

The Summer Garden

A Musical Play in Two Acts

By David Barrett

Full Version

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The Summer Garden – Dramatis Personae

Narrator	
Garmangarbis	An old goblin
Oric	the sorcerer
In the Village:	
Athelstan	a well-to-do merchant of Fritham
Wilda	his wife
Nelda	older daughter
Orva	older daughter
Odelia	younger daughter
Elvina	Odelia's poor friend
Wilfrid, Sigbert	Athelstan's Servants
Villagers	
At the Castle:	
Prince Wulfstan	the beast
Servant 1	
Servant 2	
Servant 3	
Hengist	Wulfstan's footman
Horsa	Wulfstan's footman
Lord Locksley	a nobleman
Page	
Waiters	
Nobles and courtiers	
Musicians	
Dancers	

Prologue

The lighting for this scene should be dim, and preferably backlit, so that the actors are mere shadows miming the action as if it were a dream. The narrator could be unseen off-stage, perhaps with the voice amplified, or standing downstage under a spotlight.

NARRATOR

Gather round and listen well as I tell the tale of magic, mystery, wickedness, compassion and love. Our story has its roots deep in days of yore when knights on majestic mounts did defeat dragons and deliver damsels from their distress. In a certain castle Brocburg there lived a sorcerer of great renown, whose powers made even the mighty Merlin appear like a court conjuror. This same sorcerer kept a lowly goblin servant, more from pity of him than of his abilities. Garmangarbis by name, he was grotesque of feature and of nature more twisted than a viper's tail. One duty of this foul fiend was to tend to the healing herbs in a magical garden, created by the great sorcerer, Oric.

(Enter Garmangarbis and sorcerer who mime the following sequence.)

But, not content to receive this charity, in disdainful deceit the covetous creature stole from his benevolent benefactor. Being of simple mind, however, the dim-witted dwarf failed to cover his traces and was swiftly dismissed from his duties. Generosity knowing no bounds and, compelled by compassion, the sorcerer gave the worthless wretch parting gifts of an exquisitely carved oaken chest, containing the secret of eternal happiness, and the granting of one wish – to be used only for the power of good. As a final gesture the sorcerer, placed the key to the chest on a chain around Garmangarbis's neck.

(Exit sorcerer.)

The key, however was too large for the lock and Garmangarbis found he was unable to open it and discover the secret of eternal happiness. His frustration grew daily and with it the key, rendering any notion of opening the chest an impossibility. In his obsession with the chest, the goblin quite forgot the one wish he was graciously granted by the sorcerer. Until one day, when his anger had reached its peak, the malevolent malefactor struck out at the nearest living creature – the unfortunate prince Wulfstan, only son of Aldwulf, ruler of the southern kingdom.

(Enter Wulfstan.)

Poor Wulfstan, daydreaming as boys do, was wishing aloud, as he picked a white rose from the garden, for the most beautiful girl in the kingdom to be his bride. Garmangarbis, with his one wish, in a fit of rage and jealousy consigned the prince to a despicable destiny. In a terrible transformation Wulfstan was cursed with a bear-like body and sharp claws, a long hairy snout and a foul temper. The boy roared in anguish when he realised his fearful fate. Unknown to the boy, the goblin's curse allowed a reverse charm to undo the spell, but Garmangarbis chuckled to himself at the thought of any girl falling in love with that creature, let alone shedding tears for it. The reprehensible rogue then simply picked up his possessions and began to wend his way.

(Exit Garmangarbis.)

Thus, was poor Wulfstan destined to count the passing of days as a recluse, living mostly in the Summer Garden, hidden from the eyes of the public. Upon the death of his father, Wulfstan inherited the castle, land and an army of servants, who would wait on him, without ever questioning his grotesque appearance.

(Exit Wulfstan.)

Scene 1: On the Green in Front of Athelstan's House in Fritham

(The curtain opens on a country village scene dotted with trees and simple buildings. In the background is a cloth or flat of Athelstan's house with an open doorway. In the foreground the villagers are dancing on the village green and singing.)

SONG 1, Chorus, Country Life

Chorus:

When you're tired of city life, of garbage smells and sewage,
Jump aboard a horse and cart and join us in our village.
When you need some country air to freshen up your lung,
Amble down to Giles's yard and breathe the scent of dung. So

If you love the great outdoors come down and try your luck,
Do not wear your finest clothes for wading through the muck.
Rustic life is full of fun if you prefer it laid-back,
Chewing on a piece of grass and lying on a haystack.

Verse 1:

We don't promise great hotels, just country mud and dung smells,
If you're posh then don't come here, bath-day comes just once a year.
Pigs manure between your toes and a clothes-peg on your nose.

Verse 2:

Rabbit stew and Daisy's moo a bucket for a loo,
Dancing on the village green, rubbing shoulders with the queen.
Leave behind the city toffs, take a bath in Daisy's trough.

(After the song the villagers drift back to their business upstage, leaving the principal characters downstage)

ELVINA *(In a country accent.)* Oh, Odelia, that was such fun. Please let's do the dance again.

ODELIA *(In a cultured accent.)* There's no time, Elvina. Father must leave for market at Burley or he will not get his stall set up in time.

ATHELSTAN That's right my girl. I'm already late and must ride like the wind to make up time.

ELVINA But Athelstan, you've only just returned from your last trip. How long will you be away this time?

ATHELSTAN I should be only about three days, young Elvina. And don't you worry. My wife, Wilda, is quite capable of running the house in my absence.

WILDA *(Off-stage)* Athelstan! Athelstan, where the devil are you? I hope you've not left already.

ODELIA Talk of the devil. Here's mother now.
(Enter Wilda, looking fierce)

WILDA Ah, there you are, Athelstan. Now what did I tell you about that woollen tunic? Do I have to pack your trunk myself?

ATHELSTAN No Wilda, dear, I am quite capable.
 WILDA Yes, but you didn't pack your woollen tunic. That rough hemp will never keep you warm in these chill winter days, now will it?

ATHELSTAN No dear, if you say not.
 ODELIA Mother, please don't fuss. Father has been away before. He knows what to pack.

WILDA Oh does he? And have you forgotten that he came back with a fever last year. It nearly took him away from us it was that bad.
(Athelstan coughs)

ELVINA I think she's right, Athelstan, you must be careful of your health.
(Enter Nelda and Orva)

NELDA Why you young upstart. How dare you speak to my parents like that. Who do you think you are?

ODELIA I..I..I..

ORVA The daughter of a basket weaver. That's who she is. Merely a lowly basket weaver.

NELDA I don't know why you are always here, hanging around our house. Are you looking for some charity, or something?

ODELIA The reason she's here is because she's my friend and I asked her to come. So what if her father is a poor, humble basket weaver. A touch of humility wouldn't come amiss around here.

NELDA How dare you speak to us like that. We are your elders and deserve some respect.

ODELIA Respect must be earned. Now just leave my friend alone, will you.

ATHELSTAN Come now, my dears, there is no need for these harsh words. I will need you to work together to keep the household going while I am away. Now Elvina, go and ask Wilfrid and Sigbert to bring the trunk out as we must soon be on our way. *(Exit Elvina)*

WILDA Tell them, Athelstan. You don't ask servants to do something, you tell them. *(She struts off upstage and harasses the villagers.)*

ORVA That's your problem, father, you're too soft.

ATHELSTAN Watch your tongue girl, or I'll find a new use for my belt.

ORVA You wouldn't use your belt on me Daddykins, would you? Besides, if you took your belt off your trousers would fall down.
(Laughter from the others)

NELDA Will you bring us back presents this time, Father? You often do.

ORVA Oh, yes, I do so love having presents when you return.

ATHELSTAN And if I did choose to bring you something, what would you wish for?

ORVA Oh, I would love to have a necklace of the purest silver from the orient...

NELDA And I ... a bracelet of the finest pearls from the Indian Ocean.

ATHELSTAN Well, you don't ask much do you! And you, my precious youngest daughter, what would you wish for?

ODELIA Oh, nothing, Father, except your safe return.

ORVA *(Mimicking, aside)* Oh nothing, except your safe return.

NELDA Oh Odelia – you are sooo boring!

ATHELSTAN I pray you make a wish, Odelia, and if it is in my power, I shall grant it.

ODELIA Oh, very well! I wish.... I wish ... for a pure white rose in bloom.
(Nelda bursts into a fit of giggles)

ORVA Why, that's ridiculous! It is midwinter and you know father cannot honour your wish.

ODELIA Well it's no more ridiculous than your excessive vanity in asking for the finest adornments. But, of course, being so plain, you would both need to add ornaments to catch a man's eye.

NELDA How dare you, you precious little monster... *(aside)* Just you wait until father has gone. We'll show you!
(Enter Wilfrid and Sigbert, carrying the trunk, followed by Elvina.)

WILFRID It's your turn to carry the baggage, I did it last time.
SIGBERT You little liar! I did it last time. I carried that big leather bag of trinkets and baubles all the way up the hill while you strolled up whistling one of your silly tunes.

WILFRED You have a short memory, Sigbert. That was not the last time. What about last Tuesday when we went to Brockenhurst market?

SIGBERT You always have to be right, don't you, Wilfred? Even when you're wrong.
WILFRED Just because you say I'm wrong that doesn't mean it's true, does it.
SIGBERT Why you little.....

WILDA QUIET! Now just get on with it without the constant bickering, you silly little men, or we'll be here all day.
(They exit with the trunk, grumbling and continuing the argument in undertones. Sigbert glowers at Wilda as he exits.)

ATHELSTAN And now, my dear people, alas, I fear the time has come when we must take our leave and away to market.

ODELIA Goodbye, Father, and may you have a safe journey.
WILDA And bring us back lots of money...
ORVA And a silver necklace...
NELDA And a pearl bracelet...
ATHELSTAN And, of course, a white rose in bloom. Now Wilfred, Sigbert, if you would kindly bring the trunk.

WILDA Will you never learn, Athelstan...
(Wilda gives him a loud, smacking great kiss on the cheek.)

ATHELSTAN Adieu, one and all, adieu.
ODELIA Farewell, father.
ELVINA Goodbye, Athelstan, goodbye.
(Exit Athelstan and the two servants)

NELDA Now you clear off, you little gutter-snipe. Go back to your hovel and get weaving.

ODELIA You can't talk to her like that. She's my friend.
ELVINA It's alright, Odelia, I can see I am not welcome here. I'll go.
(Exit Elvina.)

ODELIA Come back tomorrow, Elvina, please do.
ORVA *(To Odelia.)* And now **you** have work to do. There are dishes to wash...
NELDA And pans to clean...
WILDA And floors to scrub.
ORVA Sheets to hang...
NELDA And carpets to beat...
WILDA And silver to polish.

SONG 2, Chorus, Call Odelia

1 Monday morning wash day, who will wash the sheets, and
Who will do the ironing, who will make things neat?
Who will press the table cloths, who will beat the rugs, and
Who will scrub the floor and who will fill the washing tubs?

Call Odelia, she can wash and scrub and beat and shine and,
She can fold and press and darn and sweep and clean and iron.
Floors to scrub and shirts to rub, piles of washing in the tub.
Beds to make and cakes to bake, then tea to brew and serve the stew.

2 Nearly time for dinner who will wash the greens, and
Who will peel the carrots, who will slice the beans?
Who will scrub the table-top, who will carve the lamb? and
Who will stir the cooking pot and chop and boil the ham?

Call Odelia, she can cook, the table must be laid, and
She can fill the water jugs, the pudding must be made.
Floors to scrub and shirts to rub, piles of washing in the tub.
Beds to make and cakes to bake, then tea to brew and serve the stew.

End of Scene

Scene 2: On the Road Outside the Castle and in the Summer Garden

(The scene is a dirt track outside the town of Burley. There is a grassy bank on one side and an archway leading to the garden, slightly concealed on the other side. Enter Athelstan, followed closely by Wilfrid and Sigbert, who are pushing and shoving one-another. Wilfrid carries a very large bag and Sigbert a tiny one.)

ATHELSTAN Come, my friends, this seems a suitable spot to rest our legs. Let us sit down here awhile on this grassy bank. *(He sits.)*

WILFRID Yes, and when we've had a rest, Sigbert and I can swap bags. I've carried this big one for long enough.

