE THREE

SETTING: *The ENCHANTRESS' castle. Upstage is a large window. The wall with the window is made of scrim material, so a scene played behind it is visible when the lights are on behind the scrim. If a scrim is not possible, the two scenes can be played side by side.*

AT RISE: *The ENCHANTRESS is discovered sitting in a throne-looking chair rubbing her bare feet. She is witchlike. A BUTLER stands nearby. Two crusty-looking SERVANTS, WILLOW and BIRCH, stand close to the BUTLER.*

ENCHANTRESS

Abina! Abina! Come in here.

(Beat)

Where is that lazy servant? Abina!

(Beat; to BUTLER)

Go find that girl, you fool.

BUTLER

Yes, Milady.

The BUTLER exits.

ENCHANTRESS

Oh, my poor feet. How far I've walked ... and shoeless ... over sticks, stones, and brambles.

(Beat)

You two, rub my aching feet.

WILLOW and BIRCH

Yes, Mistress.

WILLOW and BIRCH kneel and rub the ENCHANTRESS' feet.

ENCHANTRESS

All because that cat demanded boots. I had to transform my shoes into red boots for him. Pure luck for him to catch me while I was a fish. I came very close to becoming his lunch.

(Beat)

I was afraid to turn myself into a bird and fly home for fear of hawks, falcons, or a hunter's arrow.

(Beat)

ENCHANTRESS (*Cont'd*)

I'll risk no more transformations until my potion is complete and I have drunk it. And then, oh, the power that will be mine. One sip and I shall live forever. Although I have the gift of transformation, I am still mortal and may easily be destroyed. After I drink the magic potion, no one can harm me. I shall be free to practice all my evil spells without fear.

(*Cackles; Beat*)

That's enough.

The ENCHANTRESS kicks the SERVANTS away. ABINA and BUTLER enter.

ABINA

Did you call me, Mistress?

ENCHANTRESS

Did I call you? Yes, until my face turned black. Until my throat was hoarse from all the calling.

ABINA

The roof is falling? Oh, no, we better get out of here.

ALBINA starts to run. The BUTLER and SERVANTS follow her.

ENCHANTRESS

Stop, you fool.

ABINA stops but the BUTLER and SERVANTS scramble off.

ENCHANTRESS (*Cont'd*)

Have you lost your wits?

ABINA

What? The dog is having fits?

ENCHANTRESS

What ails you, woman? Cease this madness, do you hear?

ABINA

Clear? Oh, yes, very clear. A fine, clear day, Mistress. Was your swim a pleasant one?

ENCHANTRESS

(*In a fury*)

Ohhhh! What am I going to do with you? Get me my shoes. Scoot!

ABINA

Fruit? You want me to get you some fruit. What will you have? Plums, apples, bananas?

ENCHANTRESS

Shoes, shoes, not fruit, you idiot! Fetch me my black ones.

ABINA

(Innocently)

Of course, good master, all you had to do was ask.

ABINA exits.

ENCHANTRESS

Has she gone mad? Ugh! I think she plays at being deaf, so she doesn't have to answer about finding a five-leafed clover.

(Yelling)

Abina! Did you find the clover? Abina?

ABINA suddenly appears behind the ENCHANTRESS, holding the black shoes.

ABINA

Yes, Mistress.

The ENCHANTRESS screams.

ENCHANTRESS

Why are you sneaking up on me?

ABINA

I have brought you your shoes.

ENCHANTRESS

So you have. Come put them on.

ABINA puts the shoes on The ENCHANTRESS.

ENCHANTRESS *(Cont'd)*

Have you also brought me a five-leafed clover?

(Pause)

Speak, or you are doomed.

ABINA

(Dropping her pretense)

I didn't get the clover. I tried, believe me, Mistress, I tried, but she wouldn't give it up.

ENCHANTRESS

What? Have you seen one? Where? When? She? Who had it?

ABINA

A young girl in the forest.

ENCHANTRESS

Did you offer her gold as I commanded?

ABINA

Yes, but it wasn't money she wanted. She wanted the clover.

ENCHANTRESS

Why? What could she do with it? What was her name?

ABINA

(Hesitating)

Her name was ... is ... Princess Aspen.

ENCHANTRESS

The Princess?

ABINA

Such a lovely child. Please do not harm her.

ENCHANTRESS

(Pondering)

Princess Aspen. Hmm ... This requires a plan. We will use my magic window to see this Princess Aspen and learn where she put the clover.

