



## ACT ONE, SCENE THREE

*Charming Castle. King Charming and Queen Charming are sat on chaises longues (or sofas!) reading the morning papers. A variety of household servants stand upstage.*

*The King throws down his section dismissively.*

**King** I don't know why I bother reading the Business section, I can't understand a word of it. Pass the sport will you dear?

*The Queen does so as Princess (Arabella) Charming enters.*

**Queen** Hello, Arabella. Did you sleep well?

**Arabella** Yes, thank you mother.

**King** Too well if you ask me: it's half past ten already. You'll never find a husband if you're fast asleep in bed.

**Arabella** I don't want to find a husband: I want to be happy.

**King** What about that big fella at the ball? Hairy chap, growly voice, teeth like tusks.

**Arabella** I don't want to get married.

**King** Or that French prince? Greenish complexion. Bandy legs. Croaked a lot.

**Arabella** I don't want to get married!

*Prince Charming sweeps in extravagantly.*

**Prince** Why ever not? I do. And I know exactly to whom. Well, not exactly. I don't know her name, who she is or where she lives, but I know I'm going to marry her.

**King** Now that's more like it. *(to Princess Arabella)* Your brother may be on some fool's errand searching for a needle in a haystack, but at least he's out there getting his hands dirty.

**Prince** Well, the major-domo is. I'm manning the fort here.

**Queen** And how is his search going?

**Arabella** Oh yes, for the foot that launched a thousand verrucas.

**Prince** He washes every foot first, actually. Even moisturises them when necessary.

**Arabella** I think I'm going to be sick.

**Prince** Don't be like that. We're talking about my true love here.

**Arabella** Now I'm definitely going to be sick!

*She runs from the room, feigning sickness and almost bumping into the major-domo as he enters (carrying the glass slipper). He gazes after her, calling ...*

**Major-domo** Good morning ... my princess.

*But she has gone and no answer comes. After a moment's disappointment, the major-domo turns and makes his way towards the Prince.*

**Prince** *(almost pleading for good news)* Well? Anything?

**Major-domo** Do you want the good news or the bad news?

**Prince** Um ... the bad news first I guess.

**Major-domo** Okay. Well, it didn't fit anybody's foot in the whole of Ebridon.

**Prince** I see. And what's the good news?

**Major-domo** It didn't fit anybody's foot in the whole of Ebridon!

**Prince** Right. Well, that's a relief. But it doesn't bring us any closer to finding her.

**Major-domo** I know, sire. I'm sorry. I will continue for as long as it takes. Longer even.

**Prince** Longer than it takes? Well that seems a little unnecessary. I assume you've checked locally?

**Major-domo** Er, not yet actually.

*The butler (Virgil) enters.*

**Butler** Your majesty.

**King** Yes?

**Butler** The Duke of Halibut requests a moment of your time.

**King** Halibut? Sounds a bit fishy to me.

**Butler** He claims to be a relative of yours.

**Prince** It could be a red herring, father.

**King** No, it's a halibut, weren't you listening? (to the butler) Go on then, show him in.

*The butler bows and exits.*

**Queen** I wonder who he is.

**Prince** Let's grill him and find out.

**King** Is that another fish joke?

**Prince** Er, yes. But a flat one, clearly.

*The butler re-enters, and with him are Sherlock and Watson in their respective disguises, but both still wearing their own hats. Holmes bows. Watson attempts a curtsy.*

**Holmes** Your majesty, what a pleasure to see you once more. I see the years have been kind.

**King** (*surprised*) Oh, thank you.

**Holmes** (*gesturing to the Queen*) And this must be your daughter.

**Queen** Oh, thank you.

**King** My wife, actually. My daughter is ... otherwise engaged.

**Holmes** Ah, but not to be married, I sense. And I note your disappointment. We'll have to see what we can do about that.

**King** (*excited*) Really? Do you mean ... oh I say ... how long are you staying? As long as it takes, I hope.

**Holmes** (*smiles*) I will stay until the job is done. That is, as long as my cook can use your kitchens? I have a very particular palate.

**King** Of course, whatever you need. Bring your whole household if you like!

**Holmes** She will do for now. She's a wonder with a frying pan, aren't you ... er ... Betsy. Now, (*turning to the Prince*) this must be Prince Charming.

**Prince** The pleasure is mine, Duke ...

**Holmes** Halibut.

**Prince** That's right, Halibut. I'm not sure I've been there. Or maybe I have. (*smiles*) I'll mullet over.

**Major-domo** Should I add it to the list, sire?

**Prince** Yes, good idea. Sounds like an interesting plaice.

**Queen** You've caught us at rather a peculiar time, Duke. I won't go into the details. Perhaps you would like to wash up in your bedroom?

**Watson** In the kitchen, surely?

**Holmes** Betsy! Speak only when spoken to. (to the Queen) My apologies, your majesty, she's got no manners to speak of, but she makes a mean game pie.

**Queen** That's alright. Virgil will show you the way. Do make yourself at home. Our castle is your castle and all that.

**Holmes** Thank you, that's very kind of you. I look forward to having a very good look around.

*Holmes and Watson are shown out by the butler and various other servants as the lights go down.*

*Suggested scene change music: "Cinderella's Theme – Interlude" as the scene changes to Cinderella's house.*