SIGBERT Rubbish! You've only taken that half a mile. I carried it for at least two.

WILFRID You little liar! You know that's not true. Why do you always have to tell fibs?

SIGBERT Hark who's talking. It's a fine thing to be called a liar by you!

ATHELSTAN Oh, do be quiet – both of you! You've been arguing since we left Burley. Can't a man have some respite from your infernal bickering.

WILFRID Sorry Master. I'll just ignore him from now on **and hope he'll go away.** *(sits)*

ATHELSTAN This journey has been a successful one. We have sold a whole trunk of merchandise and made a handsome profit. You will be rewarded well for your assistance on this trip.

WILFRID Why thank you, Master, you are most generous.

SIGBERT *(Aside, mimicking)* Why thank you, Master, you are most generous. *(Scowls at Wilfrid).* Creep!

ATHELSTAN And I have spent some of my profits on gifts to please the women so that they shall be in good humours upon our return: a necklace of pure oriental silver for Orva, a bracelet of the finest Indian pearls for Nelda and for Odelia ... now what was it I got for Odelia?

SIGBERT A pure white rose in full bloom.

ATHELSTAN Oh my goodness, the rose. I forgot the rose.

WILFRID But Master, I saw no such thing in the market, this being the middle of winter.

ATHELSTAN But, what am I to do? I cannot disappoint my youngest and loveliest daughter. How can I find such a rose?

(Enter Garmangarbis, carrying his trunk.)

GARMAN I know where you can find a rose!

(The two servants draw their daggers and advance towards the goblin threateningly.)

ATHELSTAN Hold on a moment, you two. Who are you, sir? Identify yourself.

GARMAN I am Garmangarbis, a ... peddler by trade and I am well acquainted with this region's flora and fauna.

ATHELSTAN Well, good day to you, peddler. You have surely arrived at an opportune moment and may be able to assist me in my conundrum.

WILFRID Flora and fauna? Conundrum? What on earth are they talking about?

SIGBERT Let's have a look in your trunk, Garban....garban....garbage....PEDDLER, and see what you're selling.

GARMAN *(Sharply)* No! No-one touches my trunk...ever!

SIGBERT Oh sorreee! I just wondered what kind of a peddler you are. The trunk is locked anyway, so why are you getting so stressed?

GARMAN The trunk will remain locked until the time is right for the opening.

SIGBERT You mean, such as on market day?
 GARMAN I peddle more than earthly goods, young man. But I wouldn't expect you to understand.

WILFRED But is this the key? Why, surely it is too large for this lock. No wonder the trunk stays locked.

ATHELSTAN But what about my rose?
 WILFRID My lord Athelstan needs the rose to appease a whimsical young lady. It is her wish to be brought such a rose as a gift.

ATHELSTAN How can I find such a thing in this season? Yule-tide is almost upon us. Do you have such a thing in your trunk?

GARMAN The earthly seasons hold no sway in the Summer Garden. It is there that you will find your rose.

ATHELSTAN What is this Summer Garden of which you speak? And where may I find such a garden?

GARMAN I can show you the way, provided that you are generous to me.
 ATHELSTAN Very well, here is a piece of gold for your trouble.
(Garmangarbis snatches the gold greedily and pockets it.)
 Now, perhaps you will tell me where I can find the rose.

GARMAN That is easy, Sire. You see yonder archway?
 ATHELSTAN Yes, of course I can see it!
 GARMAN That is the entrance to the Summer Garden. Very few people have witnessed the wonders of the garden. It lies within the grounds of a castle owned by the prince, Wulfstan. Within its walls all is bathed in the warm glow of perpetual summer. The flowers and herbs within grow untouched by the vagaries of the seasons. The damp mists of autumn and the icy fingers of Jack Frost exert no influence within its boundaries. Rumour has it that Prince Wulfstan is a generous man. He surely would not miss a single rose.

WILFRID I can see from here how green it grows and how bedecked with blossoms and blooms, even in this winter season.

SIGBERT But tell us peddler, why do few people go there? Is the garden enchanted? Is it dangerous?

GARMAN That's for you to decide. I have no responsibility for the risk involved. I merely point the way.
(He picks up his trunk and exits.)

ATHELSTAN We thank you, peddler for your kind assistance. *(Garmangarbis is already gone.)*

WILFRID Hey, where did he disappear to in such a hurry?
 ATHELSTAN And now, good servants, I bid you farewell. Pray, wait here until I return, so that we may hasten home to Fritham. *(He exits)*

(The action changes to the Summer Garden. Athelstan passes through the arch and is astonished by the verdant lushness of the garden. He wanders in a daze, bending to smell a variety of blooms and eventually sitting on a low bench while he ponders the situation.)

ATHELSTAN This is wonderful – truly amazing. What magical forces can possibly be at work to create this paradise in the heart of a barren winter landscape. Flowering foxglove, oxslips, woodbine – all out of their season when they should be deep in winter's dormancy. And what have we here? A pure white rose-bush in bloom, just as Odelia desires. This surely is my lucky day.

(He bends down to choose and pick a single rose bloom. No sooner has he plucked the flower from its stem than a great roaring sound fills the air, scaring Athelstan out of his wits.)

WULFSTAN Who dares to enter my garden without my permission? Who has the affrontery to pluck the head of a rose from its stem without my warrant?
(Athelstan is beside himself with fear, shaking uncontrollably.)

ATHELSTAN I..I..I'm very sorry, I thought a single bloom would not be missed..
WULFSTAN That bloom was not yours to pick. Do you not realise whom you are addressing and whose garden it is in which you trespass?

ATHELSTAN Why, yes. I..I..I believe the castle and garden belong to a Prince Wulfstan. Are you his...his gardener.
(Wulfstan roars loudly and then throws back his head in laughter.)

WULFSTAN It is true that I am the gardener. But the Prince does not need a servant, he looks after his own garden.

ATHELSTAN My Lord, I beg your forgiveness. I was unaware who you were. I did not expect the prince...

WULFSTAN To look like an ugly old bear. No, nobody does.

ATHELSTAN I beg you, my Lord, let me just have this rose and go and I swear I will never trespass in your garden again.

WULFSTAN Ha! It is easy to say that now. You should never have committed the crime in the first place.

ATHELSTAN But I am expected home. My servants await me outside the garden.

WULFSTAN Tell me, you foolish merchant, how did you find the way into the garden.

ATHELSTAN The way was pointed out to me by a curious old peddler. He said it would be alright as you were known to be generous.

WULFSTAN And would this peddler have been carrying anything?

ATHELSTAN Why yes, a sort of chest, so big? *(He shows the measurement.)*

(Wulfstan roars again and goes as if to swipe Athelstan with his claws. Athelstan ducks to avoid the blow.)

WULFSTAN You fool. That was no peddler. That was the evil goblin Garmangarbis. He is the most wicked creature ever to walk this earth. And you are ignorant enough to do as he says.

ATHELSTAN I'm sorry, Sire. I had no idea. Please let me go free. My youngest daughter, Odelia, awaits me. She asked me to bring her a rose such as this as a gift.

WULFSTAN And you agreed? In midwinter?

(Athelstan nods shamefully.)

Then you are more of a fool than I suspected. *(He ponders awhile.)*

I shall let you go... *(Athelstan breathes a sigh of relief)* but only on one condition.

ATHELSTAN Certainly, My Lord, anything you say.

WULFSTAN You will return to me in eight days time and bring to me this daughter, Odelia, who so likes to gaze upon rose blooms in winter. She will be my companion for a full year, during which time she may not leave my castle or garden, but may pick as many blooms as she desires.

ATHELSTAN But, but, My Lord, I cannot agree to your request....

WULFSTAN It is not a request... it is a demand. Now go.. before I change my mind and have you for supper. *(He roars loudly and takes a step towards Athelstan.)*

ATHELSTAN Very well! I will do as you command. *(Backing away towards the archway.)*

WULFSTAN Eight days merchant. You have eight days.
(Athelstan exits weeping.)

(The action changes back to the grassy bank where Wilfrid and Sigbert await Athelstan.)

WILFRID Hark! I hear footsteps without.
SIGBERT Without what? Without shoes on?
WIFRID No, I mean without – as in out there, afar, approaching.
SIGBERT Well then say what you mean. I cannot abide it when people speak in riddles.
WILFRID Well that's easy. I won't speak to you again and then you can't complain.
SIGBERT Good.
WILFRID That's settled then. I'm not speaking to you.
SIGBERT Well you just did didn't you.
WILFRID I never did, you liar.
SIGBERT I'm not a liar. You are. You said you weren't talking to me. You lied about that didn't you!
WILFRID Shut up!
SIGBERT You shut up yourself!
(Enter Master Warburton, the Baker, dressed in white and wearing a baker's hat.)
WARBURTON Good day to you, young sirs, on this most marvellous magical morning.
SIGBERT No it's not! Who said it's a good day?
WARBURTON I just said so myself, young fellow.
WILFRID And who are you?
WARBURTON I am Master Warburton, the Baker. I have travelled for many days to this market, to sell my freshly baked pies, cakes and pastries.
SIGBERT And did you cook the pies, cakes and pastries while you were walking?
WARBURTON Well no, of course not, I cooked them prior to my departure.
SIGBERT Well then they're not fresh are they. They're at least a few days old.
WARBURTON Well, of course, I..I..I...
WILFRID Tell him he should be more civil to a stranger and should not be so cantankerous.
WARBURTON He says you should be more civil and....
SIGBERT I know what he said, I'm not deaf! Tell him to mind his own business.
WARBURTON He says you should mind your own business. Look, why can you not simply tell one-another what you wish to say?
SIGBERT 'Cos he's not talking to me, that's why.
WARBURTON Goodness, why on earth not?
SIGMUND Because he always argues with everything I say.
WILFRID No I don't, you liar!
SIGMUND There you are, you see. He did it again.
WARBURTON Well young men, I fear I must leave you to your scintillating squabbling, worthless wrangling and antagonistic altercations.
(They both stare at Warburton, open-mouthed.)
I must circulate and captivate the crowd and persuade them to purchase my produce.
WILFRID But Master Warburton, I fear you have been too long travelling and have missed the market. There is no-one here to sell your wares to.
WARBURTON Au contraire, young man, I see a hungry horde of potential purchasers – out there. *(pointing to F.O.H.)*

SIGMUND Oh them! Well, you won't get much out of them, most of them have been asleep so far tonight.

WARBURTON Leave this to me, young sir, I will apply all my skills as a respectable retailer, bespoke baker, consummate confectioner and tip-top trader in order to part with my crusty commodities in exchange for some convenient coinage. Gentlemen, I bid you good day!

SONG 3 The Baker's Song, Master Warburton and Chorus

(Warburton sings this to the audience. During the song he goes front of house and hands out goodies.)

Solo:

1 Now I woke up this morning with a rumble inside
So then I went down the stairs to see just what I could find.
When I looked on the shelf I found that nothing was there,
Just like that Old Mother Hubbard my cupboard was bare.

Chorus:

'Cos he's the baker man,
Yea, baby, he's the baker man,
Ooh, ooh, ooh,
King of the bloomers and the master of the rolls,
Yea, he can fry a mean pancake and he's loaded with dough,
'Cos he's the baker.

Solo:

2 So I walked down the street and picked a handful of corn,
And when I'd ground for an hour I had a handful of flour.
Then I went down to town to find myself a new chick,
And when she laid me an egg I flew home really quick.

(Chorus)

3 So I threw all the flour and all the eggs in a bowl,
And beat it into a dough real quick to fill up the hole.
Then I put all the mixture in a pan on the fire,
And watched the size of my dough rising higher and higher.

4 Well now after a moment you could see my surprise,
When a big crusty brown loaf appeared in front of my eyes.
Then the smell brought the neighbours and the start of my fame,
Because the taste of my loaf brought the greatest acclaim.

(Instrumental interlude after 4th chorus)

5 Now if you come to town and see my bakery shop,
Where you can taste all my wares, I guarantee you won't stop.
Tasty pies, crusty croissants are the best of their kind,
But twenty flavours of doughnuts will quite blow your mind.

(Exit Warburton)

WILFRID I say, that baker certainly talks funny.
 SIGBERT It's called obliteration! It's a literary style.
 WILFRID I think you mean alliteration. And anyway, I thought you weren't talking to me.