The ENCHANTRESS sits in the throne chair. ABINA stands beside her.

ENCHANTRESS *(Cont'd)*

Magic Window, show me, Princess Aspen, wherever she may be.

The ENCHANTRESS claps her hands three times. SFX: Sound representing a magical spell. LIGHTS UP ON ROYAL GARDEN, (A separate scene; behind the window if possible), revealing the QUEEN seated and reading a book. The Royal Garden is rundown and unkept. ASPEN enters with her LADIES IN WAITING. She carries the basket of flowers she picked that morning. ASPEN sets the basket aside, shushes the LADIES and creeps up behind the QUEEN. The LADIES giggle to themselves. ASPEN covers the QUEEN's eyes with her hands.

ASPEN
Guess who.

QUEEN
The wicked witch of the Willow Vale.

ASPEN
No.

QUEEN
Old Bertha, the washerwoman.

ASPEN
No.

QUEEN
It surely cannot be Aspen, my daughter.

ASPEN
It is.

They all laugh.

ASPEN (*Cont'd*)
Why are you sitting in the garden?

QUEEN
For the sun, my dear. The palace is so chilly that my nose and ears are turning blue.

ASPEN
Goodness, mother. Can't a fire be started?

QUEEN
Well, the truth is ... there is no more wood and not much in the means of silver to buy it.

ASPEN
My Ladies will gather some wood.
(*Beat*)

Ladies!

LADIES
(*Rushing quickly to ASPEN*)
Yes, Princess!

ASPEN
Bring wood for the fire. The Queen is chilled.

MARIPOSA
But there is none in the Palace.

ASPEN

The woods come right up to the Palace gates. You'll find plenty of branches and sticks under the trees.

HEATHER

But the wild animals!

LILY

Lions!

LUPINE

And bears!

ASPEN

Mariposa will stand guard.

(To MARIPOSA)

You'll find a huge butcher knife in the kitchen. The cook won't mind. Especially if you tell her you'll bring wood for the stove.

LILY

Perhaps a handsome woodcutter will come by with his ax.

The LADIES giggle!

ASPEN

No more of this. Go! The Queen is cold!

The LADIES exit.

QUEEN

Thank you, my dear.

ASPEN

Meanwhile, tonight we'll have a lovely rabbit dinner. Someone left two fully-cooked, plump ones at the palace door.

QUEEN

Really? Who could it have been?

ASPEN

The card said, "With the compliments of the Marquis of Carabas."

QUEEN

The Marquis of Carabas? I don't know who that is.

ASPEN

It was very kind of him to send them to us.

(Picking up the basket of flowers)

And see the flowers I picked this morning. They'll be quite lovely on the dining table.

QUEEN

Where did you find these beautiful cattails?

ASPEN

In the forest, along the creek. I had a good, long walk ... and something curious happened.

QUEEN

Have you been walking alone in the forest? Aspen, I've told you not to go into that gloomy place.

ASPEN

But, mother, I had my Ladies in Waiting with me, and despite what they said, it's so pleasant in the forest. Oh, and I met the dearest cat. His companion is quite lovely, too—such long, funny whiskers.

QUEEN

The companion's?

ASPEN

No, the cat's. He chops wood for a living.

QUEEN

The cat?

ASPEN

No, the companion.

QUEEN

A woodcutter? The one Lily mentioned? And you spoke to him?

ASPEN

No, mother, I spoke only to the cat. But I would like to talk to the woodcutter. May I?

QUEEN

You know the rules of the kingdom, my dear. The law states that you can speak to no one lower than a Marquis.

ASPEN

But it's so lonely sometimes.

(Brightening)

Perhaps he may be something more than a woodcutter.

(Opening her locket)

Look, mother, a five-leafed clover.

The ENCHANTRESS, watching through the magic window, leaps to her feet.

ENCHANTRESS

A five-leafed clover!

QUEEN

A five-leafed clover? I have never heard of such a thing.

ASPEN

Neither have I. Simon found it – that’s the cat – and gave it to me. I’m sure it will prove to be a good luck charm.

(Beat)

And then a strange woman wanted it and offered gold for it.

QUEEN

Gold? For a clover?

ASPEN

Yes.

(Putting it back in her locket)

But I will never give it up.

ENCHANTRESS

(Raising her hand)

Enough! Magic window, close.

The ENCHANTRESS claps her hands three times. SFX: Sound representing a magical spell. LIGHT OUT ON PALACE GARDENS.

