

AN EXCERPT from THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA. ACT I Scene 4...

Previously, we have met **CONNIE**, a foundling who has been 'adopted' by **MA DUMPLING**, and works as a servant at the Palace. She is in love with **PRINCE COLIN**, who lives in the Palace with his widowed mother the **QUEEN** and his uncle **DUKE DASTARDLY-VILE**. **CONNIE** and **COLIN** are friends with **HARRY**, the kitchen boy and general servant, and **HERBIE**, the gardener who both work at the Palace. Although **COLIN** has feelings for **CONNIE** and has been thinking it is time he married and accepted his rightful role as ruler of the realm, he has allowed **DUKE DASTARDLY-VILE** to persuade him to consider looking elsewhere for a more suitable bride. Unknown to **HARRY** and **HERBIE** who are in the Palace kitchens together, their friend **CONNIE** has heard every word of this unfortunate persuasive discussion and so...

HARRY: Oh give over you eco- hippie! Some of us have to work!

HERBIE: Is that why you are you looking so glum?

HARRY: No, I can't find the root vegetables for the stew.

HERBIE: Don't worry, they will turnip! Turn up-Turnip! Get it? *(Laughs)*

HARRY: You'll get it in a minute!

HERBIE: Oh no, look, I must have torn my jeans on a nail in the potting shed.

HARRY: Never mind you can mend it with a vegetable patch. *(Laughs)*

HERBIE/HARRY: Touché!

HERBIE: Talking about all this food makes me hungry. Do you think the Ma will miss a few bowls of soup?

HARRY: There's a big pan over here - and it's lovely and hot. Here, I'll have some as well. Peeling spuds is making me hungry too. *(They fill cups from the soup bowl and taste it)*

HERBIE: Very unusual flavour. I can't place it. What sort of soup is it?

HARRY: I don't know. It was on the hob cooking before I came in the kitchen. It's sort of... cheesy. Yes, definitely cheesy.

HERBIE: It's quite a strong flavour and what are these bits in it?

Enter MA DUMPLING with bigger bandage on two fingers.

MA DUMPLING: What did you say? *(audience response)* Feed the fish! I thought you'd forgotten! *(Sees HERBIE and HARRY)* Here, what are you two doing? That's my good washing water that is! I'm boil washing the Duke's smalls

(dips tweezers into the bowl and lifts up a pair of socks – HERBIE and HARRY spit out the 'soup' She drops the socks) Let me feed the fish. Here goes! I'm taking my life in my hands here! *(Lifts lid off the barrel... tips in food... splashing and struggling)* Get off me! Behave you fishy things you... or I've only got one thing to say to you... chips! *(Slams the lid on the barrel)* I'll be glad when the pond is finished and ready! I'm just off to sort out my fresh wounds... finish those spuds before I get back. **Exits.**

HARRY peels and throws one into bucket of water- it splashes HERBIE

HERBIE: Hey, stop that! *(Picks up a potato and throws it into the bucket splashing HARRY)*

HARRY: Potato fight!

Enter CONNIE

HARRY: Hi Connie. Hey, what's up? Have you been crying?

CONNIE: No, no... you must have just splashed water on my face.

HERBIE: Connie, come on, this is us you're talking to. What's up?

CONNIE: I'm so unhappy.

HARRY: You can tell us.

CONNIE: It's Colin.

HERBIE: What has happened?

CONNIE: I thought... I... but I was just being silly. I heard something I don't think I was supposed to. Colin is going to be married... to...

HERBIE: You!

CONNIE: No.

HARRY: No?

CONNIE: No. He will marry a... real princess.

HARRY: But we all know you and he were meant for each other. What did Colin say?

CONNIE: Nothing.

HERBIE: I'll give him a piece of my mind when I see him next.

CONNIE: No you mustn't. It isn't his fault. The Duke says it is written in the constitution... it has to be a real princess not someone like me.

HARRY: But he loves you! He must have told you that... lots of times!

CONNIE: Yes, well no actually. It was always implied but never spoken. He never said he loved me.

HERBIE: We'll all thought he'd marry you one day. He's let you down.

CONNIE: He never promised. It's okay. He hasn't let me down. It was just silly dreams.

HARRY: Where's Ma? She'll have something to say about this. Stay there Connie. Come on Herbs lets go and look for Ma, she'll know what to do! **Exits**

EXCERPT FROM CRAZY FOX PANTOMINES