SIGBERT I'm not.
 WILFRID Well you just did, didn't you?
 SIGBERT Don't start this again.
(Enter Athelstan.)

WILFRID Why, my Lord Athelstan! Hey, you got the rose. That's wonderful, but why the glum face?

ATHELSTAN What have I done? What **have** I done?
 SIGBERT What troubles you, my lord?
 ATHELSTAN What kind of a father am I? I am not worthy of a daughter so fine as Odelia.
 SIGBERT But you have the rose. You have taken great pains to acquire it for her.
 ATHELSTAN But at what cost? I have forfeited her life and bound her to a monster!
 WILFRID What on earth do you mean, a monster? You talk in riddles.
 ATHELSTAN That garden is not what it appears. It is frequented by a monster calling himself Prince Wulfstan. He found me picking the rose and I was afraid for my life. Like a coward I made a rash promise to save my own skin.

SIGBERT I have heard tales of a prince with the body and face of a bear who has had a spell cast upon him. Until now, I believed it to be simply a folk tale.
 WILFRID But what did you promise, my lord?
 ATHELSTAN I promised that my little Odelia would go to live in the castle with the prince for a whole year. *(The servants gasp in horror.)*
 Oh woe! I am so unworthy. I deserve to be struck down by lightning!
(He sobs.)

SIGBERT Then we must away to your house in Fritham to see what can be done.
 ATHELSTAN Perhaps he will forget my promise and not take Odelia from me.
 WILFRID Perhaps he will, my lord. Perhaps he will.
 SIGBERT Let us make haste. To Fritham.
(Sigbert exits, followed by Athelstan, who appears near to collapsing and is supported by Wilfrid.)

End of Scene

Scene 3: Outside Athelstan's House in Fritham

Elvina sits on the green outside Athelstan's house, weaving a basket. Odelia is with her. Nelda and Orva are arguing as they hang out the washing.

ELVINA Cheer up, Odelia, life can't be so bad. You live in a lovely big house and your father is wealthy and respected throughout the area.

ODELIA Oh, Elvina I do so envy you.

ELVINA You – envy me?

ODELIA To you life is so simple. In terms of wealth your family is poor but you are so rich in happiness and the love of life. Me – I have wealth but I have to suffer an overbearing mother and two horrible bullies as sisters. Oh, how I long for father to return. Life is so much better when he is around.

NELDA What's that you say, little sister?

ORVA Stop whispering. Don't you know it's rude to whisper.

NELDA What are you saying about us? I heard you mention your sisters.

ODELIA Oh, nothing much. Just that I expect you will be pleased to see father return home. That's all.
(Wilda calls from the door of the house.)

WILDA Oi! Stop gossiping and get on with the work. I want that washing dry by nightfall.

ORVA Yes, mother.

NELDA *(Noticing Athelstan in the distance)* Father! Father's home, everyone. And do look at the bag of presents he has brought for us.
(They all run to greet Athelstan as he enters with Wilfrid and Sigbert. The two servants put down the bags and then lurk in the background, anxious to keep out of the family business. Elvina also withdraws but to the other side. Much hubbub as they all call out words of greeting and rush to surround Athelstan and to give him hugs.)
(Enter Wilda)

WILDA And what about the most important woman in the house. Have you no greeting for her?

ATHELSTAN Of course I do. *(He gives Wilda a bear-hug.)*

WILDA Tell me, Athelstan, what troubles you. I can see you have something weighing on your mind. Was the business not good?

ATHELSTAN No, honestly, Wilda, the market went well. We sold all our wares.

ORVA What about the presents, Daddy? The presents!

ATHELSTAN Oh yes, I quite forgot. For Wilda – a lovely new smock.
(Wilda takes the somewhat oversized smock with glee and gives him a kiss.)
For Orva a necklace of the purest silver from the orient.
(He holds up the necklace and the others gasp at its beauty.)

ORVA Why father, it's beautiful. Thank you, father. It's just perfect.
(She goes to put the necklace on but struggles with the clasp. Odelia tries to help but is pushed away roughly. She looks dejected.)

ATHELSTAN For Nelda - a bracelet of the finest pearls from the Indian Ocean.
(Nelda holds out her hand like royalty and Athelstan slips the bracelet onto it.)

NELDA Oh, father, this is the most gorgeous thing I have ever seen. Thank you.
(She gives him a quick kiss.)

ORVA And what about Odelia's flower? *(Spoken with contempt.)*

NELDA *(Aside)* Even if father found a rose, it is quite likely withered and brown after the journey.

ATHELSTAN Odelia – this is for you.
(He reaches into his pocket and produces a perfect white rose bloom.)

ODELIA Oh father, that is simply perfect. How can I ever thank you?

WILDA Athelstan, you sly old fool. I might have guessed that you would have achieved the impossible. Where on earth did you find such a rose in winter?

ATHELSTAN It is a long story, Wilda.

ODELIA But father, why are you so unhappy. We are so pleased that you're home and the whole family is together again.
(Cynical laughter at this from the two sisters.)

ATHELSTAN The rose was far more costly than the other gifts and I fear I have made a terrible mistake.
(The sisters are outraged.)

ORVA More costly. How can this be?

ATHELSTAN Oh, Wilda, I have been such a fool. I have done a thing that cannot be undone – and all for the sake of a single rose bloom.

WILDA Explain yourself, dear. We are all bemused.

ATHELSTAN I found the rose in a magical garden where summer eternally holds sway. But in picking the rose I angered the owner, a prince with the body of a beast. How disgusting!

NELDA Never mind dear. That's in the past. You're home safely now.

WILDA The consequences I fear are in the future. In order to escape with my life I made a rash promise on the spur of the moment. Oh woe...how can a man stoop so low....
(Athelstan breaks down and sobs. He is comforted by Wilda.)

NELDA Father! What did you promise.

WILFRID He promised that in eight days time, he will give Odelia to the ugly prince to live in his castle for a year.
(The sisters look delighted, Elvina is distressed and runs to Odelia to comfort her, Athelstan sobs some more and is led into the house by Wilda.)

WILDA *(As she exits, to Odelia)* Don't you worry, my dear, we will find a way out of this dilemma.

ORVA *(Aside, smiling)* A whole year without precious little Odelia under our feet.

ELVINA *(Forlorn)* I would rather be dead than live without her friendship for a year.

NELDA *(To Orva)* Just think, it will be so much easier for us to find ourselves husbands without that pretty little brat turning men's heads.

ELVINA You will never find husbands. Who would want to marry you?

NELDA Go home, Elvina, you have overstayed your welcome here.
(Elvina gathers up weaving and begins to exit pouting ferociously. She then throws the basket at Nelda and struts off.)

NELDA Ooh, better watch out, Orva, there's a little tiger on the loose.
(She claws the air and makes a hissing sound.)

ORVA And as for you *(this to Odelia)*, as you'll only be here for another eight days you can do our share of the chores as well. Starting with the washing.
(She throws the pegs at Odelia who flinches and winces with pain and hurt. Odelia drops the rose and Nelda purposefully stamps it into the ground as she and Orva exit. Sigbert rushes forward and picks up the crushed rose. He gives it to Odelia, who regards it with great sadness.)

SONG 4 Just a Rose

Odelia and chorus of villagers, servants and Elvina, who all enter during the song.

Odelia:

One single rose,
One mighty flower,
Will you not leave us be?
You have the power.
My father is a troubled man, broken by my pride.
Why can't we flee from this place and find a lonely place to hide
From this rose.

Chorus:

One humble rose,
One pure white bloom.
How you toy with our lives,
Decree our doom.
Oh how foolish a girl can be, acting on a whim.
Now peoples' lives have been broken
By a harmless little thing;
Just a rose.

(After the song the villagers freeze in place as the narrator [one of the villagers in this case] comes forward.

NARRATOR And so, a blanket of gloom covered Fritham as the villagers fearfully awaited the consequences of Athelstan's rash promise. This persisted throughout the eight days until, finally, the appointed day arrived. Secretly, each person had kept a track of the passing days but no-one wished to be the one to mention the approaching deadline. That is, except for Orva and Nelda, who awaited the moment with glee.

(Straight into next scene.)

Scene 4: Eight Days Later, Outside Athelstan's House in Fritham

The villagers are going about their business but, in place of the normal vibrant atmosphere of the village, each person walks slowly with head hung and no-one smiles as they greet one-another in passing. Elvina and Odelia sit together downstage.

ODELIA Elvina, I'm so pleased for you that your father has been appointed official basket-maker to Lord Burley. He is such a clever craftsman.
ELVINA It is very kind of you to say so, Odelia. I'm pleased for Father too. He works so hard and deserves to be rewarded for his work.
ODELIA But tell me, Elvina, why on earth you are dressed in your best clothes? It is not Sunday.

ELVINA I know but I wanted to look my best today. I am tired of dressing like a basket-weaver's daughter.

ODELIA Well that's most unlike you, Elvina. I've never heard you complain about anything before.
(Enter Orva and Nelda, seriously strutting and with mischief in mind.)

ORVA Well Odelia, ready for your holiday then?

NELDA It'll be much more pleasant around here with you out of the way.

ORVA For a whole year as well. There will be much more room in the house.

ELVINA Leave her alone. You can see she's upset. Why do you have to bully her all the time.

ORVA That's what little sisters are for – tiger!

NELDA Anyway, why are you here again, you little waif? Oh, of course, I forgot – your cottage is so small there is not room for you and your seven brothers and sisters all day.

ODELIA Be quiet, can't you! Just be quiet!

ORVA Oooh! Just listen to her. We're really scared, aren't we, Nelda?

NELDA Yes, really scared, Orva.

ODELIA *(Standing to confront them.)* Someone really ought to teach you a lesson and show you what it's like to be treated like dirt. You never stop, from dawn 'til dusk. Nagging, moaning and bullying – and I've had enough!

NELDA Who's going to teach us a lesson then, little sister? You?

ODELIA Yes, me!
(She slaps Nelda's face and then Orva's before strutting off, head held high. Elvina jumps up, looking dumbfounded, covering her mouth with her hand. Once they have recovered from the initial shock the sisters follow after her, furiously. Other villagers follow to see the fun.)

ORVA How dare she slap us!

NELDA Where is the little cow? Let me get my hands on her.

ELVINA Now there's going to be trouble. I'd better go and rescue Odelia, before they kill her.
(She goes as if to exit but is stopped in her tracks by the sound of horses and a carriage arriving.)

Oh my, it's him! He's come for Odelia. What a stroke of luck she has just run off like that.
(Enter Hengist and Horsa, dressed in elaborate footmen's livery.)

HORSA Good day to you Miss.

ELVINA Good day! Can I help you?

HORSA Well, perhaps you can. We are strangers in these parts and are looking for the village of Fritham.

ELVINA Then you are in the right place.

HENGIST We seek the house of Athelstan, the merchant.

ELVINA Then you are looking at the right house.

HENGIST We have come from the Prince Wulfstan to collect his companion for a year. Her name is Odelia.

ELVINA Then...then...then you have found the right person.

HORSA Excellent! Now if you would bid farewell to your family we will take you to Castle Brocburg in the royal coach.

ELVINA I am ready now. I do not wish to make this more difficult with sad goodbyes.

HORSA Excellent! Then, please step this way.

(Elvina exits with Hengist and Horsa. This is followed by a sound effect of horse and carriage leaving.

Enter Wilfrid and Sigbert in time to see Elvina wave from the carriage window.)

WILFRID Why Sigbert, surely that coach bears a royal coat of arms.
SIGBERT Yes and those footmen are dressed in noble livery. But that was Elvina waving at us from the carriage.

WILFRED You don't think....
SIGBERT Oh yes I do, Wilfred. They have come to collect Odelia and have taken Elvina by mistake – or she has tricked them.

WILFRED Oh horror!
(Momentary silence.)
This is your fault.
SIGBERT How can it be my fault?
WILFRED Well, you weren't here, were you. You could have prevented this.
SIGBERT So could you have. You just wanted to see a fight between the three sisters.
WILFRED So did you.
(Enter swiftly Odelia pursued by her sisters with a crowd following, making a great deal of noise. They stop when they see the carriage disappearing into the distance.)

ODELIA Miss Odelia, I fear there has been a misunderstanding.
What kind of misunderstanding? Whose was that carriage – and where is Elvina?