ENCHANTRESS *(Cont’d)*

It seems you have told the truth. A five-leafed clover ... and the Princess wears it in her locket. And she won’t give it up.

(Beat)

How am I to get it? Another transformation? Perhaps a crow with a clever beak can pick the clasp upon her locket and fly away with it? No, no! I dare not risk it.

(Beat)

Oh, yes, there is another way.

The ENCHANTRESS cackles.

ABINA

I’m sure it’s an evil way.

ENCHANTRESS

Hold your tongue. Tomorrow, I’ll go to the Princess in honor of a make-believe prince from a faraway land. I will tell her that he is my son.

ABINA

Why would she be interested in anyone that you would recommend?

ENCHANTRESS

Why not? It's obvious that they are near penniless. I shall impress the poor old queen with my enormous wealth, and she will gladly give my son her daughter's hand in marriage. And then, within the week, the locket will be mine.

ABINA

Poor Princess Aspen. If I could only warn her ...

ENCHANTRESS

Don't be a fool. You will not warn the Princess. I will lock you in your room. Be grateful that I even let you live, but I still need the things you have found for the formula.

(Beat)

Soon, I shall have the locket and the five-leafed clover and become the wickedest enchantress in the entire land.

The ENCHANTRESS cackles madly. She takes ABINA by the arm, and they both exit as the LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE FOUR

SETTING: *The forest outside the Palace gates.*

AT RISE: *CEDAR and SIMON enter. SIMON carries a leather bag bulging with feathers. They both have armloads of firewood.*

CEDAR

But I don't want to take a swim. The air is chilly this morning.

SIMON

It's for your own good that I ask it.

CEDAR

But why this lake? It's so near the palace. I'll not take a shoe off until you tell me what this madness is about.

SIMON

It's not madness. I have a plan ... oh, such a clever plan.

CEDAR

I might have known. You always have a plan. Is all this firewood part of your plan?

SIMON

Yes.

CEDAR

What is your plan?

SIMON

I've decided that you will become the Marquis of Carabas.

CEDAR

Become who?

SIMON

You told me you were born in Carabas. And the Princess will be able to speak to you if you're a Marquis.

CEDAR

Simon.

SIMON

Last night, I went to the palace with a gift of rabbits. I knocked at the gate, crying, "Open in the name of the Marquis of Carabas." Then, I gave them to a servant to be presented to the Queen with the Marquis' compliments.

CEDAR

You did what?

SIMON

And this morning, I'm on my way with four partridges and this firewood. The servant informed me that they were running low on wood. Again, I'll offer them with the Marquis' compliments. But in the meantime—

CEDAR

Stop! I'm not the Marquis of Carabas or any other place, so stop this nonsense. What if the Queen should ask to meet me? A fine Marquis I'd make in these clothes.

SIMON

I have planned all that. While you are swimming, I'll run to the palace shouting, "My master, the Marquis of Carabas, is drowning. Help, help, help." The Queen will send servants to rescue you and, out of gratitude for your fine food and firewood, will give you new, dry clothes.

CEDAR

Drown? I can swim like a fish.

SIMON

I know, but we must pretend you can't.

CEDAR

And my clothes ... if I went swimming, I would leave them on the bank.

SIMON

I know that too, so I will carry them away and say they were stolen.

CEDAR

No, Simon, I want no part of deceiving my Queen. I won't do it.

SIMON

Do you want to see the Princess again?

CEDAR

You know I do.

SIMON

Then trust me to work my magic.

CEDAR

I've heard you say that before.

SIMON

Go over there, take your clothes off, and throw them to me.

*CEDAR drops his armload of firewood
and goes off.*

CEDAR

(Offstage)

The things I do for you.

SIMON

This is for you.

CEDAR

For love.

CEDAR throws his clothes at SIMON.

CEDAR *(Cont'd)*

My future is in your hands.

SIMON

Well, at least your clothes are.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE FIVE

SETTING: *The Royal Garden.*

AT RISE: *The QUEEN is seated in the chair, dozing. ASPEN is weaving a wreath of flowers. The LADIES stand behind ASPEN.*

ASPEN

There, I've finished. Isn't it pretty, mother? I shall hang it around the poodle's neck and make another for the cat.

The QUEEN snores. The LADIES giggle. ASPEN tickles the QUEEN with a long-stemmed flower.

ASPEN (*Cont'd*)

Mother, wake up.

QUEEN

(*Waking*)

What?

ASPEN

I'm sorry, mother, but you were snoring rather loudly.

The LADIES giggle.

QUEEN

Snoring? Nonsense. I was wide awake all the time. I was just thinking with my eyes shut. I was thinking of the story I just read. It was a very good one, too.

ASPEN

Please read it to me.

LILY

We'd love a story!

ASPEN

Ladies?

OTHER LADIES

Yes! Please!

QUEEN

Very well, gather round.

The LADIES position themselves on the ground facing the QUEEN.

QUEEN (*Cont'd*)

Ahem. "There was a once a miller who left his mill, his donkey, and his cat to his three sons. The eldest got the mill, the second the donkey, and the youngest – nothing but the cat. The poor young fellow was quite sad at having so little left to him."

As she reads, SIMON creeps in and sets down the leather bag full of partridges and a sheet of paper. He takes several flowers from ASPEN's basket, puts them on the ground, leading to his leather bag. SIMON then throws one flower in her lap startling ASPEN and her LADIES. SIMON quickly hides behind a bush.

Oh! ASPEN

The LADIES jump up and hide behind ASPEN.

QUEEN
Yes, my dear? Shall I read that last bit once again?

ASPEN
No, this flower ... it fell into my lap.

QUEEN
Fell?

ASPEN
Why there's another ... and another. How did they get there?

QUEEN
I don't suppose they grew.

ASPEN
It's just like magic. And they lead over there.
(Picks up the flowers)
Look, a handsome leather bag full of partridges.

QUEEN
Partridges?

ASPEN

And there's a note.

(Reading the note)

"With the compliments of the Marquis of Carabas. PS – There is also plenty of wood to cook the birds and heat the castle."

QUEEN

The same kind gentleman who sent the rabbits?

ASPEN

Yes.

QUEEN

But where is this Marquis? Can his partridges have flown into the garden? No, surely not. They're dead.

ASPEN

A servant must have set them here. But what a charming thought, a chain of flowers. The Marquis must be very clever.

SIMON's head comes up from behind the bush. He smiles and nods smugly.

QUEEN

Rabbits ... and now partridges. And firewood aplenty. I should like to meet this Marquis.

SIMON expresses delight and scurries off.

ASPEN

I'll take these partridges to the kitchen. We'll have them for lunch.

ASPEN and the LADIES exit. The QUEEN sits.

QUEEN

(With dignity)

Carabas? Where would that be?

(Searching)

Now, where is that map of all my kingdoms?

The QUEEN pulls a folded map from a little purse and unfolds it. SFX: Sound representing a magical spell. The ENCHANTRESS suddenly appears as if by magic. She watches the QUEEN with interest and eventually amusement.

QUEEN (*Cont'd*)

What was that?

(*Beat*)

I guess it was just the wind.

(*Beat*)

Now, where did I put my spectacles?

The ENCHANTRESS gestures meaningfully. SFX: Sound representing a magical spell. The QUEEN finds her glasses on her forehead and puts them on, studying the map but not able to see because of the spell.

QUEEN (*Cont'd*)

Oh. I still can't make anything out. How strange.

The ENCHANTRESS gestures again. SFX: Sound representing a magical spell.

QUEEN (*Cont'd*)

Of course, I can't; the map is upside down.

(*Flipping map*)

Now, where is Carabas?

The ENCHANTRESS waves her hand. SFX: Sound representing a magical spell.

QUEEN (*Cont'd*)

Yes, there it is. A tiny village very near the palace ... and the Marquis of this place has sent me handsome gifts. I should like to meet this kind gentleman.

(*Beat*)

Aspen must marry one day ... if he proves to be both rich and good ...

The ENCHANTRESS opens her eyes wide and decides upon a plan. She steps to the QUEEN.

ENCHANTRESS

Forgive me, oh most gracious Highness.

QUEEN

Oh, you startled me. Who are you?

ENCHANTRESS

I am Lady Quickly, from the village of Carabas. I come in honor of the Marquis.

QUEEN

Do you know the Marquis of Carabas?

ENCHANTRESS

Yes, he is my son and the very man you hoped to meet. I trust that his poor gifts were pleasing to you.

QUEEN

Oh, dear me, yes! My daughter thought so too.

ENCHANTRESS

I am eager for you to introduce your daughter to me so I can present her with a few more small tokens from my son.

QUEEN

More gifts? How very kind.

ENCHANTRESS

They are nothing ...

The ENCHANTRESS holds up a strand of pearls.