SIGBERT We believe that the prince has mistaken Elvina for you and has taken her to his palace.

ODELIA Oh no!
ORVA/NELDA *(Loudly)* **Oh no!**
ODELIA How can this be – mistaking Elvina for me? The poor girl. What must she be feeling now. But I don't understand.

ORVA The little tiger did this on purpose didn't she!
NELDA Why else was she dressed up to the nines in her best clothes?
ODELIA Oh, my dear friend, Elvina. She has sacrificed herself on my account.
(Orva wails in distress at the thought that Odelia will not be leaving after all.)
(Enter Athelstan, hurriedly and sees the crowd. He fears Odelia has gone.)

ATHELSTAN Odelia, my dear Odelia!
(Catching sight of Odelia)
But I..I don't understand. The carriage.... I thought you were....were....

ODELIA Elvina has tricked the footmen and gone in my place, father.
ATHELSTAN This cannot get any worse. Through my own stupidity I have given away another man's daughter. Oh woe. How can I make amends?

ODELIA That is obvious, father. Night is falling and it is too dangerous to ride, but in the morning you must take me to the castle and deliver me to the prince so that Elvina may be released. And in the meantime, I will go to her family and explain what has happened here. *(She exits and the others freeze.)*

ATHELSTAN *(Aside)* How this plot twists and turns. I can scarcely keep pace with it. A rash promise, dire consequences, the sacrifice of friendship, mistaken identity, and I, surely, am the unwitting villain in all of this. Oh woe! If only one could look into the future and see how this will be resolved.

SONG 5 Wand'ring Through a Labyrinth, Athelstan and Chorus

Athelstan:

Twists and turns of destiny, the lottery of fate
Take a chance to save your skin and sow the seeds of hate.
Gamble with your daughter's life,
Things turn sour, you pay the price.
Act of mercy by her friend and who knows how this thing will end?
Now another's daughter's gone and I'm to blame for all this wrong.

(Athelstan sinks to his knees and buries his head in his hands.)

Chorus:

Wand'ring through a labyrinth we try to find our way,
Turning down blind alleyways we seek the light of day,
Fingers burnt and lessons learnt,
Each new day along life's way.
On the roller-coaster ride
With luck and fortune by your side.
God grant that he live so long to make amends for all this wrong.

(The longer version of this song begins and ends with the same chorus.)

End of Scene

Scene 5: The Great Hall, Castle Brocburg

The scene opens on a magnificent castle hall, bedecked with rich wall hangings and illuminated by numerous chandeliers and candelabra. Knightly shields hang on the wall and there are portraits of past Lords. In the centre is a long table with places laid in silver for two at either end for dinner. The two footmen Hengist and Horsa, show Elvina into the room and bid her sit one end at the table to await the prince. They stand motionless either side of the door. She sits awhile, toying with the silver cutlery and examining the craftsmanship of a woven fruit basket. Soon there is a shuffling sound and a creature, Wulfstan bursts through the door. The footmen bow deeply as he enters. Hengist immediately exits to fetch the meal. Elvina stands and lets out an involuntary gasp of astonishment.

WULFSTAN Ah, my guest has arrived. *(Advances towards Elvina offering his hand, who shrinks away slightly.)*
Very pleased to make your acquaintance. *(Taking her hand and keeping it.)*
But, how rude of me. I fear I do not even remember your name.

ELVINA O..O..Odelia. My name is Odelia.

WULFSTAN A charming name, meaning, I believe, little wealthy one. And I – am Prince Wulfstan and I am delighted to share your company.
(Elvina struggles to free her hand from his grasp.)
Miss Odelia, let us take dinner. If you please.
(Wulfstan gestures for her to sit and takes his place at the other end. He then picks up a beater and bangs a huge gong. Immediately Hengist enters with an enormous tray. He has clearly been waiting directly outside the door for the gong.)
Ah, Hengist, bang on time, as ever.
(Hengist lifts the large silver cover off the serving dish and Wulfstan inspects the meal.)
Wonderful, smoked trout from my own trout pool – and exquisitely prepared by cook. *(Hengist serves Wulfstan and then Elvina.)*
Now, tell me, young lady, have you ever been to Burley before.

ELVINA No, sire, I have not.

WULFSTAN Well, what about Brockenhurst – a lovely market town. Surely you have been to the market?

ELVINA Well, no actually I have not yet been there. But I know that Odel... *ahem* ...my friend's father sometimes goes there.
(She picks up her knife and fork but the table is laid for several courses and she is uncertain about which cutlery to use.)

HENGIST Allow me miss. I regret the table is not perfectly laid.
(He helps her select the correct knife and fork from the outside.)

WULFSTAN But your father is a merchant. Surely you have accompanied him on his travels. He has a duty to show his daughter the world, especially to introduce her to eligible young men, if she is ever to marry.

ELVINA *(Bristling)* My father is very dutiful. He has paid great attention to my upbringing.
(She plays with her food but does not eat.)

WULFSTAN Of course, I apologise, I did not intend to imply otherwise. But why do you not eat, my Dear? Have you no appetite?

ELVINA I'm sorry, I'm simply not hungry.
WULFSTAN Horsa, don't just stand there, clear the table. What do I pay you for?
HORSIA Forgive me, sire, I had not realised you were finished.
WULFSTAN And you, Hengist, don't lounge around - help him.
(Wulfstan's temper is frayed and the footmen nervously clear the table. This makes them clumsy and Horsa drops a plate.)

WULFSTAN Why, you idiot, you complete fool. Is this the result of years of training. You throw plates at me in front of my guest.
HORSIA S..s..sorry, my lord.
WULFSTAN Get out of here. *(They hesitate.)* Get out – NOW. Both of you. Leave us in peace for goodness sake. *(He roars loudly and, in a blind panic, Hengist and Horsia bow deeply and back away gracefully out of the door.)*
I am so sorry, my dear. I had tried to make this a perfect occasion for you. I suppose I am simply out of practice at entertaining guests. I tend to be something of a recluse these days.

ELVINA Oh really? I can't imagine why!
WULFSTAN Now my dear, tell me, what do you think of my castle. Do you think you can be happy here for a year.

ELVINA Why, y..y..yes, I'm sure. Not that you have given me any choice in the matter!
(Wulfstan is regarding Elvina with curiosity.)

WULFSTAN Here, why are you staring at me like that? Is it something I said.
No, Odelia, not at all. It is the way you said it. I am curious about your accent. It is most unusual for a girl of your class to speak with a country accent. Your father's speech, as I recall, is rather more cultured. I simply wondered why this should be so.

ELVINA Oh, I get it from my friends, some of them are country folk. I'm not proud. It's the personality that counts, not the way someone speaks.
WULFSTAN Quite so, my dear - a very noble sentiment.
(Elvina idly picks up the fruit basket.)
How rude of me not to offer you some fruit. Please – be my guest.

ELVINA Thank you, sire, but I am not hungry. I was simply admiring the pattern of the weave. It is most exquisite.
WULFSTAN Certainly, and purchased from a local market I believe.
ELVINA It is a most unusual style. My father weaves in the old Saxon style with a cross.... *(She stops in her tracks as she realise her mistake.)*

WULFSTAN Your father, but your father is a merchant – not a craftsman. Is he not?
ELVINA I...I...I..
WULFSTAN Is your father a merchant or is he not?
ELVINA NO! He is a basket weaver.
WULFSTAN Then you have deceived me. *(Becoming ever angrier.)*
You do not know how to use your cutlery.
You have never travelled beyond your village.
Your speech gives you away.
You are an imposter.
You are nothing but a basket-weaver's daughter.

ELVINA So what? What's wrong with a basket-weaver's daughter?
WULFSTAN Where is the girl, daughter of Athelstan the merchant?
ELVINA At home in Fritham. I took her place.
WULFSTAN How dare she treat me so dishonourably? I made a bargain with her father.

HENGIST! HORSIA! Come at once. *(He bangs the gong furiously and the footmen burst through the door to see what the fuss is about.)*

ELVINA She is not dishonourable. She knows nothing of this. I took her place without her knowledge. And who are you to talk of honour? You who treat people like chattels to bargain with and own like property. You're nothing but a monster! *(Elvina jumps up and throws the fruit basket at Wulfstan. He roars loudly like a lion. She rushes past him and out of the door before he can say another word. The footmen try to restrain her but she shoves them aside in temper and they are dumbfounded.)*

WULFSTAN *(Shaking with rage.)* Don't just stand there gawping – go and catch her. Take her back to the hovel from whence she came. *(Shouting now as they exit.)* And bring me back the real daughter of Athelstan, forthwith. *Alone in the room, Wulfstan beats his fist on the table and sends the candelabra flying with a sweep of his arm. Slowly, he sinks to his knees, and buries his head in his hands, sobbing.)* What has happened is no more or no less than I deserve. I have the body of a beast and a temper to match. I wish I could treat others more kindly. The girl is right, it is I who is dishonourable and nothing but a monster. *(Enter Hengist, out of breath. Wulfstan pulls himself to his feet.)*

HENGIST Sire, the girl has disappeared. We fear she has gone into the forest. It was too dark to follow her.

WULFSTAN Then she is in serious danger. I cannot leave her at the mercy of wild beasts, evil spirits and creatures of the night. Bring me a lantern. I will search for her myself. And you – you will ride to Fritham to collect the real Odelia.

HENGIST But, Sire, night has already fallen....

WULFSTAN Go NOW! Ride through the night and bring me back the girl.

HENGIST As you wish, Sire. *(Exits)*
(Wulfstan sinks into a chair head in hands, sobbing.)

Song 6, A Monster Who is Foul of Face, Wulfstan

Chorus:

A monster who is foul of face, whose countenance brings much disgrace,
Whose looks cause men to run away and hide.
His sharpened claws and furry paws, the ultimate in fear will cause
Men's blood runs cold, both young and old when they hear Wulfstan's cries.

Wails of anguish loud resound through palace walls and castle ground
As he regards his mirror once again.
His beast-like looks he can't abide, his true self's trapped inside,
Till the day dawns which will take away his pain.

Wulfstan:

One day I hope my heart will find a loved one who is true and kind
Who loves me for the person locked within.
She will not mind my furry paws and never fear my monster roars,
She'll think I'm sweet with clumsy feet and hairy werewolf skin.

We'll attend the finest balls in palace rooms and castle halls
My bear-like steps will grace the ballroom floor.
We'll dance till dawn's light fills the sky and then like birds we'll fly,
And our friendship will remain for evermore.

Yet, even though I dream,
Locked deep in my domain,
A monster I remain.

End of Scene

Scene 6: The Forest of Bearlow

MUSIC *(It is night in the forest and the trees grow so close together that they blot out all but a few shafts of silvery moonlight. In the darkness the trees take on grotesque shapes which alarm Elvina. She is running this way and that through the trees, searching for some sort of pathway to lead her home. Eventually, she slumps exhausted in front of a large tree, sobbing uncontrollably with her head in her hands. The goblin, Garmangarbis steps out from behind the tree and observes her curiously. She does not notice him and so, after a while, he leans forward and prods her arm with a spiny finger. She screams and backs away in fear and trembling.)*

ELVINA Who are you? What do you want?
GARMAN Don't be afraid, little girl, I mean you no harm. I am Garmangarbis. I am a friendly soul who helps people who are lost in the forest at night.
(Aside) Or am I an evil night-goer who bewitches innocent humans and puts a curse on them? We shall see.

ELVINA Oh, thank goodness for that. I'm lost myself.
GARMAN Really?
ELVINA Oh, I suppose that's rather obvious isn't it. But what sort of creature are you – I mean, you're not a man, are you?
GARMAN I am a... a goblin!
ELVINA A g..g. goblin? *(She swallows hard.)*
GARMAN That's right, girl. But, if you are lost, then you are fortunate to have met me.
ELVINA C-can you help me? Can you show me the way home? You see, I've been wandering around for hours and I'm scared. I keep seeing glowing eyes in the trees and hearing the howling of wolves. I'm sure they must be following me.
GARMAN You tell me where home is. If I know it, I can show you the way.
ELVINA I live in a village called Fritham. It's somewhere over the other side of the forest.
GARMAN I know Fritham. I even know a person who lives there – a certain merchant. But how do you come to be here alone in the Forest of Bearlow at night. This is not place for a young girl like you.
ELVINA Oh, it's a long story.
GARMAN I'm in no hurry. *(sits down)*
ELVINA You see, a merchant picked a rose from some-one else's garden and it turned out it belonged to a prince.
GARMAN What?
ELVINA It's true! And then in order to escape he made a foolish promise and gave away his daughter, for the prince to keep in his castle for a year.
GARMAN What an amazing co-incidence. *(stands)* So you are Odelia, the daughter!
ELVINA No, I am her friend. But how do you know she is called Odelia? I never mentioned her name.
GARMAN Oh, it's just goblin magic.
ELVINA Wow, that's clever! But you see, I couldn't bear to see Odelia sent away from her family so I secretly took her place.
GARMAN You sacrificed yourself to save a friend?