ENCHANTRESS (*Cont'd*)

A necklace of ...

QUEEN

Pearls.

ENCHANTRESS

(Showing a gold box)

I have a box of ...

QUEEN

Emeralds.

ENCHANTRESS

(Holding up a large ring)

And this ruby ring.

The ENCHANTRESS has placed each item on a bench as she speaks of it. The QUEEN has moved near to observe and then sits down on the bench, fingering the jewels.

QUEEN

Pearls, emeralds, and a ruby ring. Oh my.

ENCHANTRESS

I am fortunate to be a very wealthy woman, and my wealth will be passed on to my son the day he is wed. And my son would gladly lay his fortune at the feet of your fair daughter if they were to marry.

QUEEN

The Marquis of Carabas wants to marry my daughter?

ENCHANTRESS

Yes, he does. And if you give your consent, our castle and all that my son possesses shall be yours. There will be plenty of wood to warm your toes ... and gardeners by the dozen to care for the flowers.

QUEEN

(Delighted)

She will marry. At once. This minute.

(Reflecting)

That is if she wants to. I'll have to ask her.

The QUEEN calls for ASPEN.

QUEEN *(Cont'd)*

Aspen. Aspen.

ASPEN and LADIES enter.

ASPEN

Yes, mother, what's the matter?

QUEEN

Child, come here. May I present Lady Quickly, mother of the good Marquis of Carabas ...

The ENCHANTRESS curtsies.

ENCHANTRESS

My Lady.

QUEEN

... and soon to be your mother-in-law.

ASPEN

My mother-in-law?

QUEEN

Look, my dear—all for you.

The QUEEN motions to all the jewels on the bench.

ASPEN

Goodness, gracious.

LADIES

Ooo!

ENCHANTRESS

These are but small tokens from my son, the Marquis.

QUEEN

And he is sure to be good-looking.

ASPEN

But mother, I don't know him, and I think I should not like his looks since his mother has the face of evil.

ENCHANTRESS

(Angerly)

Why, you ungrateful little ...

The ENCHANTRESS catches herself. She laughs, but it sounds like a cackle. The LADIES quickly hide behind ASPEN.

ENCHANTRESS *(Cont'd)*

Would Her Highness please let me slip this strand of pearls around your neck? But first, let me remove this simple locket. It's hardly fine enough to grace your beauty.

ASPEN

No, don't touch my locket.

QUEEN

But, my dear—

ENCHANTRESS

(Frowning, then smiling)

Then let me give you this to put inside it.

(Selecting a jewel from the box)

The largest emerald of them all ... as clear and green as the ocean.

ASPEN

No, thank you. I've something in it now that's large and green and far more precious to me than a thousand emeralds.

ENCHANTRESS

Impressive. Please, let me see it.

ASPEN

It's just a clover.

ENCHANTRESS

(Fiercely)

I command you to give it to me.

ASPEN

How dare you speak to me in that tone.

QUEEN

See here, my good woman. She'll do no such thing if she doesn't want to.

ENCHANTRESS

A thousand pardons. But the smallest token from Her Highness would be precious to me. May I win forgiveness with a banquet given in your honor tonight? My castle shall be yours.

QUEEN

A banquet?

ASPEN

I don't want to go.

ENCHANTRESS

Roast duckling, fresh stream trout, wild strawberries, colored bonbons ...

LILY

Roast duckling?

HEATHER

Fresh trout?

MARIPOSA

Wild strawberries?

LUPINE

And bonbons!

ASPEN

(To LADIES)

Shush, now.

QUEEN

Aspen, my dear?

ASPEN

Oh, very well. But no more talk of clovers.

ENCHANTRESS

As you wish. I'll expect you at seven. Farewell ...

(Curtsying to the QUEEN and then to ASPEN)

Your Highness. Your Highness.

ASPEN

(Indicating the jewels)

Oh, don't forget your jewels.

ENCHANTRESS

They are yours...from my son.

The ENCHANTRESS cackles as she exits.

QUEEN

(Watching the ENCHANTRESS exit)

A very fine, worthy woman. I'm looking forward to our visit to the Marquis' castle.

ASPEN

I have the strangest feeling that it won't be pleasant.

From offstage, SIMON is heard yelling.

SIMON

Help. The Marquis of Carabas is drowning! Help, help, help. Save the Marquis. Help.

QUEEN

Oh, dear, what's that?

SIMON rushes in. He wears a red and white cape and a mask.

SIMON

(Acting)

My master is drowning. Save the Marquis of Carabas. Help!

ASPEN

The Marquis?

QUEEN

Oh, dear.

SIMON

He's in the lake. Will no one help him?

ASPEN

Ladies! Call the servants. They will rescue him.

SIMON, ASPEN, and LADIES exit.

QUEEN

I am so confused. Lady Quickly said her son, the Marquis of Carabas, was at the castle ...
Now, how could he be drowning?

(Beat)

No one can be in two places at once.

(Beat)

Unless black magic is involved. Maybe an enchantress!

ASPEN enters.

ASPEN
The servants have been summoned.

QUEEN
If not too late.

ASPEN
But how can he be the Marquis as Sir Boots proclaimed? He is supposed to be at his castle.

QUEEN
Precisely what I – who? Sir who?

ASPEN
Sir Boots. The cat who serves him.

QUEEN
Didn't you meet a cat in the woods yesterday?

ASPEN
Yes, I met a cat, but he didn't have such fine boots of red leather, a cape, or a title. And he didn't wear a mask.

QUEEN
Could it be the same cat?

ASPEN
I shall know when I see this Marquis.

LILY, HEATHER & MARIPOSA enter.

LILY
The Marquis has been saved!

HEATHER
Lupine is taking him some new clothes.

MARIPOSA
Sir Boots said—

LUPINE
(Entering)
The Maquis will join us in a moment.

SIMON enters.

SIMON
Make way for the Marquis of Carabas.

SIMON bows. ASPEN leans forward, hopefully. CEDAR enters. He wears a half mask.

QUEEN

My good Marquis, how does your mother fare?

CEDAR

My poor mother is dead. I am alone in this world, except for my friend, Si—
(Catches himself)
... Except for my servant, Sir Boots.

ASPEN

Then, the lady who was here earlier was not your mother?

SIMON

What? Does someone claim to be the Marquis' dear mother?

QUEEN

Yes, she just left.

SIMON

Imposter! The Marquis is an orphan. And I am his squire.

ASPEN

You are both most welcome in the palace.
(Aside to the LADIES)
I am sure this is Simon and Cedar.

CEDAR

(Aside to SIMON)
If there is a real Marquis, we are in big trouble.

SIMON

There isn't. Trust me.

ASPEN

Would the Marquis like to stroll about the garden with me? I would like to talk to him.

CEDAR

(Offering his arm)
With all my heart, Your Highness. And gladly, I will listen.

ASPEN, CEDAR, AND LADIES exit.

SIMON

How marquis-like he is in walk and dress. Can you doubt him?

QUEEN

Aspen accepts him. That is plain to see. But how can I be sure that the other woman here was not representing the real Marquis and this one is the imposter?

ABINA enters; overhears the QUEEN.

SIMON

What sort of person was this rouge who said she was my Marquis' mother?

QUEEN

Well, she was a big person with an unusual voice.

ABINA

And did she laugh evilly?

QUEEN

My goodness, who are you?

ABINA

A friend.

SIMON

(Aside)

The older woman in the woods.

ABINA

Did she cackle like a witch?

QUEEN

Why, yes, she did.

ABINA

It was my mistress. She isn't a Marquis' mother; she's an enchantress.

QUEEN

An enchantress?

ABINA

Yes, and very evil. I climbed out her castle window to get here to warn you. She means harm to the Princess. She will do anything to get a five-leafed clover.

QUEEN

Good heavens. The clover?

SIMON

Why does she want it so badly?

ABINA

For a magic brew, she is preparing. Your Highness, the Enchantress, must be stopped.

QUEEN
But how?

ABINA
I don't know.

QUEEN
There must be something we can do. I know we will not be attending the banquet.

SIMON
A banquet?

QUEEN
At the castle of the Enchantress. A banquet in honor of Princess Aspen and her marriage to her son, the Marquis of Carabas.

SIMON
There is but one Marquis of Carabas. My Master!
(Beat)

We need a plan to protect the Princess.
(Beat)

Would Your Majesty grant a small favor to whoever found a way?

QUEEN
Anything.

SIMON
Could someone be named a Count or Marquis?

QUEEN
Even a Prince.

ABINA
Do you know someone who can help us?

SIMON
I believe so. Now, listen closely. You must go back to your mistress' castle.

ABINA
No, she will punish me.

SIMON
She'll need help with the preparations for the banquet. If she questions why you were gone, say you went to look for a five-leafed clover.