ELVINA Yes I suppose so. But, Wulfstan discovered the deception and he was really angry. I threw a fruit bowl at him and ran away...so...so...here I am...lost, tired, hungry ...and... and homesick!
(She breaks down and sobs wildly.)

GARMAN *(Aside)* My oh my, what an unhappy set of co-incidences. A house of cards collapsing in on itself – and it was I who gave the first push.
(To Elvina) Do not be afraid, little girl. I mean you no harm. The time has come for Garmangarbis to pay for his wrong-doings. He has been evil for too long and hurt too many people.

ELVINA Why, what on earth do you mean? Who have you hurt?

GARMAN Never mind, girl. It need not concern you. Wait here! I will return.
(He disappears behind a tree.)

ELVINA What a strange little man. I wonder if he really is a goblin. I've never met one before. But can I really trust him? He says he will show me the way home. Perhaps he wants to eat me for supper. How would I know?
(Enter Garmangarbis carrying his trunk.)

GARMAN Here we are, little Missy.

ELVINA Goodness, what on earth have you got in there?

GARMAN I...I...don't really know, little one, but it is a treasure. The trunk holds the secret of eternal happiness – so it must be lots of gold.

ELVINA *(Lifting one end of the trunk.)* But it does not feel that heavy. It would surely be really heavy if it were full of gold.

GARMAN But it must be gold – or silver – or jewels. I have been carrying this trunk for years. It was given to me by an old sorcerer when I ... left his employment.

ELVINA Well, why don't you open it and see? *(She inspects the lock.)*

GARMAN Have you a key? Is that it around your neck?

GARMAN Yes, I certainly have the key, but it will do you no good. You'll see.
(He takes the key from around his neck and gives it to her. She tries it in the lock.)

ELVINA Why, it is much too big! This cannot be the right key.

GARMAN It is the key but it grows, you see. It has become ever bigger since I was first given it by the sorcerer.

ELVINA But why? There must be a reason.

GARMAN I don't think the trunk was meant for me – and...and...I want you to have it.

ELVINA I couldn't possibly.....

GARMAN YES, little one, you must take it. I must repay you for your distress. I must make everything right again.

ELVINA *(Aside)* How can I accept this gift. Is it safe to accept gifts from goblins? And what does he mean about repaying me? Surely, he has not caused me any distress.

GARMAN It would mean a great deal to me if you would accept my gift.

ELVINA Then I will accept it, if it means so much to you.
(Garmangarbis sets the trunk down at her feet, an act which clearly causes him great pain, and places the key around her neck.)

GARMAN Thank you Garber ... Graman Grabbergam goblin. That was very kind of you.

GARMAN And now, little friend, Garmangarbis will show you the way out of the forest.

ELVINA Thank you.

GARMAN You see that gap in the bushes just there.... *(points)*

ELVINA Where?

GARMAN Just...just... (*points again*)
 ELVINA Oh yes, I see it.
 GARMAN If you squееeeze through the gap you will find yourself standing on a track.
 (*she nods*) Follow the track in the direction of the moon.
 ELVINA (*Memorising the instructions.*) The moon.
 GARMAN After a while you come to a crossroads.
 ELVINA A crossroads.
 GARMAN Take the path that leads you to the west wind.
 ELVINA The path to the west.
 GARMAN When you pass the old oak tree turn onto the north road
 ELVINA North road.
 GARMAN And follow the track to Fritham.
 ELVINA Oh goblin, how can I thank you for your kindness. You have saved my life.
 GARMAN No thanks needed, friend. Garmangarbis must make amends.
 ELVINA (*Bending down, she kisses him lightly on the cheek. He is astonished and puts his hand to his cheek at the place where he she kissed him.*)
 Goodbye, Garmangoblin...and..and thank you. (*Exits*)
 GARMAN What kind of human magic is this? She has put a spell on Garmangarbis.
 (*He rubs his cheek and looks at his fingers as if he can see the kiss.*)
 Farewell, little girl. Farewell.
 (*He falls to his knees and appears deep in thought.*)
 Human kiss, human spell. Why should pretty human girl kiss an ugly old
 Goblin. She said Garmangarbis is...is...is kind! She said it twice:
 Garmangarbis is kind, Garmangarbis is kind.
 (*Becoming angry*)
 Garmangarbis not kind – he is evil, (*each time louder*) wicked, selfish, hateful.
 (*Pause*)
 But he does not hate the little girl. She was kind to him. He was kind to her.
 Garmangarbis was kind. Can he really be kind? Has he any kindness in him?
 I'm glad I gave away that old chest. It brought me nothing but misery.
 I tricked the merchant in an effort to undo the curse I laid. If only a pretty girl
 would fall for the prince all the evil would be undone.
 There's nothing more I can do now but wait for the magic to run its course.
 But the chest! Will Garmangarbis ever live to discover its secret?
 But hark! I hear footsteps. I must away.
 (*Exit Garmangarbis.*)

 (*Enter Master Warburton carrying his wares.*)
 WARBURTON Oh me oh my! This situation is lamentably ludicrous. One moment I'm
 wending my way happily homewards, and the next dismally disorientated and
 drastically adrift. It is strange the way the darkness plays tricks on one. I could
 have sworn I heard voices just then. Oh well, it must have been an owl.
 (*Sound effect of an owl hooting.*)
 It's important not to panic in these situations you know. I must control my
 breathing: in 2,3 out 2,3 in 2,3, out 2,3.
 (*Enter Wulfstan, unseen. He stands behind Warburton.*)
 I am in control of my situation. I am lost in the middle of a strange forest, in
 the middle of the night, but I am not afraid.
 (*He turns and notices Wulfstan.*)

WULFSTAN Aaargh! It's a wicked werewolf! Aaargh! Help.
 WARBURTON Oh, do be quiet you silly little man..
 WULFSTAN Aaargh, it talks!
 WULFSTAN I'm not a werewolf. I'm a man just like you. *(Looks at Warburton.)* Well,
 maybe not quite like you. Have you seen a girl? I need to find a girl, quickly.
 WARBURTON I know your type!
 WULFSTAN No, you misunderstand me. There is a girl running away from me. I need to
 find her.
 WARBURTON Now I wonder why she would want to run away from you!
 WULFSTAN You're not being very helpful, are you! Perhaps I should eat you up. I am
 rather hungry – my dinner was interrupted tonight.
 WARBURTON Go on then! Put me out of my misery.
 *(He stands still with his eyes shut and fists clenched. Meanwhile, Wulfstan sits
 on the ground, takes a pie from Warburton's basket and starts to eat it.)*
 WULFSTAN Hey, this pie is delicious. Where did you get it from?
 *(Opening his eyes and snatching his basket, outraged that Wulfstan should
 help himself.)*
 WARBURTON Hey, you leave those alone, you petty pilferer. Those are my pies, I baked them
 myself.
 WULFSTAN Did you now? They're very good. Hey, would you like a job as head chef in
 my castle?
 WARBURTON C..c..castle! What castle?
 WULFSTAN Castle Brocburg, of course.
 WARBURTON Wilbur Warburton, Head Chef, Castle Brocburg. I like it! Yes, I'll take the job.
 When do I start?
 WULFSTAN How about now, I could do with some breakfast. *(Looking up at an imaginary
 meal table.)* Do you do bacon, eggs, sausage, tomatoes, mushrooms, baked
 beans, and fried bread.
 WARBURTON Yes, and I could also serve a scrumptious starter and a delectable desert. But
 what about the girl?
 WULFSTAN No, I don't think she'd fit on the fried bread.
 WARBURTON No, I mean the one who's running away from you.
 WULFSTAN Oh, she'll wait. I'll get the servants to find her later.
 Come on. Let's go and have breakfast.

Song 3, Reprise *(Warburton sings as they exit.)*

'Cos I'm the baker man,
 Yea, baby, I'm the baker man,
 Ooh, ooh, ooh,
 King of the bloomers and the master of the rolls,
 I can fry a mean pancake and I'm loaded with dough,
 'Cos I'm the baker.

End of Scene

Scene 7: The Great Hall, Castle Brocburg, a Few Days Later

The castle is buzzing with activity with courtiers dancing a regal dance to the accompaniment of musicians in a gallery. Odelia sits in one corner looking forlorn. Hengist, Horsa and servants 1 and 2 stand motionless at the back, awaiting orders.

DANCE 1 Prince Wulfstan's Round Dance

(After the dance, Wulfstan comes forward, glass in hand, to propose a toast.)

WULFSTAN My Lords, ladies and trusted servants, I would like to propose a toast in honour of my new companion, Odelia, daughter of Athelstan of Fritham. May she find peace and happiness during her stay here in castle Brocburg. I promise that I will do everything in my power to make her welcome. She will live in my castle like a princess and I will try to give her happiness beyond her wildest dreams. She may go wheresoever she wishes in the castle and grounds and whatever she needs shall be given without question.

(Raising his glass.) My Lords, a toast to Odelia!

(She rises, reluctantly, unsmiling.)

ALL *(Raising their glasses.)* Odelia! *(Odelia sits.)*

WULFSTAN And now, Odelia, please be gracious enough to join me on the floor for the next dance.

(Everyone applauds politely as Odelia rises to her feet and steps onto the dance floor. She is still pouting and looking rather sour-faced.)

Gentlemen, the music, if you please. I think a slow waltz would be appropriate.

SONG 7/DANCE 2 Waltz

Wulfstan takes Odelia's hand and they begin a slow waltz. Other couples join them on the floor. Wulfstan tries to pull Odelia close to him but she repeatedly pulls away so there is a gap between them, although he still holds her hand and has the other arm partially around her waist in waltz fashion.

Come take my hand again,
Let's waltz some more, polish the floor.
Let's step and whirl for a while,
In the new Viennese style.

Just hold your partner tight,
Gentleman, Lord or Earl.
Let's dance till morning light,
Come, give me one more twirl.

It goes well at first but Wulfstan is terribly clumsy and after a few bars he begins to flounder and is clearly stepping on Odelia's toes. She cries out in pain. The courtiers continue to dance as Wulfstan seeks to blame the musicians.

Instrumental Interlude

WULFSTAN

(Over the instrumental interlude.)

You incompetent fools, why do you have to play your music so fast. I asked for a slow waltz. You should know that I cannot keep up with your indulgent accelerando. I've a good mind to dismiss you but I do not wish to disappoint my guests.

(He looks around for a lone male nobleman.)

My Lord of Locksley, please do me the favour of finishing the dance with Odelia.

(He gives her hand to Locksley and the pair begin to dance gracefully. Odelia looks much happier. The dance continues, almost in slow motion, and Wulfstan makes his speech over the music.)

I'll choose a waltz today,
Three in a bar, better by far.
Let's try that number by Strauss,
It's from his Die Fledermaus.

Who'll pay the band tonight?
Certainly won't be me.
I've spent my last gold crown,
I can't afford their fee.

WULFSTAN

(Aside) Oh what a sorry state! I cannot dance on these oversized bear's paws. How can I ever expect a lady to fall in love with a monster such as I? My hopes and dreams of marriage are surely gone forever.

(Glances at Odelia and Locksley.)

Just look at the graceful pair. And I had hoped to charm Odelia and to make her my wife. This is never to be. Oh, how I curse that wretched creature Garmangarbis for his evil spell.

But, just a moment. Perhaps the spell can be reversed – there is a reverse charm for most magic spells - and only the wretched goblin would know. I will find the wicked creature and make him tell me, even if I have to throw him in the dungeon first.

(If the dance is still in progress, Wulfstan should sit with head in hands until the music stops. If the dance finishes before the end of Wulfstan's speech, the dancers should drift silently back to their places and sit.)

(Wulfstan roars and everyone jumps to their feet.)

WULFSTAN

You two, servants, come here at once!

(They come downstage.)

SERVANT 1

My Lord?

WULFSTAN Take a pair of strong horses and ride through the kingdom in search of the evil Garmangarbis.
(Gasps of horror and shock from the crowd.)

SERVANT 2 But M...M..My Lord, what would we want with such an evil creature.

WULFSTAN Do not question my orders. Bring him here, alive. Offer him gold if you have to. Go! Now!

SERVANT 1 At once, my Lord.
(He grabs Servant 2 by the collar, sensing that he is about to argue with the prince and they exit. There is a hubbub now in the crowd as they speculate on what the prince may want with the goblin.)
(Wulfstan is now in a temper at the insubordination of his servants.)

WULFSTAN Hengist, Horsa, come here at once!

HENGIST Sire, you called?

WULFSTAN Pay the musicians and then kick them out of the back door. I never wish to see them again. They have ruined the evening.

HORSA But, Sire, surely the musicians have played well.

WULFSTAN *(Shouting)* I shall be the judge of that – not you. Now do as I ask.
(They do so, kicking the musicians out unceremoniously, violins and cellos flying.)
(Wulfstan roars and rants in a high temper.)
People refuse to do as I command. They question my judgement.
(The courtiers shrink away, fearful of Wulfstan's mood. Odelia lurks in the corner, shocked.)
This is my castle, I am the prince and my subjects must obey me without question.
(He roars again. The guests are beginning to gather their cloaks and leave.)
Oh that's right, you just leave. Have you had enough of my hospitality?

ODELIA This is simply outrageous! I cannot bear to stay here and listen to you insult one person after the other. I shall retire to my chamber.

WULFSTAN You cannot do that, Odelia. I have not dismissed you. You cannot simply walk out.

ODELIA Why not? Am I not to act like a princess and go wherever I wish in the castle? Well, I'm going to bed. I bid you GOODNIGHT, Wulfstan. *(Exits)*
(The last of the guests are still leaving and Wulfstan hurries them along with a loud roar.)

WULFSTAN Leave then, all of you! Leave me alone, why don't you. I am merely your host and you my guests.
(He sits in a chair and puts his head in his hands. Pause.)
But how can I blame them. Who would want to spend an evening with a bad-tempered monster. I am not fit to be a host, not even fit to be a prince. I will never break this spell. This magic can surely not be undone. Oh, what wicked punishment I have to endure for merely picking a rose and wishing myself a beautiful bride. Why did the goblin not simply kill me. I would rather be dead!

Song 6, Reprise

Wulfstan:

One day I hope my heart will find a loved one who is true and kind

Who loves me for the person locked within.

She will not mind my lion's paws and never fear my monster roars,

She'll think I'm sweet with clumsy feet and hairy werewolf skin.

We'll attend the finest balls in palace rooms and castle halls

My bear-like steps will grace the ballroom floor.

We'll dance till dawn's light fills the sky and then like birds we'll fly,

And our friendship will be sealed for evermore.

Yet, even though I dream,

Locked deep in my domain,

A monster I remain.

End of Scene

Scene 8: The Summer Garden, a Few Months Later

(Odelia is idly passing time in the Summer Garden, delighting in sampling the fragrances of the various flowers.)

ODELIA Such a variety of colourful flowers, sweet-smelling herbs and unusual shrubs, how wonderful. And the perfume is simply glorious. But, come now, Odelia, you are talking to yourself again. You'd better get out of the habit, people will think you're mad.

(She plucks a white rose from the very same bush as Athelstan.)

ELVINA Pst!

ODELIA My, a talking bush! How curious.

(She picks another rose and looks from rose to bush in wonder.)

ELVINA Pst!

(And another)

ELVINA Pst!

ODELIA Well, this garden is certainly magic.

ELVINA Hello, it's me you idiot!

ODELIA Hello, rose bush. There is no need to be rude to me, you know!

(The rose bush rustles and heaves, the branches part and Elvina clammers out and dusts herself down.)

ELVINA, it's you!

ELVINA Hello, Odelia.

ODELIA And I thought

ELVINA What did you think?

ODELIA Oh never mind. How lovely to see you *(They embrace)* but what are you doing here?

ELVINA I've come to rescue you, of course.

ODELIA But Elvina, I don't need rescuing. I'm quite alright.

ELVINA But....but I thought.....

ODELIA You thought that I would be unhappy and at the mercy of some ruthless monster but it's not like that that, Elvina. Wulfstan has a terrible temper but underneath he has a heart of gold – and he is confused, unhappy, bewildered. He needs someone to look after him.

ELVINA You're not in love with that overgrown bear of a man are you, Odelia?

ODELIA No, of course not. I don't think I am, anyway. But I am really pleased to see you and grateful for your concern. It was really noble of you to pretend you were me to spare me the ordeal and I will be grateful to you for ever. I am so lucky to have a friend like you.

ELVINA But don't you want to come home? Don't you miss your family?

ODELIA Of course I miss Father and Mother greatly and I think about them every day, but I know that this is only for one year. There is no point in fretting when one has no choice in the matter. I am honour-bound by father's promise to stay for a year.

ELVINA But, Odelia, you must simply hate it. One evening was too much for me.

ODELIA At first I was very unhappy and hated it here, but I began to feel sorry for Wulfstan and then I wanted to help him. Although Wulfstan is bad-tempered with the servants he has shown nothing but kindness to me. I don't know what kind of cruel sickness he must have suffered to cause his beastly deformity and

temper, but I can see how much he suffers in his mind and I wish to help him while I am here..

ELVINA I see! You won't be coming home with me, then?
ODELIA Not until the year is up.
(Enter Wulfstan, unseen)

ELVINA Well, I suppose there are consolations; like the servants, the food and all the splendour.
ODELIA Yes, but although Wulfstan is a high-ranking nobleman, he never has visitors anymore, on account of his temper, and he never ventures into the world outside the castle and garden. He loves the garden – it is a tonic for him.
WULFSTAN I have good cause to appreciate this garden.
(Elvina backs away in fright.)
Ah, Odelia, I see your friend has come to visit you.

ELVINA I..I... I'm sorry, I should not have come. I'd better be going...
ODELIA Elvina, it is quite alright, Wulfstan means you no harm. You are my guest.
(She gives Wulfstan a fleeting embrace.)

WULFSTAN Of course, you are welcome here.
ELVINA W..w..why, thank you.
WULFSTAN I have the greatest admiration for a friendship which causes a girl to sacrifice herself for her friend in the way you did.

ODELIA But Wulfstan, you said you have good cause to love the garden. Why is that?
WULFSTAN There is more to this garden than meets the eye. It has a certain magic. You see, the garden was created for my ancestors by a powerful sorcerer. Not one of these plants is poisonous. In fact, many of them have healing properties and can be used in powerful remedies and medicines.

ELVINA Wow, that's fantastic!
ODELIA But why a summer garden?
WULFSTAN Many of the plants only flower or produce their valuable fruits in summer. Seeds can be ground, fruits squeezed for their juices, leaves can be pressed for the valuable liquid within. All this can only happen in season.

ELVINA So the sorcerer cast a spell maintaining perpetual summer in the garden.
WULFSTAN Precisely – so that its healing powers would be ever present for the power of good. But there is an extra ingredient in every potion or cure. The real secret of the cure is in the love and care put into the preparation, together with a wish for the recovery of the sick person.

ODELIA That's wonderful!
WULFSTAN And so, you see why the garden is so special to me. But it was also in this place that a dark deed was done..... an evil goblin....by the nameof.... Garmangarbis..... *(Wulfstan collapses in a faint.)*

ODELIA Oh no, Wulfstan. Wulfstan, wake up!
ELVINA What on earth is wrong with him?
ODELIA He has become rather sick these last few weeks. It may be the illness which caused his deformities, but I feel it is simply sadness. He keeps becoming weak and collapsing like this. Oh Elvina, I don't know what to do.

ELVINA But Odelia, he mentioned the name Garmangarbis. I know of such a creature. He showed me kindness in the forest when I was lost. He gave me a trunk as a present. I...I...I don't understand. Wulfstan called him evil.

ODELIA We cannot quiz him now. He is too weak.
(Wulfstan begins to come round.)

WULFSTAN *(Moaning and groaning as he comes to.)* Odelia! Where is Odelia?

ODELIA *(Stroking his brow.)* I am here Wulfstan. Don't try to stand yet. I will get the servants. Elvina, I'm sorry, but I must get Wulfstan back into the castle. Forgive me.

ELVINA Yes, of course. I should go now.

ODELIA Please give my good wishes to mother and father and tell them I am not unhappy here and that it will not be too long before we are re-united.

ELVINA I'll tell them.

ODELIA And please come back soon and visit me.

ELVINA I will – I promise.
(They embrace and Elvina exits.)

ODELIA Come now, Wulfstan. Let's get you into your bed.
(She helps him to his feet and he begins to walk off, very shakily .)
Hengist, Horsa, please help me. *(They exit.)*

End of Scene

Scene 9: Wulfstan's Bedchamber, At Night, Some While Later

The lighting is dim, only a few candles light the bedchamber. Wulfstan lies very sick in bed and is in a deep sleep. The two footmen stand to attention at the head and foot of the bed and Odelia sits on the far side, mopping Wulfstan's brow with a cloth. There is a gentle knock at the door.

ODELIA *(In a whisper.)* Enter!
(Enter the two servants)

SERVANT 1 My lady, we have been....

ODELIA Shhh, for pity's sake, not so loudly. Can you not see he's asleep?

SERVANT 1 Sorry, my lady.

ODELIA Now, what news? Have you found the goblin?

SERVANT 2 Alas, although we have searched high and low and enquired throughout the kingdom, we have found no trace of this Garmangarbis. Rumour has it that he has left this land for some foreign shore.

ODELIA Then all is lost. Whatever magical powers he possesses Wulfstan had a notion that the goblin could release him from whatever evil spirit is consuming his soul.

SERVANT 2 We are truly sorry, my lady.

ODELIA I'm sure you did your best. Now go and get some rest and in two days time resume your search, although I fear it may be too late for Wulfstan by then.

SERVANT 1 But surely, you don't mean...

ODELIA Wulfstan is near the end of his life's journey. Soon he will be at peace. It has been a privilege to share his last days with him. My only regret is that he will leave one stone unturned and I know not its meaning. Wulfstan was convinced that the goblin could end his misery. I know not how but it almost seems as if he has lost the will to live – as if his heart is broken in two. Now go and rest, you have served your master well.
(As they exit she slips them each a small bag of gold. The door closes behind them with a clatter and Wulfstan opens his eyes.)

WULFSTAN *(Feebly)* Odelia. Dear, gentle Odelia. How kind of you to care for me. You are not obliged to stay any longer. I release you from your obligations. You may go.

ODELIA Don't be silly, Wulfstan – I'm not going anywhere. I'm staying here to care for you.

WULFSTAN Well, don't worry, it will not be for much longer. I sense the end is near. Hengist, Horsa leave us in peace. *(He dismisses them with a weak wave of the hand.)*

ODELIA Wulfstan, don't be ridiculous. You will soon recover and get strong again. We'll take you to the Summer Garden, you do so love it there. The rich scent of the evening blossoms will be a tonic and and...

WULFSTAN Odelia, you do not need to keep up the pretence. I am not a child!
(Odelia begins to sob and puts her head on his chest. He pats her head.)
But there is something I must tell you. I have made an arrangement with the Lord Chamberlain. I am leaving all my lands and wealth to you, Odelia.

ODELIA *(Sobbing)* But why, Wulfstan. I am not family. I do not deserve this.

WULFSTAN You are closer than family and you have shown me such kindness when others have shunned me. When I am gone you can bring your family to live here and

take a husband. Should you be blessed with a son, you shall call him Wulfstan.
(He coughs feebly and has difficulty finishing his sentences.)

Odelia – I love you

(She clasps his hand in hers.)

O DELIA

Oh Wulfstan, I love you too. And you must stop this talk of dying. Why, you are still young. You used to be strong and you will again, Wulfstan. I will certainly marry and have a son, but it will be you I'll marry – if you'll have me. We'll show our little Wulfstan the wonders of your lands and the secrets of the summer garden. He'll grow up a proper little prince – just like his father.
(Wulfstan's hand goes limp and drops as he passes away.)

Wulfstan! WULFSTAN! Don't leave me – please! Please no, no!

(She sobs uncontrollably. Enter Hengist and Horsa.)

HENGIST

My lady, is everything alright.

O DELIA

He's ... he's dead!

HORSA

Then there's nothing more to be done, my lady.

(Hengist covers Wulfstan's head with the sheet. Horsa takes Odelia by the hand.)

Come, my lady, we must inform the household of Wulfstan's death.

O DELIA

No, no! Please just leave me alone with him – for a few minutes – please!

HORSA

Very well. As you wish.

(They exit silently.)

Song 8, Do Not Close the Door, Odelia Solo

Twilight dims the evening,
Lighted candles flicker,
Still the daylight lingers,
Do not close the door!

Just another evening,
Just a normal day,
Do not shut the light out,
Please don't go away.

When you find the one to share your dreams,
Light a candle flame and do not let it die.

Do not close the door,
Do not steal our light,
Dear Wulfstan let our flame burn bright.

(Instrumental)

Darkness dims the mem'ry,
Faces blur and fade,
People are forgotten,
Friendships we once made.

Now's a special evening,
Not a normal day,
Do not let my mem'ries
Ever fade away.

Now I found the one to share my dreams,
Fate has intervened and tried to close the door.

Do not close the door,
Do not steal our light,
Dear Wulfstan let our flame burn bright.

(Instrumental)

Twilight dims the evening,
Shadows growing higher,
Still the mem'ry lingers,
Do not let it ever die.

(At the end of the song Odelia bends low over Wulfstan's body and weeps. As she does this, her tears fall onto Wulfstan's face, through the sheet. There is an enormous flash of lightning and crash of thunder which causes her to shrink back against the wall with a scream. Wulfstan groans and begins to rise. Odelia screams all the more loudly only becoming dumbstruck when the sheet falls from his face and, instead of the previous bear-like figure, there sits a handsome prince.)

WULFSTAN Do not be afraid, Odelia, it is I – Wulfstan.
ODELIA But, but, you can't be. I mean, how can this be.
WULFSTAN *(Jumping off the bed, standing rather shakily, and putting his hands on her shoulders.)* You unlocked the real Wulfstan with your tears and your declaration of your love for me. It seems so obvious now that the reverse spell would be something simple such as that. Profoundly simple – and yet, unattainable for an ugly bear-like man with an evil temper. Garmangarbis would never guess that a beautiful girl would really fall in love with me.
ODELIA But, but I don't understand.
WULFSTAN It does not really matter now, my dear. Just a wicked spell once cast upon a vain prince who thought rather too much of himself. *(He begins to faint and Odelia supports him and sits him down. Enter Hengist and Horsa and stare at Wulfstan in disbelief.)*
HENGIST My Lord, we thought you were...were ...dead.
HORSA And how you are transformed! What miracle is this?
HENGIST Then the legend of the goblin's curse is true – and somehow the curse is undone.
WULFSTAN *(Standing again.)* Exactly right, Hengist, and now we can get on with our lives. Go, both of you, and spread the good news to the castle, and to the kingdom. Prince Wulfstan will henceforth be a people's prince. I will ride through my realm greeting my subjects and hearing their complaints.
HORSA Certainly, Sire. *(They exit.)*

ODELIA But Wulfstan, you must rest. Why, after all, only a few minutes ago you were dead.

WULFSTAN And now, I feel quite well. Pass me my coat, if you please. And perhaps you had better change into something more suitable for riding before we set off.

ODELIA But...but...but....

WULFSTAN Well, Odelia. What are you waiting for?

ODELIA Oh Wulfstan!

WULFSTAN Odelia!
(They embrace.)

ODELIA I was so frightened. I thought I had lost you, forever.

WULFSTAN Odelia, I had no idea that you cared about me so much.

ODELIA Well it was hard to explain. Not every girl falls in love with ... with a bear!

WULFSTAN Steady now, girl.
(She takes a hand mirror and a brush and begins to brush her hair. Suddenly she screams and drops the mirror.)

ODELIA Why, Odelia, whatever is the matter?

WULFSTAN The mirror ... I ... I saw my father in it.

ODELIA Extra-ordinary!

WULFSTAN He..he was very sick on his deathbed. He called my name, Wulfstan. He was calling 'Odelia'. Oh Wulfstan what does this mean?

ODELIA It is an omen, a portend my dear. Your father is sick because he misses you. That is my fault and mine alone. I shall, therefore, make amends. I shall go to your father, in disguise, and restore him to full health.

WULFSTAN But how?

ODELIA You remember what I told you about the herbs in the Summer Garden?

WULFSTAN Why, yes, of course.

ODELIA I have become very skilled in the preparation of remedies for all sicknesses. I will disguise myself as a travelling herbalist. Fear not, my precious, your father will recover.

WULFSTAN Oh, Wulfstan!

ODELIA But I must go swiftly. Time is of the essence.

WULFSTAN Of course. But do be careful, you have not yet recovered.

ODELIA I feel fine. Do not worry yourself on my account. Come, we must gather the necessary herbs for the draft. You must assist me in the preparation. Remember, the potion must be prepared with love and care and a wish for the sick person's recovery.

WULFSTAN I remember.

ODELIA And when I return, I shall take you as my wife and there will be celebrations lasting for weeks. Your family may come and live here in the castle with us.

WULFSTAN Oh Wulfstan, that would be wonderful. Although, I'm not sure I want to live with my sisters again.

ODELIA Farewell my love, and do not worry – all will turn out well in the end. You'll see.
(Exit Wulfstan.)

ODELIA Farewell, and take care, Wulfstan.
(Odelia puts the candles out one at a time. Blackout.)

End of Scene

Scene 10: Athelstan's House, the Next Day

(One side of the stage is outside the house and the other side is the entrance and the main room where Athelstan lies. Wilfrid and Sigbert are off-duty and playing jacks outside the house. Enter Wulfstan, carrying a leather bag, in disguise as a herbalist, except for his riding boots, which he forgot to change.)

WULFSTAN Good day to you young men!
SIGBERT Is it?
WILFRID Yes, it is. Good day to you, sir!
WULFSTAN Tell me, my good man, is this the dwelling place of Athelstan, the merchant.
WILFRID Yes it is.
SIGBERT No it isn't.
WULFSTAN My goodness, we seem to have a difference of opinion here. Is one of you lying?
WILFRID Yes.
SIGBERT No.
WULFSTAN *(To Wilfrid)* Is it you then?
WILFRID No, it's him.
SIGBERT It's not me, it's him.
WULFSTAN Well then, let's try something else. Is Miss Odelia at home today?
SIGBERT No, she's been away many months.
WULFSTAN Then I have come to the right place. Thank you.
SIGBERT No, you haven't!
WILFRID Yes, he has!
WULFSTAN Well, thank you for your help.
(He gives Wilfrid a coin for a tip and knocks on the door of the house.)
WILFRID Wow, it's a gold coin. He must be a very important person.
SIGBERT How come I didn't get one?
WILFRID 'Cos you're stupid! And he knew it was you who was lying. He's not daft.
SIGBERT I'm not stupid!
WILFRID Hey, look at that! It's a four-leafed clover.
(Sigbert bends down to look and Wilfrid kicks his backside making him fall flat on his face. Wilfrid laughs aloud at this.)
(Wulfstan enters the doorway of the house.)
WULFSTAN Good day, mistress.
WILDA Good day, sir. *(Noticing the bag)* But we did not send for a physician.
WULFSTAN I am no physician, I am Alfred, the herbalist, good lady. And you must be Athelstan's wife. I heard you husband was sick and I have come to offer a remedy.
WILDA What makes you think you can offer anything different from the other quacks who've promised to heal Athelstan. They're quick to take our money but we never see them again. Be off with you!
WULFSTAN Madam, I do not wish for any payment. I offer my services at no charge and I assure you that your husband will make a quick recovery.
WILDA Here, how come you knew my Athelstan's name, anyway?
WULFSTAN I was sent by someone who cares about his well being.
WILDA Well then, you'd better come on in. Anything's worth a try.
(They enter the house and Athelstan lies on the couch, very pale and weak, with his eyes closed. Orva and Nelda administer to him and Elvina is helping out by doing the chores, cleaning pots and pans.)

WILDA My dears, this is Alfred, the herbalist. He will try to help father recover from his illness.

ORVA *(Whispered to Nelda)* Well, this is our lucky day, Nelda. It's not every day such a handsome young man visits our house.

NELDA You keep your hands off him. He's here to help father. And if he succeeds, then I shall thank him personally.

ORVA Over my dead body.

NELDA Is that a promise?

WULFSTAN Now, is Athelstan able to eat and drink?

WILDA He eats nothing. I have been able to persuade him to sip warm drinks.

NELDA The potions given him by those other useless physicians.

WULFSTAN And, how long has he been in this state?

ORVA For months. Ever since our little sister was kidnapped and held prisoner at the hands of an evil monster. He blames himself, you see.

ELVINA No, no it was not like that at all.

NELDA Yes, it was. She was kidnapped.

ELVINA But he is not a monster. He suffers a disability and...and he can't help it!

NELDA Who asked you for your opinion anyway?

ELVINA Well, at least in the castle she does not have to put up with you two.

ORVA How dare you, you little upstart!

WILDA Cease this nonsense, you three. Elvina, thank you for help in the house. I think you'd better go now.

ELVINA But, mistress....

WILDA *(Shooing her out like a hen.)* Off you go ... shoo, shoo, shoo! *(Exit Elvina.)*
You see, young man, he is suffering from grief at the loss of his daughter, Odelia.

WULFSTAN I see, then I have just the cure for him.
(He opens his bag and searches through the jars. Orva and Nelda stand very close to him and peer over his shoulder into the bag. Wulfstan turns away to conceal his movements.)
I believe this draught will revive him immediately.
(He touches the bottle to Athelstan's lips and he opens his eyes, slowly sitting.)
(Overjoyed.) Athelstan, you've come back to us.

WILDA *(Looking at Wilda.)* Odelia!

ATHELSTAN No, it's me, you fool, Wilda. The one you married, remember?

WILDA But I felt Odelia's presence very strongly. It seemed as though she were here in this very room.

ATHELSTAN Fear not, Athelstan, you will be re-united with your daughter sooner than you think.

WILDA And who the devil are you?

ATHELSTAN *(Standing cosily shoulder to shoulder with Wulfstan.)* This, is Alfred. He's a herbalist and he seems to have cured you of your sickness.

NELDA Well, then I owe you my gratitude, young man. Wilda, a bag of gold for the young man. *(She starts to go and fetch the gold....)*

ATHELSTAN That's a grand gesture, sir, but I cannot accept your gold. I am here as a favour for a mutual friend, but I cannot tell you who.

WULFSTAN Then you must thank him for me when you see him.
(Nelda is still rubbing shoulders with Wulfstan.)

ATHELSTAN I say, Alfred, I have got a sore knee. Do you have any ointment you can rub into it for me?

NELDA And I have a sore back.

WULFSTAN Alas, I fear I must be on my way. My future wife awaits me. I will make a point of seeing you soon Athelstan, just in case you need a further draught of potion. Very soon, in fact.
(To Wilda)
Madam, my card.
(Handing Wilda a printed card)
And now, good people, I bid you adieu. *(Exits swiftly.)*

WILDA Farewell, Alfred, and thank you.

ATHELSTAN Goodness did you see his boots? Those are costly riding boots of the finest leather and in the latest continental style. Our friend must make a good living as a herbalist.

WILDA And how strange to wear riding boots when one is on foot. I feel that there is more to that herbalist than meets the eye.

NELDA He's mine, Orva. You keep your hands off.

ORVA Are you deaf? He said he is already promised to a woman.

NELDA I don't care. He also said he would return, didn't he.

WILDA Oh, Athelstan!

ATHELSTAN Oh, Wilda!
(Athelstan and Wilda embrace. The action moves to outside the house, where Elvina has been waiting and Wilfrid and Sigbert continue their game.)
(Noticing the key around Elvina's neck.) Elvina, where did you get that key? It is strangely like one I have seen before, only rather larger.

WULFSTAN *(Aside)* Strange! He knows my name.
(To Wulfstan) I was given it as a present by a stranger who showed me kindness in an hour of need.

ELVINA

WULFSTAN How thoughtful, but what an unusual gift.

ELVINA He also gave me the chest which the key opens, but, strangely, the key is too large for the lock.

WULFSTAN How curious.

ELVINA The most curious thing is that the key seems to be shrinking. I would swear it was so big *(she shows the size with a hand gesture)* when the goblin first gave it to me.

WULFSTAN Goblin! I wonder.

ELVINA And how is Athelstan? Has there been any change?

WULFSTAN There certainly has. Athelstan is awake, sitting up and talking.

ELVINA That's wonderful. You have worked a miracle. What a powerful potion that can perform such wonders? It must be costly. You must allow me to pay you for it.

WULFSTAN My dear, your generosity in offering to pay when you have so little is worth more than all the riches in the world. Besides, the ingredients are rare but not dear: merely a few pressed flowers and scented herbs. The secret of the cure is in the love and care put into the preparation, together with a wish for the recovery of the sick person.
(Elvina gasps at the memory of that phrase. She turns towards the audience. Meanwhile, Wulfstan silently vanishes.)

ELVINA But your voice – it is so familiar. And your words I have surely heard those phrases spoken before, but where? I wonder. *(She turns.)*

WILFRED Sir, sir. ... But where did he go? I wanted to ask him something.
He went that way. *(Gesturing.)*

SIGBERT He went that way. (*Gesturing the other way.*)
ELVINA Oh, never mind.
(Moving downstage and taking the key in her hands.)
My goodness, the key is shrinking. If this continues it will soon be small
enough to open the chest!
WILDA *(Coming out of the house.)*
Elvina, do look, the herbalist left this card. (*Shows the card.*)
ELVINA But I don't understand! How did he get hold of this?
WILDA It's an invitation to a wedding, Elvina. A wedding between my daughter
Odelia – and ... and the PRINCE!!!
(She faints and is caught by Elvina)

Blackout

End of Scene

Scene 11: The Great Hall, Castle Brocburg. The Wedding Feast

The hall is decorated for the wedding feast and a dance is in progress. The guests are dressed in their finest clothes. Just before the end of the dance Athelstan, Wilda and the two sisters enter. The sisters are carrying wedding gifts. Elvina follows, carrying the chest with the key around her neck.

DANCE 3 Irish Dance

(After the dance, the guests form groups and chat in the background.)

ORVA Well, where is she?
SERVANT 3 I beg your pardon, my lady?
ORVA The bride, where's the bride?
SERVANT 3 The bride and groom will be arriving shortly, my lady.
ORVA Hear that, Nelda? He called me 'my lady'.
NELDA Don't worry, Orva, it is a simple mistake: he forgot to put his glasses on this morning.

ATHELSTAN Put the gifts on that table, my dears, with the others. *(They do so.)*
WILDA Just look at all that sumptuous food. They have certainly prepared a banquet for us.

ATHELSTAN Well, she will only be married once, my dear. The occasion must be fitting.
NELDA Odelia is so lucky. Fancy living in this wonderful castle and having all these servants to wait on you.

ORVA I would not wish for it if I had to marry an ugly, hairy monster to get it.
ATHELSTAN Girls, do stop your incessant chatter!
(A fanfare sounds.)

PAGE My lords, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to announce the arrival of the royal wedded couple; Prince Wulfstan and Princess Odelia of Brocburg.
(Another fanfare as they enter upstage and process downstage. There are gasps of astonishment from the crowd at the beauty of the princess in her wedding gown. All bow deeply as they enter, except the sisters, who are dumbfounded. A quick slap by Wilda brings them to their senses and they also bow, grudgingly.)

NELDA Oh my, just look at Odelia – she looks just like a real princess.
ORVA She is now!
(Odelia rushes forward and fondly embraces her parents.)

ODELIA Mother Father!
WILDA But look at the prince, surely that is Alfred the herbalist!
ELVINA *(Aside)* I knew I recognised that voice.
WULFSTAN That is correct, my lady. Or should I call you – mother?
(Wilda giggles slightly and looks embarrassed. Wulfstan embraces Wilda followed by Athelstan, Orva, and Nelda. This is all too much for Nelda, who faints.)

PAGE Page, a glass of water for the lady, if you please.
PAGE Certainly, sire.
(Someone passes the page a glass of water who promptly throws it over Nelda. She wakes up, spluttering, and slaps the page on the face.)

WULFSTAN I had intended for her to drink it, page, not swim in it.

PAGE
WULFSTAN I'm sorry, Sire.
Wilda, Mother, please accept my sincere apologies for the deception but I felt that you would more readily allow my treatment of Athelstan if I disguised myself as a herbalist – and my face would not have fitted the description you had been given of the prince Wulfstan, had I tried to be myself.

WILDA
ATHELSTAN
WULFSTAN Well, that explains the boots anyway!
But what happened to you? When I met you, you were a ... a ...
A beast? Well, it is a long story – too long to be told now. But it involves a wicked goblin and a curse, which was happily undone by your own daughter.

NELDA
ODELIA That wretched Odelia! She has all the luck.
(Noticing Elvina in the crowd.) Elvina, oh, Elvina, I'm so glad you could come to share in our happy day. *(Embracing Elvina with difficulty as she is still carrying the trunk.)*

ELVINA
WULFSTAN I have brought you and Wulfstan a wedding gift.
By the bones of Saint Peter, it's the trunk!

ODELIA
ELVINA Oh, Elvina, you should not have – you have no money.
Please accept this chest – it was given to me by an old goblin. He says it holds the secret of eternal happiness. And here is the key. *(She takes the key from around her neck and gasps.)* My goodness, it has become even smaller. *(She holds out the trunk, which is taken by a page who rushes forward to take it. She gives Odelia the key.)*

ODELIA And I have a gift for you. If you agree, you shall be my lady-in-waiting. You shall live in the castle and attend to me every day. Your family can come and live here too.

ELVINA Oh, Odelia! I should like that more than anything. But I shall have to ask father.

ODELIA Of course.
(There is a commotion from the back of the room and the guests part and turn curiously to see what is happening. The two servants enter, dragging in a struggling Garmangarbis. All goes silent and some gasp in horror.)

SERVANT 1 Sire, we found this creature lurking on the battlements and peering into the upper windows. *(He gestures towards the roof.)*

SERVANT 2
WULFSTAN Shall we have him thrown into the dungeon, My Lord?
Maybe, but first he must give an account of himself. Garmangarbis, come forward.
(The goblin shuffles forward and throws himself at Wulfstan's feet.)
Pray, tell us what more mischief you intend. How many more lives are you to ruin before you are satisfied?

GARMAN
WULFSTAN My liege, please forgive me. I...I meant no harm... I was angry.
Meant no harm! MEANT NO HARM? And now I am angry. You, you vile toad, sentenced me to live as a recluse, fearful to show my beast-like face to the world. And why? Because I was in the wrong place at the wrong time, picking a white rose from the Summer Garden.
(All gasp.)

GARMAN I know, master, and I am sorry for it. Give me the chance to make amends. I am sorry for the curse and glad that it is now broken. I set in motion the chain of events that released you from the spell. I sent Athelstan into the garden to pick the roseI brought you and Odelia together.

ELVINA And he showed me an act of kindness. He helped me find a way out of the forest when I was lost.

WULFSTAN Is this true, goblin? Did you show kindness to Elvina in the forest?
 GARMAN Yes, master, I suppose I did.
 WULFSTAN I see.
 ATHELSTAN If I may venture to speak, your lordship...
 WULFSTAN Certainly, Athelstan...DAD!
 ATHELSTAN I too committed the same crime of picking a white rose from the garden .. and you yourself punished me by demanding my daughter in return.
(Gasps of horror that Athelstan should address the prince in this way.)
 ORVA She's not done badly out of it though, has she!
(The prince paces up and down, deep in thought.)
 WULFSTAN Elvina, the key to the chest. Let us see whether it holds any secret which may shed light on this conundrum.
(She gives him the key.)
 GARMANGARBIS – open the chest.
(The goblin looks astonished and then rubs his hands together with glee as Wulfstan throws him the key. As he fumbles with the lock everyone cranes forward to see what will happen.)
 ELVINA It is no good – the key is still too large!
 GARMAN You must try, mistress. It may work for you.
 ELVINA *(Trying the key.)* It fits – it fits the lock.
 WULFSTAN Well, go on then, open it.
(The lock creaks as Elvina attempts to lift the lid.)
 GARMAN It is stuck, master.
 WULFSTAN Here, let me help you, Elvina.
(Suddenly, the lid opens.)
 GARMAN At last, after all this time – the secret is out. *(Looking inside.)*
 But, I don't understand, where is all the gold and the jewels?
 WULFSTAN *(Laughing.)* Did anyone actually ever say there was gold inside? You've been carrying this trunk around for years and all it contained is simply – a stone!
(Wulfstan holds up the stone. The crowd repeat his words 'a stone', mocking and laughing. Garmangarbis looks from one to the other in shame and bewilderment, eventually sinking to his knees and covering his ears with his hands.)
 ELVINA But look, there is an inscription on the stone. What does it say, Wulfstan?
(Wulfstan examines it.)
 WULFSTAN It's written in the old language. Send for the translator!
 GARMAN *(Rising)* No, wait! I can understand the old tongue. I have lived for nearly five hundred years.
 WULFSTAN Then translate at once – and save yourself.
 GARMAN It says: whosoever is able to unlock this chest is already blessed with the gifts of generosity, unselfishness and compassion. These gifts are rarer than gold or silver. Cherish your gifts and use them to the full. In-so-doing you will discover true happiness. Thus, the secret on this stone is entrusted to those who are worthy. Signed, Oric, The Sorcerer.
(When he gets to the end, he hangs his head in shame. The hall is silent.)
 I carried the secret with me but was unworthy. The secret of happiness was so close. I am truly sorry.
 WULFSTAN *(Stepping forward.)* Here, Garmangarbis, you may have the stone. It may guide you in the future. Your remorse has pardoned you.
 ODELIA You may go free.

(He takes the stone and, cradling it tenderly in his hands, withdraws, smiling. The crowd applaud.)

(Enter Wilfrid and Sigbert in their finest clothes, arguing loudly. All turn to look.)

WILFRID Hey, if it isn't young Alfred, the herbalist. How's it going, Alf?

SIGBERT I think that's the prince, you fool.

WILFRID *(Aside)* No wonder he tipped me a gold coin.

(To Wulfstan.) Sire, I am sorry we are late. Sigbert took a wrong turning on the way.

SIGBERT You told me to, you idiot. I told you to go east at the crossroads and you went west.

WILFRED You said go WEST.

SIGBERT I never did.

WILFRID You did too...

(The crowd laugh at these antics.)

WULFSTAN *(Clapping his hands)* Enough! *(Sigbert and Wilfred back away, bowing.)*

We have delayed the feast too long. Let the banquet begin.

(He claps again, three times, and Warburton enters, followed by a throng of servants carrying the most tasty dishes. There is a buzz of excitement as the guests see the wonderful food. Wine waiters hand out drinks to the guests, or at least the principals.)

And, before we eat, I would like to propose a toast to my new wife, Princess Odelia!

ALL Princess Odelia!

WULFSTAN And just as our dreams have come true, so may yours if you wish hard enough.

(All cheer wildly and throw their hats into the air.)

SONG 9 Far Beyond Horizons, Chorus

1 Far beyond horizons is a world we want you to share.
Chances will come rolling your way, if you only would follow us there.
And this world exists in all of our lives if we just believe it's true.
You'll find the chances to change your life,
Don't let them pass by, give it a try.
Hold your head high, reach for the sky.

Chorus: So let's turn those tears into smiles,
Let there be no more pain.
Never stray from the path you choose and
Trust in your friends, stay together till the end.

2 Daylight follows darkness just as sunshine follows the rain.
If you could just turn back the clock, would you live your life over again?
You must recognise your own destiny when you meet it face to face.
You have the power to make it real.
And you can achieve all you believe.
Don't change your mind, don't look behind.

Chorus

The End