QUEEN
Aspen and I will not be going to her castle.

SIMON

You must. If she is to be tricked, she must believe that all is well and that her plot is still a secret.

ABINA

What are you going to do?

SIMON

Once inside the castle, we will find a way to stop her.

(Beat)

Quickly run!

ABINA runs off.

SIMON *(Cont'd)*

And you, Your Majesty, call out the carriage. I'll fetch my Marquis and the Princess. Then tonight we'll all go to this Enchantress' castle, and there we will defeat her, or my name's not ... Sir Boots.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE SIX

SETTING: *Near the palace gardens.*

AT RISE: *CEDAR, ASPEN, and LADIES enter.*

CEDAR

The palace gardens are as beautiful as the palace Princess.

ASPEN

It's strange; talking to a Marquis is not much different from talking to a – let's say – a woodcutter.

CEDAR

(Laughing)

A woodcutter?

ASPEN

I talk to both with equal pleasure. And your cat, Sir Boots, reminds me of a similar cat I met yesterday in the forest, but his name was Simon. His companion was a woodcutter named Cedar.

CEDAR

I can't keep this charade up any longer.

(Takes off mask)

It is I, Cedar.

LADIES giggle.

ASPEN

Did you really think that silly mask and borrowed fancy clothes could hide the identity of the woodcutter I love?

CEDAR

I love you too.

LADIES giggle even more. CEDAR and ASPEN embrace. SIMON enters.

SIMON

Beg your pardon, most lovely Princess and Marquis, sir.

(Beat)

Princess Aspen, your Queen Mother, has sent me to tell you to prepare for the banquet.

ASPEN

Thank you, Simon.

SIMON

Why do you call me Simon?

CEDAR

Simon, she knows who we are.

SIMON

Good. That means I can take this mask off.

(Removes his mask)

We have bigger problems than our identity.

(Beat)

Tell me, Cedar, would you slay a ferocious lion to protect the Princess?

CEDAR

Gladly.

CEDAR pulls the sword from its sheath and holds it high.

SIMON

How about coming face-to-face with an enchantress?

CEDAR

Bring her on.

CEDAR pumps the sword in his hand to accent each word.

SIMON

Good, because we're all going to an enchantress' castle tonight.

LADIES hide behind ASPEN.

ASPEN

I thought we were going to a banquet at Lady Quicky's castle.

SIMON

The Lady and the Enchantress are the same evil person. And she plans to do away with all of us.

ASPEN

I knew it.

SIMON

But I have my own plan.

CEDAR

My sword will put an end to the evil Enchantress.

ASPEN

Take this for luck.

ASPEN pulls the clover from her locket.

CEDAR

Your five-leafed clover.

ASPEN

Our five-leafed clover.

SIMON

It will take all of us for my plan to work. Who's with me?

SIMON extends his arm, with his hand out, palm down. CEDAR puts his hand on SIMON's.

CEDAR

You can count on me.

ASPEN puts her hand on top of CEDAR's.

ASPEN

And me.

SIMON

We do make a good team.

(Beat)

Ladies, run back to the castle and tell the Queen we're on our way.

The LADIES exit.

CEDAR

What's your plan?

SIMON

I'll tell you as we run back to the palace. It begins with you still a Marquis. But now you are Princess Aspen's cousin.

ASPEN

My cousin?

SIMON

To hide his true identity.

*SIMON, CEDAR, and ASPEN run off as
LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.*

SCENE SEVEN

SETTING: *The ENCHANTRESS' castle.*

AT RISE: *SIMON tip-toes in.*

SIMON

(Whispering)

Albina.

(Beat)

Why would she leave the banquet. What does she want to tell me?

ABINA enters.

ABINA

Simon.

SIMON

I'm here.

ABINA

We must be quiet. My mistress mustn't know I've left the banquet hall, but I had to warn you. I overheard her muttering to herself. After dinner, she plans to bring everyone here to perform some magic tricks.

SIMON

Will she transform herself?

ABINA

No, no. She'll make some flowers and gold coins appear, then ask the Princess for her locket and make it vanish.

SIMON

The locket with the five-leafed clover? No, she can't get it.

(Beat)

My plan is to make her turn into a lion, and then Cedar will destroy her with his sword.

ABINA

(Delighted)

Yes.

(Crestfallen)

But she won't do another transformation until she's drunk the magic potion.

SIMON

How does she do the magic tricks with the flowers and coins?

ABINA

They are very simple tricks.

SIMON

Could I do them too if I had flowers and a coin?

ABINA

Yes, I think you could.

SIMON

Can you get me what I need?

ABINA

Yes, she keeps them here in this little trunk. I have the keys.

SIMON

Quickly open it and give me what she will use.

ABINA selects the key and opens the trunk.

SIMON (*Cont'd*)

I'll watch her carefully and try to do the same tricks. Then I will tease and mock her until she turns herself into a lion.

VOICES are heard from off.

ABINA

They're coming.

SIMON

Hurry.

ABINA takes a small bouquet of flowers and a gold coin from the trunk and gives them to SIMON.

ABINA

Take these.

SIMON

I'll hide them beneath my cape. Now, let's get out of here before she finds us together.

ABINA and SIMON hurry off. The ENCHANTRESS ushers in ASPEN, the QUEEN, and CEDAR. The LADIES, BUTLER, and two SERVANTS enter behind them.

QUEEN

Thank you, Lady Quickly, the meal was most delicious.

(To ASPEN)

Have you ever tasted food so fine, my dear?

ASPEN

The Marquis' mother is a gracious host.

CEDAR

And, Lady Quickly, you say your son was called away unexpectedly?

ENCHANTRESS

Duty calls.

(To CEDAR)

He would have loved meeting another Marquis.

ASPEN

My cousin.

CEDAR

The honor would have been mine.

ENCHANTRESS

You are too kind.

(Beat)

Come, everyone, please take a seat, and let me entertain you. I will show you several amusing tricks. But where is Sir Boots, Milord? Why did he leave the banquet hall?

SIMON enters.

SIMON

Did I hear you call Sir Boots? I was admiring the castle's many rooms, halls, and fountains. Such elegance. Such beauty. Ah, the good Marquis of Carabas is a nobleman beyond compare.

ENCHANTRESS

Sir Boots, have we met before? You look so familiar.

SIMON

I've not had the pleasure.

ENCHANTRESS

And such fine-looking boots of red leather.

SIMON

A gift from my dear old dad.

ENCHANTRESS

Do you fish?

SIMON

You know cats are afraid of water.

ENCHANTRESS

It will come to me how I know you.

(Beat)

But please, be seated with the others while I do my best to win a smile from the Princess.

SIMON sits next to CEDAR. The ENCHANTRESS claps her hands, and ABINA enters with a black cape. ABINA helps the ENCHANTRESS put the cape on and then stands behind the others with the LADIES, BUTLER, and SERVANTS.

ENCHANTRESS *(Cont'd)*

And now, with the compliments of the Marquis.

The ENCHANTRESS makes several flourishes with the cape and produces a bouquet of flowers. She gives them to ASPEN. All applaud.

ENCHANTRESS (Cont'd)

And next ...

SIMON

One moment, if you please, Milady.

(Beat)

With the compliments of the Marquis of Carabas.

SIMON does the same flourishes with his cape the ENCHANTRESS did and produces a bouquet, which he gives to ASPEN. All applaud. The ENCHANTRESS frowns and then smiles.

ENCHANTRESS

Very clever, Sir Boots, but my next trick will prove to be too difficult for you to follow.

SIMON

I do like a challenge.

The ENCHANTRESS moves to the QUEEN and reaches to the QUEEN's ear.

ENCHANTRESS

What have we here, inside the good Queen's ear? A gold coin?

The ENCHANTRESS holds up a gold coin and gives the coin to the QUEEN.

With the compliments of the Marquis of Carabas.

QUEEN

Heavens.

All applaud and laugh.

SIMON

(Smugly)

One plus one will always equal two!

SIMON pulls a coin from QUEEN's ear.

SIMON (*Cont'd*)

With the compliments of the Marquis of Carabas.

SIMON gives the coin to the QUEEN. All applaud.

QUEEN

Upon my soul.

The QUEEN tilts her head, taps the side, and tries to get more coins from her ear.

ENCHANTRESS

(Fiercely)

Well done, Sir Boots. I will now do an even harder trick. If I may have some trinket, some object any of you wears or carries. I shall make it disappear and then reappear.

CEDAR

(Quickly)

Will this chain do?

ENCHANTRESS

I think not, no, it's too heavy.

QUEEN

How about my ring?

ENCHANTRESS

No, too small. The Princess's locket will serve very nicely. Please lend it to me for a moment.

ASPEN

My locket?

ENCHANTRESS

Yes, it's just the right size.

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes