

The Evil Stepmothers' Club

By Asha Hartland-Asbury

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE - THE 'BEANSTALK' COFFEE SHOP

(Lights up on a coffee shop, with three women seated around the table. They are: Maleficent, a wicked sorceress; Mother Gothel, a wicked sorceress; and Queen Evelyn, a - well, a third wicked sorceress. A waiter comes in with a tray and serves them coffee and cake.)

Jack: Hi, welcome back to the Beanstalk Cafe. Cappuccino for Maleficent - mocha for Mother Gothel - an apple tea for Your Highness - and a Pumpkin Spice Latte for Lady Tremaine - errr, I'll just put that down there.

(Jack leaves.)

Gothel: Oh, where has Griselda got to? Her coffee's going to get cold.

Maleficent: It's not like we haven't met in this cafe, at this table, at 2pm every Saturday for the last twelve years.

Evelyn: It's certainly unusual. I wonder where she is?

(A door crashes open. Enter Griselda Tremaine, a - oh sod it, another wicked sorceress.)

Griselda: HAVE. YOU. SEEN. THIS????

(She brandishes a newspaper bearing the headline 'Royal Wedding for Cinderella', almost beating Maleficent over the head with it.)

Maleficent: Seen what, Griselda? Stop waving that thing around!

Griselda: It's today. She's getting married today!

Evelyn: Who?

Griselda: That dirty little slattern - I mean, *(heavily sarcastic)* our darling princess!

Gothel: Ohhh, yes, it's Cinderella's wedding today. Oh, you poor thing.

Griselda: That should have been my daughter up there, with the swooshy dress and the pretty hair and the whole kingdom at her feet...

Evelyn: Oh, that's so sad! Remind me though, why *didn't* Drusilla get that prince? I thought you had it all planned out?

Griselda: Yes, she was all set to go, up on the horse and everything, and then she just couldn't hold it together long enough to get the palace. She just *had* to go screaming...

Gothel: Whatever for?

Griselda: I don't know. I only cut a little bit of her foot off!

Maleficent: Well, never mind, it can't be helped. I'm sure there are plenty more ways to get a prince for your girls.

Griselda: No, I'm done. That's it. I give up. I'm a terrible villain.

Evelyn: *You're* terrible? I mistook a deer's heart for my step-daughter's. I have incompetent henchmen, and even when I took matters into my own hands it all went wrong. I threw everything I had at that Snow White - combs, corsets, apples, the lot! - and she still ended up making the best of it and marrying a prince!

Gothel: Tsk! That's not so bad. Rapunzel flung herself out of a window - without a care for me, her poor old- I mean poor *young* foster-mother- and ran off with the first prince to pass by!

Maleficent: I mean, my princess was literally asleep, and she still managed to outwit me! All it took was some block-headed prince with a sword and a lack of boundaries and now she's back on the throne!

Griselda: Well, if we're all so bad, maybe we should just give up villainy. Learn to knit or something.

Gothel: No, come on! We're better than this. Who are we?

All: (*mumbling*) Mvil mupmuther mub...

Gothel: Who are we?

All: The Evil Stepmothers' Club.

Gothel: Exactly! We can't suddenly decide not to be evil! That's just... that's just a coffee morning!

Griselda: Oh, I suppose so. Take that thing (*waves newspaper*) away then, so I can't think about it.

SONG! A LOVELY SONG ABOUT BEING EVIL AND ATTENDING COFFEE MORNINGS!

(*Enter a herald who goes 'doo-diddloo' and bows*)

Herald: This the Evil Stepmothers' Club?

Gothel: ...Yes?

Herald: Post for you.

(The herald flings a scroll at them, then turns and flees. Maleficent begins to open the scroll.)

Evelyn: Bit odd... Anyway, has everyone seen my new Apple? *(She holds up a shiny phone)* It's got all the latest technology, so no way can any one - naming no stepdaughters - call me old-fashioned now!

Griselda: *(Taking a sip of her coffee)* Gasp, really, Gothel? You ordered me Pumpkin Spice? Hardly the most sensitive...

(Suddenly Maleficent gasps, screams, and clasps the letter to her chest)

Griselda: What on earth? What's wrong?

Maleficent: L-look! *(she thrusts the scroll out in front of her)*

Gothel: *(reading)* King Roderick cordially invites you to the 18th birthday party of Princess Amethyst Aurelia Alexia Angelica Annabella Amaryllis of Arronia.

Evelyn: Maleficent, what's gotten into you? It's just another boring political invite! Do you know her or something?

Maleficent: I... I... I've never had an invite before! What do I do? What shall I wear? Oh! What's RSVP?? Do I need to go and do it now? *(she leaps up)* I'm going to a parteeeee! *(she runs off gleefully)* I need a dress! And shoes!!

Gothel: Wow. Now I understand why she was so upset with poor Aurora's christening...

Evelyn: But- she has no idea of the etiquette- she might- oh dear! Gothel, she's going to ruin our reputation!

Griselda: Oh, fine. We'll all come. Maybe we can bump off this princess Amalamadingdong while we're at it. Get some of our mojo back.

(They all leave. The waiter comes back on, looks for money on the table, and sighs.)

Jack: Ruddy evil customers. Never pay their bills.

(Lights out.)

SCENE TWO - RODERICK'S COURT

(Lights up on Princess Amethyst, Queen Penelope and King Roderick in the castle. Servants run in and out presenting various bits of decor and catering to the King and Queen.)

Amy: But Dad, I don't understand why you've invited so many people. I thought this was just going to be a small party?

Roderick: What?! It's not every day your seventh daughter turns 18! Besides, we have to get you married soon. When are you going to meet princes if I don't have any balls?

Amy: But I don't want to get married. Not yet, anyway.

Roderick: Nonsense! *(to a servant)* Er, the blue, I think. *(to Amy)* You have to get married, it's what princesses are for. Can't have you all cluttering up the place. *(to Queen)* Ah, just imagine! The last one gone! All our daughters married, and a nice quiet house, and no endless deliveries from ASOS, and space for all my things in the bathroom.

Penelope: Ooh! We could turn her bedroom into a home gym! *(to servant)* Delicious - quail, did you say?

Amy: Hello? I'm still here you know. And I don't intend to get married to some fat-headed prince you've invited to this party.

Roderick: Oh, I think you will. You'll have your pick of every eligible bachelor in the land! Well, except the ones your sisters have already married.

Penelope: Can't be having any civil wars, now.

Amy: Every eligible bachelor will be there? Where on earth are we going to put them all?

Penelope: That's not all! Every eligible bachelor, their mothers, their fathers, their squires....

Roderick: My courtiers, your mother's courtiers, your sisters...

Penelope: Your sisters' husbands, their courtiers, their squires...

Roderick: Oh, and *(quickly and sheepishly)* Maleficent, Mother Gothel, Queen Evelyn and Lady Griselda Tremaine.

Amy: What?! You've invited four of the most notoriously evil women in the world to come to my birthday party?!

Penelope: Really? Queen Evelyn? After her behaviour at that Christmas ball two years ago?

Roderick: Hum- well- yes- er- She didn't know I was married to you, darling.

Penelope: (*very drily*) Oh, the six adult daughters didn't give that away?

Roderick: I rather think she thought I was a widower, you know. Lots of kings are. She seems to like that type.

Penelope: Yeees. Well, as long as she keeps her witchy little claws off you... (*to servant*) Oh, definitely the gold glitter, don't you think, Amethyst dear?

Amy: But they're criminals! Dangerous criminals!

Roderick: Well, yes, but it would be worse to leave them uninvited - *terrible* things might happen.

Penelope: Don't worry, though - I'm sure they won't show up. It's just the invite that counts.

Amy: Ugh! This is ridiculous! I'm going to the stabl- er, to my room.

(*She leaves*)

Penelope: Really though, Roderick? Is it wise to invite that group of... witches? I do worry about her safety with that sort of company.

Roderick: Well, you see, my dear, it's not all that dangerous. I know they have a rather evil reputation, but look at the facts. Jives!

(*He clicks his fingers and Jives rushes in with a flipchart*)

Jives: Here you are, sire.

Roderick: So. Let's take Mother Gothel. One princess, one impenetrable tower - sounds like a recipe for evil success. What do we have a year later? One happily married princess. (*turns flipchart*). Maleficent. One princess, one curse, one really big hedge - and now? One happily married princess. (*turns flipchart*). Queen Evelyn. The so called 'Evil Queen'. One princess, one huntsman, that inexplicable romp with those seven guys in the woods - and one happily married princess. And for my final exhibit: Griselda Tremaine. (*turns flipchart to a copy of the newspaper from earlier*). She didn't even *start* with a princess, and what did she end up with? One. Happily. Married. Princess.

Penelope: So what you're saying is..?

Roderick: Amy's not in danger from these people! It will just look like she is, and a prince will "save" her, and then he'll have to marry her! It's traditional!

Penelope: Do you know... that just might work...!

(*Exeunt*)

INTERLUDE ONE - THE SHOE SHOP

Maleficent sits on a chair, surrounded by shoes and shoe-boxes. Three elves rush around her, tidying the shoes and bringing new pairs.

Maleficent: Ooh, can I try those glittery ones? And those ones? Ooh, look at those! And those ones, the red pair?

Elf One: Madam, I really think you should wait for the shoemaker to come back

Elf Two: We're really not supposed to sell people shoes, we just make them behind the scenes when no-one's looking.

Maleficent: But I can't go evil shopping in the daytime! Do *you* want to wake him up and let him know it's you restocking the shoes every night?

Elf Three: No, I suppose not. He doesn't know we're here.

Maleficent: No indeed. Then will one of you *please* bring me the glittery shoes? I have a very important party to go to!

SCENE THREE - IN THE STABLES

(A stable. A young lad is brushing down a horse.)

Rupert: Stand still, Monty! You're so persnickety today. Here, have a sugar cube.

Monty: Hrrrrrr! *(he stomps and shifts his back half as he eats the sugar cube)*

Rupert: Ho ho, it's like that is it? Well, I suppose you just don't want to be brushed, hey?
(he puts the brush high up in the air and Monty tries to grab it with his mouth. Eventually Monty tries to brush Rupert's head with his own. Person in the front of Monty, go wild. Really try to mess his hair up.)

Rupert: *(laughing)* Fine, fine. I suppose Uncle Jasper wouldn't be too happy with me if I leave you all tangly. Come here, Monty. *(Monty acquiesces and Rupert starts brushing him again.)*

(At some point in the next bit of Rupert's dialogue, Amy slips in at the side of the stage and watches him)

Rupert: Silly horse. I'm glad I'm here with you, having fun and not primping and preening for the party tonight! All those nobles with ridiculous hair, giving all those endless speeches in honour of the princess...

Amy: *(sarcastically - remember these guys are best friends)* Oh, am I not worth the honour then? And anyway, your hair is pretty ridiculous.

Rupert: Amy! You startled me! What are you doing here? I mean, hm (*straightening up, attempting to smooth his hair, and putting on a silly deep fake voice*), of course, Your Highness is worth every word of every speech of every noble of ev-

Amy: Oh, stop it, Rupert! I come here to get away from all of that. Especially today.

Rupert: Oh yes, today! Happy birthday! I have something for you. (*rootles in his pockets and produces a small package*). Here.

Amy: (*unwrapping it*) Oh my gosh, Ru, you didn't! Chocolate? Real chocolate? Thank you so much! (*she takes a bite*) Mmmpph, that's so good. I haven't been allowed real food in weeks so I can fit into the gown Mama had made for me. And the food tonight's going to be so boring, all that fancy stuff - fondues and foie gras and fripperies...

Rupert: That sounds amazing.

Amy: It's not. Dad's ordered the chefs to use the Cauldron of Plenty. Everything will either taste of haddock or rum'n'raisin ice cream, or both. It's been on the blink for months. But *this* - MMMM! I can't believe you got me chocolate! In fact... how on earth did you manage it?

Rupert: Well, I put a little bit away each week, and then last Saturday there was that fair, and that man from Ruritania was there with all the sweets. I know how much you like chocolate.

Amy: This is the best birthday present ever. Thanks, Rupert. (*she gives him a kiss on the cheek*) How about we share?

Jasper: (*from off-stage*) Rupert! Ruuuuupert! Where are you, you little terror?

Rupert: Quick! Amy, you can't be seen down here! Imagine the uproar if someone found you here with me!

(*Amy runs off stage just as Jasper stomps on. Monty rears, and Rupert goes to calm him.*)

Rupert: Whoa, boy. Shhh.

Jasper: Can't you control that thing?

Rupert: Er, I am controlling him. Go on Monty, off you go. (*As if to prove a point, Monty walks off with as much of a sneer at Jasper as he can muster*)

Jasper: Well stop it, and come with me. Everyone's starting to arrive for the party, and I need you to help me. I hear there's going to be a few interesting guests of honour tonight, and I need you to slip into the dining room and make sure my name tag is on the same table.

Rupert: Why, who is it?

Jasper: Have you ever heard me talk about (*dramatically*) the Evil Stepmothers' Club?

Rupert: Oh, here we go again... *(sarcastically)* No, Uncle, please *do* tell me.

Jasper: Well, once upon a time, when I was a little older than you, I attended Sorcery College. There were these four girls in my year, and they were the queens of the college - top grades, incredibly popular, they had it all. They majored in Evil Sorcery, and had plans to set themselves up as the four most powerful Evil Witches in the land - called themselves the Evil Sorceresses' Club, back then, before they were stepmothers. Maleficent, Gothel, Griselda Tremaine, and Evelyn - oh, Evelyn. She's a queen now, but she always was special.

Rupert: *(thoroughly bored, as he's had this conversation a hundred times)* Was she really?

Jasper: You'll understand one day, lad. They were the coolest clique in the school, and they never would let anyone else join in - no matter how hard we tried. Anyway, even now, twelve years later, they still meet up, once a week, for a lovely little 'witch and bitch' session - but they never invite anyone else!

Rupert: And now they call themselves the Evil Stepmothers' Club because?

Jasper: Well, that's how they proved themselves to be so completely evil! They became stepmothers - or, well, Gothel and Maleficent adopted princesses-

Rupert: I think you mean abducted.

Jasper: Sh. And the curses they put on those girls are their claim to fame.

Rupert: And this has what exactly to do with you sitting with them tonight?

Jasper: I just thought, maybe after all this time, they might finally let me join in. Be a sort of honorary Stepmother. An Wicked Uncle, perhaps. We can work on the name.

Rupert: But, Uncle, you aren't evil.

Jasper: Aren't I? Go to your room! No food! No water! No nothing!

Rupert: Er, but if I do that, how will I move your place card?

Jasper: Um - oh drat. Just - just go and do that and then go and be miserable somewhere, okay?

Rupert: Sigh, fine.

(They leave in opposite directions.)

INTERLUDE TWO - THE EVIL COFFEE SHOP

(Lights up on the coffee shop, with the Stepmothers' usual table empty. In walks Little Red Riding Hood and Robin Hood)

Jack: Ah, Robin, good to see you again. And who's this?

Robin: Oh, this is my cousin, Little Red. We're just grabbing some coffee before our big family reunion.

Jack: Great, sit anywhere you like!

(They attempt to sit at the centre table, only to be stopped)

Jack: Um, I'm not saying you can't sit there. I'm just saying that's the Evil Stepmothers' table.

Little Red: But they aren't here at the moment?

Jack: Well, no, but I like to keep their table reserved for them. You know, just in case. Once, they came in and found Hansel and Gretel sitting there, and you know, thunder, lightning, hail of frogs... It's not great for business.

Little Red: I'm not scared of those silly witches!

(She sits at the table, but Robin pulls her up.)

Robin: Little Red, what have I said about this? It's not bravery to wander off the path, it's not bravery to mock witches, and it's not bravery to walk up to wolves and pull their tails.

Little Red: I'm training to be a hero!

Robin: No, you're training to be dead. Come on, we'll sit over here. Can we get two hot chocolates?

(Lights down)

SCENE FOUR - AMY'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

(Lights up on a ballroom (don't worry, it basically looks like everywhere else in the castle except with a 'Happy Birthday Amy' banner). People are milling in groups on the stage - one group is our 'heroines', one group is four princely young gentlemen (Prince Charming, Dick Whittington, The Frog Prince, and the Penguin Prince). There is fanfare, and Jives runs in and places a little podium at the centre of the stage. They applaud as the King and Queen enter and stand on the podium.)

Roderick: Thank you, thank you! And you are all very welcome to our home for this grand celebration.

Penelope: Our daughter, the Princess Amethyst, is eighteen years old today, and it is wonderful that you could all make it here to celebrate with us.

Roderick: The last princess is grown up - woohoo!

(The King and Queen high-five)

Penelope: Of course, we do wish our final daughter to be as happy as her sisters, and so there is an ulterior motive to this party.

Roderick: Tonight, Princess Amethyst will choose a husband!

(At this point, rapturous applause, but Amy bursts in)

Amy: I'll WHAT?!?

Penelope: *(laughing nervously)* Now come on darling, we discussed this. Please be quiet, and come up here and thank your guests.

(She pulls Amy up onto the podium.)

Amy: Um. Thank you for coming, and *(a cough from Penelope)* for all the wonderful gifts you have brought. I'd just like to say that I'm not remotely interested in marriage right now, and I hope this doesn't disappoint too many of you.

(groans from the Princes)

Gothel: *(to the others)* Ooooh, this sounds like it could be good....

Amy: So please do have fun and....er... don't be offended if I don't want to marry you?

(She steps down from the podium. General chatter ensues. The Evil Stepmothers' Club come to the front of the stage while everyone else mingles.)

Griselda: This party's going to be excellent! What an easy family to meddle with!

Evelyn: And I can't wait to get that pervert Roderick back for his behaviour at that Christmas party two years ago. Disgusting man, clawing at me all evening.

Maleficent: No, please! No trouble! Just let me enjoy this one party!

Griselda: But it would be so easy to wreck it.

Maleficent: But I've never *not* wrecked a party before. Usually I show up late, make a big poof of smoke, ruin everyone's day and then vanish cackling into the night. Look, there's a buffet. I never knew there were buffets. And a minstrel! Please, please let me stay and have fun!

Griselda: Oh, all ri...

(She is interrupted by Roderick, who bursts into the conversation.)

Roderick: Ladies! So glad you could make it. Evelyn, you're looking devastating.

Evelyn: Well, yes. I generally do.

Malficent: She means thank you. It's a pleasure to be here, your highness.

Roderick: Good, good, goooood. Now my dears, I must admit I have a reason for inviting you here, other than your sparkling company, of course. *(Maleficent giggles)* You see, my daughter Amethyst...

Griselda: Wilful little thing, isn't she? She reminds me a bit of my step-daughter. Always disagreeing and moaning. *(Does impression of Cinderella)* 'But I cleaned it yesterday! But why can't I go to the party? But whyyyyyy?'

Roderick: Ho ho, yes, she does sound like a handful. Good job that prince got her out of your hair, though, eh?

Griselda: I don't want to talk about that.

Roderick: No, no, of course not. But still! I'm sure you would have dealt with her if he hadn't have come along... and that, in fact, is what I would like to talk to you ladies about.

Gothel: Dealing with something?

Roderick: Yes indeed! You see, my dear daughter Amethyst does keep refusing to get married, and I really do *(loud stage whisper)* need her out of the way, if you know what I mean?

Evelyn: Out of the way. Are you asking us to kill your daughter?

Roderick: Only a little bit! Just curse her, or lock her up somewhere, or trade her to a dragon or something! I just want my castle back! Six daughters! Six! Can you imagine how long I've been living without hot water??

Maleficent: I really don't know...

Roderick: Oh, do say yes, please! I'll make it easy for you, give you open access to the castle and everything you need. And, there's a reward!

Griselda: Go on...

Roderick: Well, I happen to have a spare castle in Ruritania! You could have it, turn it into an evil fortress. *(singsongy, tempting)* It has four towers, one for each of you...

Gothel: Ooh, I love towers! We're in!

Maleficent: Gothel! We should discuss this!

Evelyn: No, it's a good idea. It'll be the perfect way of getting our mojo back!

Griselda: We're in.

Roderick: Wonderful! My butler Jives will give you the details.

Gothel: Don't you mean Jeeves?

Roderick: Sadly no. The harvest wasn't that great this year, so I've had to employ only copyright-noninfringing servants. Anyway, with that unpleasantness dealt with, won't you come and try the buffet?

Maleficent: Ooh! Look! Tiny sausage rolls!

(They move away and mingle at the back, as the group of princes comes forward on one side, and Amy and her mother come forward on the other side, silently arguing)

Prince Charming: Dick! Will you please put your cat away! It's giving me terrible hayfever, and I would really rather not sneeze on my future wife.

Dick: *(cradling a plush cat - if at this point you think 'oh, we should get a real cat!', I'd advise reading on a bit.)* I'd rather you did. Since she's my future wife.

Frog Prince: Are you - could you possibly be talking about my bride-to-be?

Penguin Prince: Did none of you hear the princess say she didn't want to get married?

Dick: Oh, that. Tush! She's just a silly girl. Who wouldn't want to marry me?

Prince Charming: A-ha! *(he grabs the cat and punts it backstage)* Can't stop me now, suckers! *(he runs across to Amy and slides on bended knee to kiss her hand)*. Hey, gorgeous.

(Penelope gives Amy a wink, and slips away although Amy grabs for her)

Amy: No, Mum. Please. Ugh! *(to Charming, coldly)* Hi.

Charming: Your smile is addictive, and so adorable. I'm Prince Charming. Wanna come for a walk in the gardens?

Amy: Um, thanks, but no th-

(Dick comes running across)

Dick: Princess! Is this... gentleman bothering you? Never fear, Dick Whittington is here! How about we take a trip around the lake in my boat?

Amy: Um, well, he is bothering me a bit, but quite frankly so are you.

Frog Prince: *(running across)* Do you need rescuing, my love? We could visit the forest and look at the stars...

Amy: Um, first of all, how will we see the stars through all the trees, and second of all, *my love??*

Frog Prince: Well yes. I have loved you from the moment you first dropped your golden ball into my pond - *(dramatically)* for I was once that small frog who returned your favourite play-thing, and the thanks you gave me are etched into my heart forever! Oh, but you rejected my slimy love so cruelly...

Amy: Wait, I never had a golden ball... Are you sure? Oh, that was Ruby! I remember! *(to confused princes)* My fifth sister? Long *[whatever colour Amy's isn't]* hair, voice sweet as a bell, yada yada?

Frog Prince: Erk. *(long pause, then he starts again dramatically)* Well in your sister I saw but a pale shadow of yourself, and I decided then and there to love you always!

Amy: Nice try. Wasn't there another one of you earlier?

Frog Prince: Oh, my brother. Yes, but you don't really want to talk to him. My family has a long history of being turned into frogs in order to meet princesses. When it came time for his transformation, the silly idiot messed up and turned himself into a penguin.

Amy: That sounds much nicer than a frog! If you all turned into cuddly penguins instead of slimy frogs, I think you'd have a much higher success rate with the princesses. I think I'll go talk to him. You three just.. practice your pick up lines.

(she crosses to the Penguin Prince)

Penguin Prince: Um, hi Princess. Um, just to be clear. I don't love you.

Amy: You don't?

Penguin Prince: Well, I don't not love you, I mean, I might, I suppose, one day, but I do like you, but not like, *like like* you. I like you a bit. But I don't love you. Unless you want me to. Um. Do you?

Amy: (*amused*) Do I what?

Penguin Prince: ...Want loving?

Amy: Nah, I'm good. But since you're the only guy in here who doesn't seem like a colossal douchebag, want to get some champagne?

(*They move off. The ESC come back to the centre.*)

Griselda: So, what are we going to do to this little princess, hey? I think a few months as a troll's kitchenmaid could do her some good.

Gothel: See, I'm a traditionalist. Let's just kidnap her, and then hide her somewhere. Tower? Cave? Ooh, in one of those little show flats in Ikea!

(*Jasper approaches them, but feigns surprise*)

Jasper: Wow! Fancy bumping into you guys here! How's it going?

Evelyn: Um, sorry, I'm terrible with faces. You are?

Jasper: It's me, Jasper! From Sorcery College?

Griselda: Oh, were you the guy with the tentacles for hair?

Jasper: Er, no? (*gestures at head*)

Maleficent: I know! That guy who blew up his potion in Potions class and got a case of the never-ending boils?

Jasper: Again, no.

Gothel: The one who was kicked out of college for baiting the watch-dragon?

Griselda: No, Gothel, he wasn't kicked out. He died. The dragon ate him.

Gothel: Oh. Not him then.

Jasper: No, obviously not. I'm Jasper! I was in all your classes! We worked together on the Magical Runes diorama for six weeks!

Evelyn: Ohhh. Yeah, sorry, I don't remember you. We mostly kept to our own little group back then.

Jasper: And now, it seems.

Maleficent: Well, we are the Evil Stepmothers' Club. We kind of have to stick together.

Jasper: And you've not taken on any new members? Just wondering...

Gothel: Why would we do that?

Griselda: We certainly wouldn't take men, if that's what you're asking. No such thing as an evil stepfather, is there?

(The ESC all laugh)

Jasper: Well, no, not yet. Men can be evil too, though. There's evil wizards! And warlocks can be quite mean sometimes! And, and, and, Wicked Uncles!

(they laugh even harder)

Maleficent: *(laughing)* Wicked Uncles??

Gothel: That's ridiculous!

Griselda: Who's ever heard of a Wicked Uncle?

Jasper: Lots of people!

Evelyn: Wicked Uncle. That's hilarious. Well, I'm sorry... Jasmine, did you say? We have things to be getting on with-

Gothel: Evil Stepmother business, you know.

Evelyn: -so we'd best be going. Lovely to catch up!

(The women leave, laughing, and Jasper looks despondent. He mingles away and the lights dim.)

SCENE FIVE - AMY'S BEDROOM

(Amy and Rupert are in Amy's room.)

Amy: Ugh, I'm so glad that's all over. These princes are so arrogant!

Rupert: They sound awful. Especially Dick Whittington. I remember when he came to court, and he used to be such a nice guy. Now all that fame and fortune has gone to his head and he's unbearable!

Amy: I don't know what I'm going to do. I can't marry someone like that. I don't want to get married at all!

Rupert: What, not ever?

Amy: Not to a prince. I suppose it would be alright if I could marry someone I liked, and live somewhere I liked. Somewhere with horses to ride, and woods to explore, and books to read, and someone who makes me laugh...

Rupert: Yes, that does sound nice. That sounds like exactly what I want...

Amy: Oh Rupert...

(It looks as though they might kiss, but SUDDENLY A PLOT DEVICE OCCURS! There is a knock on the door and in burst the ESC!)

Amy: What on-? Rupert, quick, hide!

(Rupert hides behind a whatever-the-producer-decides-isn't-too-hard-to-make-out-of-cardboard just as the ESC come in. They are weirdly, fakely bouncy and cheerful - and they never let Amy get a word in edgeways. Fall over each other's lines, make up extra stuff if you need to, just don't let Amy object.)

Griselda: Good evening, Princess!

Maleficent: The sun is putting on its little nightcap and tucking into bed, and it's time for you to sleep too.

Amy: Excuse me? What are you doing in my bedroom?

Gothel: We're your new ladies-in-waiting!

Evelyn: Isn't it wonderful?

Gothel: Come along, time to get ready for bed.

(Gothel grabs Amy and begins unbraiding her hair)

Evelyn: I'll just take that...

(Evelyn takes Amy's crown and admires it, then places it on her own head)

Amy: But-

(She is silenced as Maleficent shoves a flannel into her face)

Maleficent: Let's take all that nasty make up off.

Griselda: And last of all, a nice bath for you.

(She clicks her fingers, and from backstage, a paddling pool is flung on.)

Griselda: Now then! Into the bath, Your Highness.

Amy: I'm really fine, I'll just wash in the morni-

Evelyn: Don't be silly! You'll feel much better after a nice hot bath.

(They more or less manhandle Amy into the swimming pool.)

Amy: I can do this myself!

Gothel: Ah. but that's what we're here for.

Amy: And shouldn't I take my clothes off anyway?

Maleficent: Oh no, no need for that.

Amy: But-

Griselda: Just sit there nicely, and we'll wash your hair.

Evelyn: Lean back, that's it, and - NOW!

(They push Amy down into the bath and she flails about.)

Gothel: Yes! We've got her!

Griselda: Just keep her down.

Maleficent: How long can a princess breathe underwater?

Evelyn: Hold on just a little bit longer!

(Rupert's had enough. He flings over whatever he was hiding behind, and leaps out.)

Rupert: What the hell do you think you're doing?

(Startled, the ESC screech let go and Amy sits up, gasping. Rupert rushes over and helps her out of the tub)

Griselda: Ahh! Bloody princes! They pop up everywhere!

Evelyn: That's no prince! He's just some sort of common stable boy or something.

Gothel: Since when have they been doing rescuing?

Rupert: Since ladies in waiting apparently try to murder princesses!

Maleficent: Murder is a strong word.

Rupert: What were you doing then?

Maleficent: We were...

Gothel: Washing her hair!

Rupert: And that usually puts people's lives at risk? Remind me never to enrol in Evil Hairdressing School!

Griselda: Ex-CUSE me? We are graduates of the finest magic college in the whole land, Sorcery College! I have a first in Doing Away with Princesses!

Evelyn: Don't tell him that!

Rupert: A-ha! So you were trying to hurt Amy!

Evelyn: Nothing of the sort! Just... an accident. Look, we'll go now, okay?

Gothel: But Evelyn, I want to fight him! We can kill both of them!

Maleficent, Evelyn, Griselda: SHUT UP!

Evelyn: No one's killing anyone, it's all a misunderstanding, both of you are just dreaming. Here, who'd like an apple?

(The ESC have been backing away at this point, Griselda with her hand over Gothel's mouth)

Maleficent: Okay, lovely to see you, have a nice evening, okay, BYE!

(They turn and flee)

Amy: Oh Rupert, what are we going to do? I knew it was a terrible idea for Dad to invite the Evil Stepmothers! Now they're trying to kill us both!

Rupert: Well, I feel like I'm just collateral here. But there's definitely something shady going on. You don't think your father-?

Amy: Surely not. Oh, but he was so keen for me to get married, and then I refused in front of everyone. Maybe he's angry! Maybe he's hired them to kill me! Oh my god, oh my god!

Rupert: *(grabbing Amy by the arms)* Hey, hey. No one's going to kill you, okay? I'm here. I'll protect you.

Amy: But my dad will never let me spend time with you.

Rupert: Well, you've been sneaking out to the stables for most of your life. Who's to say I can't sneak into the castle and make sure you're okay? Don't worry, Amy. I will look after you.

Amy: Oh Rupert. Thank you. It means so much to me.

Rupert: And you mean so much to me, Amy.

(Impulsively, Amy kisses him. He looks startled, but kisses her back)

SONGETY SONG SONG - A LOVELY SONG ABOUT LOVE

Rupert: Hum, well. Yes. Um. Gosh. Well. I'm going to go and see if my Uncle Rupert can do anything about our evil friends. We can't exactly ask your parents for help. Lock the door behind me.

(He starts to move away to the door, but Amy calls him back)

Amy: Rupert?

Rupert: Yes?

Amy: Would you - um, there's another fair on this weekend, isn't there? Do you think we could go? As in, will you come with me?

Rupert: Yes. Yes, I'd like that.

(He leaves, and the lights go down).

INTERLUDE THREE - THE EVIL COFFEE SHOP

(Lights up on the coffee shop again. Three bears are sitting at the Stepmothers' Table.)

Jack: But it's half past two! Where are they?

Papa Bear: Well, you said they ran out of here talking about a party last week?

Jack: Yes.

Papa Bear: Maybe it's turned into more of a holiday.

Baby Bear: Or maybe they were going to the party and then they got eaten by an ogre! A really big one, with fangs like BLARGLEARGLEARGH! *(does convincing ogre impression)*

Mama Bear: Calm down, sweetheart. I think it's nice to have our coffee shop back.

Jack: We are seeing more of the woodland folk in here now the atmosphere's a little less... evil...

Papa Bear: Good for you, dear. This is a nice coffee shop, and it's been an evil haunt too long. I wish those villains would just go to their own pub. I mean, nobody nice goes to the Decapitated King - that would suit the Evil Stepmothers much better!

Baby Bear: Can I go to the Decapitated King? I like pubs.

Mama Bear: No you can't. And you're four. You've never been to a pub.

Papa Bear: Yes, Baby Bear, you've *never. Been. to. A. pub.* Um, excuse me?

Jack: Yes?

Papa Bear: I'm really sorry, but this coffee is much too strong. Could you remake it?

(lights down)

SCENE SIX - JASPER'S ROOMS

(Jasper is pacing in his room, very angry.)

Jasper: *(muttering)* Stupid stuck up witches. I don't know why I bothered. And anyway, this is my territory. I'm the Wicked Uncle of this castle. Who cares about their stupid club? *(yelling)* Rupert!

Rupert: *(running in)*

Jasper: Fetch my magic mirror, will you, boy? I need to- I just need it. None of your business. Stop asking questions and get going!

Rupert: Yes, uncle.

Jasper: *(to himself)* I know just the person to call...

(Rupert runs back in with the mirror and hands it to Jasper)

Rupert: Uncle, have you got a minute? I need to talk to you about something important.

Jasper: Yes, of course.

Rupert: I - it's about a girl. I really like her, and I think she's in d-

Jasper: Bored now. Run along!

Rupert: But - *(Jasper raises his hand)* Okay, okay, I'm going.

Jasper: Little brat. Now then... Mirror mirror, er, in my hand, I haven't put you up, as planned, but still I hope you'll help me out, please call Jeffrey R right now.

(On the other side of the mirror appears... Jafar!)

Jasper: Jeff! My old buddy! How are you?

Jafar: Er, who's this?

Jasper: Oh for goodness - It's Jasper, you know, your roommate from college! You remember! Jas'n'Jeff, the Devilish Duo?

Jafar: It's Jafar.

Jasper: Yeah, Jeff R, I know. *I phoned you.*

Jafar: No, not Jeff R. I don't use that name any more. You know, surnames... Not very evil, are they? It's just 'Jafar'.

Jasper: Right, yeah, right, okay. Snazzy.

Jafar: Yeah, so... What do you need? I'm a bit busy; I've got this little homeless kid to steal a genie for me, so I kind of need to get on...

Jasper: Right, yes. Well, I was hoping you'd be able to help me with something. Do you remember that clique of girls in our year at college? Evelyn, Griselda, Gothel and Maleficent?

Jafar: Oho, yes, the Evil Sorceress Club! Gosh, that takes me back.

Jasper: Well, I've bumped into them now, and I kind of want to impress them.

Jafar: Jasper, it's been twelve years. You can't still be desperate to be liked by those resting witch faces.

Jasper: Oh Jeff, I'm just not *evil* enough for them! Look at you, all in the headlines with your exploits in the Middle East! You're like villain royalty! But I'm just...

Jafar: A bit bad?

Jasper: Yeah. I'm a bad villain. And not in the good-bad way.

Jafar: Well hey, I've always got time for a good old evil friend. Why don't you meet me at the Decapitated King pub down in Little Whinging in a couple of days, and I'll bring a few guys to show you the ropes. I know Hook and Gaston have been dying for something to do, and I think I know how to get a hold of Scar...

Jasper: Thanks, Jeff, that's super helpful!

Jafar: Jafar.

Jasper: Jafar, sorry.

(A loud crash is heard backstage)

Jafar: I have to go. Sounds like the boy's arrived with the genie.

(Jafar vanishes and the mirror goes blank).

Jasper: Great. Now I just need to find my old robes, and polish up my villainous hat...

(Rupert runs back on)

Rupert: Uncle, you know I was asking for your help earlier? Well, you have to come and see this! Quick, quick, come into the corridor!

(Jasper and Rupert hide at one side of the stage. From the other entrance, the Stepmothers enter.)

Griselda: Well I didn't know she was going to have a little twerp in her room!

Maleficent: You were in charge of reconnaissance!

Griselda: He was hiding!

Gothel: I still don't understand why you wouldn't let me kill them both...

Evelyn: Because we're trying to do away with the princess, not start a killing spree!

Gothel: Killing sprees are evil! I thought we were trying to be more evil!

Maleficent: Not like that. We're not just mercenaries, we're highly trained villains!

Griselda: We do plots and subterfuge, not just bumping people off!

Gothel: Well I still think we should try again with the drowning thing. Or maybe push her out of a window.

Evelyn: We're going to have to go for something more subtle. I can whip something up that'll stop her breathing. What does this one like to eat? I've been working on a recipe for poisoned banana bread!

Griselda: *(Sarcastically)* Have you tried banana bread plus poison? Your evil fruit thing is so old fashioned, Evelyn.

Evelyn: You take that back! All you do is try to undermine their self-esteem. That's not wicked, that's just mean!

Maleficent: I think we should try to put her to sleep for a hundred years! Then she'll be out of the king's hair, but we don't need to kill her outright. I mean, she did invite us to her birthday party.

Gothel: Oh you and the birthday party thing! It was a ruse, okay? She didn't want us here, her father did!

Maleficent: Wh-what? *(wells up)*

Griselda: Oh, here we go. You've done it now, Gothel.

Gothel: Shut up, meanie. You couldn't stop a peasant girl with a shoe.

Griselda: Oh yeah? Maybe I'll do this on my own then! I'll win that castle all for myself! *(Storms off)*

Evelyn: Like hell you will! I'll get that princess before you, and the throne will be mine. *(Storms off)*

Gothel: You already have a throne! It'll be mine! I know exactly how to get the princess! *(Storms off)*

Maleficent: *(to herself)* She really didn't invite me? Right then. Princess is going down. *(She stalks off)*

(Jasper and Rupert come out of hiding.)

Jasper: ...Gosh.

Rupert: You see! They're trying to kill Amy - I mean, the Princess!

Jasper: *(Stroking his chin evilly)* Yeeeeesssss. I see... Thank you Rupert, I know exactly what to do.

(lights down)

SCENE SEVEN - AMY'S BEDROOM

(Amy is in her room, looking into a magic mirror)

Amy: Mirror mirror, if it's not a bother, please connect to my fairy god...mother.

(On the other side of the mirror appears an elf in a headset)

Maple: Good morning and thank you for calling Fairy Godmothers'R'Us, where we make all your dreams come true. My name is Maple, how can I help you today?

Amy: Hi, this is Princess Amethyst of Arronia. Could you please send my fairy godmother to me?

Elf: Let me just check that... Oh, I'm afraid she's currently on maternity leave. Would you be happy to see a locum, or can your problem wait?

Amy: No, it definitely can't wait. I'll take the locum, thank you.

Elf: Wonderful! He's on his way. Thank you for calling!
(The elf vanishes)

Amy: Did you just say 'he'?

(Pooooooooooooffffff! Up pops the Fairy Godfather in a cloud of smoke! He is wearing a pinstripe suit and hat, with a tiny moustache)

FG: Hey. You looking for some revenge? I can make you an offer you can't refuse.

Amy: Um, hi? Are you the replacement for my Fairy Godmother?

FG: Oh! Er, hi! I'm sorry, I'm normally sent out to preteen princes, they tend to like all that Godfather stuff. You normally have a godmother, though, right? All sparkles and magic wands?

Amy: Yeah. But don't worry, I can work with whatev-

FG: Oh no, Little Princess! I never get a chance to show my sparkly side! *(He rips off the Godfather outfit to reveal a sparkly white suit).* They give us all this training, then they stick me with a stereotype. Oh, my, I am gonna enjoy this! Let's start again. *(he puts his hand in his pocket and flings a cloud of glitter. Beaming.)* Hello Princess, I'm your Fairy Godfather, and I can make all your wishes come true! *(SONG! A FABULOUS FAIRY GODFATHER SONG ABOUT SPARKLES AND MAGIC)*

FG: But seriously, Princess, what's bothering you?

Amy: Well, a group of the most notorious sorceresses in the land are trying to murder me, and I think my dad might be behind it. Plus there's this whole thing with Rupert-

FG: And who's Rupert?

Amy: My best friend. Well, he was my best friend, but last night we...

FG: Kissed?

Amy: Yes, and it was...

FG: Magical and wonderful and startling, like fireworks going off in your brain?

Amy: Well, yes.

FG: Oh, sweet girl, you've found your True Love's Kiss!

Amy: Really? With Rupert?

FG: Sounds like! Lucky you!

Amy: Wow. Um. Wow. Okay. Well, we should probably deal with that later. The threat to my life might be a bit more important.

FG: So why do you think your father wants to kill you?

Amy: Well, he wants me to get married.

FG: Ah, and you've found your True Love! What wonderful news! I hardly see what you need me for - just take this Rupert to your father and have him call off the witches!

Amy: That's the problem. Rupert's a stable boy.

FG: Gasp, oh my.

Amy: I know.

FG: Well, there's only one thing for it. You'll have to run away!

Amy: Run away?

FG: It is traditional, you know. Your youngest daughters do have to have an adventure before you settle down. You know, camp in the woods, see how your love copes when you're cold and hungry and one of you has been eaten by bears-

Amy: Eaten by bears! You don't think it would be better just to, you know, talk to my dad?

FG: (*dismissively*) Well, you can if you want to. I don't think it'll help though. Wouldn't you rather I gave you a cool woodland makeover and hid you in a cottage in the woods as a scullerymaid?

Amy: Um, no, thanks.

FG: Can I not even apprentice you to a friendly witch in the forest? Ooh! Or cut off all your hair and have you pretend to be a boy?

Amy: I'm... just gonna go talk to my dad.

FG: Oh, they never let me do anything fun!

(*lights down*)

INTERLUDE FOUR - THE FOREST

(Rumplestiltskin enters from one side of the stage, carrying a bundle of hay. Hansel and Gretel enter from the other side a moment later, carrying a loaf of bread and dropping slices behind them.)

Hansel: Good morning!

Gretel: Hi! I'm Gretel and this is my brother Hansel! Who are you, mister?

Rumple: *(visibly startled)* Wah! Children! Stay back! I don't want you! I don't have anywhere for you to live! Go away!

Hansel: What do you mean? We're not doing anything to you!

Gretel: We're just making a map of the forest! Please tell us your name. We'll put you on the map!

Rumple: Well what if I don't want to be on the map? Get along with you.

Gretel: Oh! How rude!

Hansel: What a grump!

Gretel: *(laughing)* What a grump, what a grump! Grumpy grumpy grumple.

Hansel: Grumpley grump! Grumpleson!

Gretel: Grumplestiltskin!

Both: *(singing and dancing)* Grumplestiltskin, Prumplestiltskin, la la la la... Frumplestiltskin, Rumplestiltskin, la la la la...

Rumple: What??

(the children stop dead mid spin)

Gretel: What did we do?

Rumple: What did you say? Say it again. What you were singing. Say it!

Hansel: Rumple...stiltskin?

Rumple: Ah! That's it! You guessed my name - but- how? How? How? I mean... How? But... how?

Gretel: Your name is Rumplestiltskin? That's unusual.

Rumple: Yes, I know! In forty years not one person has ever guessed my name! I even changed it to John so it would be easier to guess! And then you idiot children come along and just - poof - no trouble at all, you've guessed my name!

Hansel: ...Cool.

Rumple: (*sarcastically*) Oh yes, very "cool". So cool that you could guess it where a dozen queens couldn't. So cool that I have 15 first-born children to bring up!

Gretel: Fifteen! That's an awful lot!

Rumple: That's why I didn't want to talk to you! I thought you were more first-borns coming to live with me!

Hansel: Oh no, we're just following the path. Then we'll follow our bread trail home

Rumple: So you're not abandoned?

Gretel: Well.... We are a bit.

Rumple: Oh God.

Gretel: But don't worry! We'll just mark you down on the map and be on our way.

Hansel: Lovely to meet you, Mr Rumplestiltskin!

(They skip off)

Rumple: One day, someone's going to make a killing running Forest Social Services...Tell you what, though, this bread trail will make a good breakfast for my lot.

(He picks up H&G's bread trail and walks off)

INTERLUDE FIVE – THE DECAPITATED KING

(Gaston and Hook are lounging at the bar of the Decapitated King. Tinkerbell is bartending.)

Hook: God, it's boring in here. Why do villainous hideouts always look so... dingy?

Gaston: Needs more antlers, I think.

Tinkerbell: Hey, I do my best! You're just cranky because you miss your ship.

Hook: Ah, the Jolly Roger. Not a finer ship on the sea! Oh, she had the finest crew a man could hope for – we travelled the-

(Gaston and Tinkerbell join in in unison)

All: Seven seas, doing daring deeds and dashing crimes, finding treasure, never answering to anyone... Oh, for the life of a pirate!

Hook: Pirate- wait, are you making fun of me?

Gaston: Come on, Hook, we've heard this a thousand times before. We get it. You were a great pirate.

Hook: Well, what do you want to talk about, Gaston? Only please don't tell me I'm boring and then go on about your low-carb high-egg diet again. I might die of boredom.

Gaston: I actually have some news, now that you mention it.

Tinkerbell: Oh really? Do tell.

Gaston: *(Dramatically)* This morning, somewhere far far away, I beat my personal record and lifted six dwarves at once!

Hook: *(fake excitement)* Six? Really?

Gaston: Yeah, six whole dwarves! And biggish ones, mind you.

Hook: Oh wow, how – *(back to normal voice)* utterly and completely boring.

Tinkerbell: Well I thought it was quite impressive.

Gaston: Oh yeah? Well now, that's very interesting, little lady. What do you say you and I grab a drink sometime?

Tinkerbell: *(giggles)* Isn't that what we're doing now?

Hook: Watch it, pretty boy. Tink's mine.

Gaston: Oh yeah? Wanna bet? Hey, Tink, if you had to choose, which one of us would you rather go out with?

Tink: Hmm... Well...

(At that moment, three bandits burst in laughing)

Keith: Oi oi! 'Ello the Decapitated King!

Barry: Cor, it's been a while since we've been 'ere.

Alan: 'Asn't it got all dark and dingy.

Hook: Ex-cuse me, we are trying to have a quiet drink here.

Barry: *(sarcastically)* Ooh, I'm so frightened!

Alan: Shut up, you idiot, that's Captain Hook!

Gaston: And Gaston!

Alan: Er, and Gaston.

Keith: Yeah, and I'm the leader of the Three Thieves. I don't care.

Tink: Three Thieves? I thought there were forty of you?

Barry: Yeah, well, there were forty, and then Henry and Paul decided to start a pottery workshop, and George and Davis deserted us to run an ice cream parlour...

Alan: Sixteen of 'em got sick on the journey to Arronia...

Keith: Two died fighting that dragon...

Barry: Five got mauled by a bear...

Alan: Robbie decided to go straight and join the police...

Keith: Oliver took five guys to start a synchronised swimming team...

Barry: Tom got stolen by fairies, Jim fell off his horse, and Kenneth...

Alan: We don't talk about Kenneth.

Keith: So there you go. Three Thieves.

Gaston: Enlightening. Hook, shall we show them that this is a real villain's bar now?

Hook: Oh, why not. Sounds like something to do.

Tink: Ooh, can I help?

Gaston: Sure thing, little lady.

Hook: I'm really not sure that's a good id-

Tink: Wheeeee! *(she grabs a handful of glitter and throws it everywhere)*

(Hook, Gaston and Tink chase the bandits around and off-stage)

Hook: *(from off)* Tinkerbell! You got glitter all over me! Villains. Shouldn't. Sparkle!

(end scene)

SCENE EIGHT - RODERICK'S COURT

(Lights up on Roderick counting his money. Penelope is eating bread and honey. Amy enters.)

Roderick: Ah, Amethyst, there you are.

Penelope: Have you chosen a husband yet?

Amy: Mum, Dad, you know I don't want to get married.

Roderick: Nonsense! You're 18! All your sisters had been married for years before they were this age!

Amy: Yes, and that's not a good thing.

Roderick: You must have chosen one of the princes from the ball last night? *(loudly)* Jives! Bring out the boys!

(Jives leads in the four princes from the party)

Jives: Here they are, sire.

Roderick: Wonderful! Would you announce them all, please? *(to Amy)* This is fun, isn't it! It's like a game show!

Amy: More like a living nightmare.

Jives: Presenting our first young bachelor, Prince Charming!

Charming: Hi Princess. Your smile is addictive and so adorable.

Amy: Is that your standard pick up line? You definitely used that last night. And it was creepy then too.

Roderick: Amethyst! Be nice to your potential future husband!

Amy: Well I'm certainly not marrying him! Dad - I just want to talk to you.

Jives: Bachelor number 2 is Dick Whittington of London!

Roderick: Not a prince, technically, but hasn't he done well for himself? You could make some good connections there.

Dick: Hey there. Want to stroke my cat? Then maybe I can-

Amy: NO, stop there. Definitely not. He's just gross. Dad - can I please just-

Jives: Bachelor number 3 is Prince Arthur, the Frog Prince!

Amy: Look, I'm not marrying anyone who used to be a reptile.

Frog Prince: Frogs are amphibians, actually. There's a big difference. No scales.

Amy: Oh, great. Because slime is so much better.

Frog Prince: Frogs aren't slimy! You can feel, if you like...

Amy: Dad! Will you please just listen to me! I have something important to-

Roderick: And bachelor number four, Jives?

Jives: Bachelor number four is Prince Jamie, the, er, the Penguin Prince.

Amy: Hi Jamie. Sorry about this.

Penguin Prince: Not a problem. We gotta do what we gotta do, right?

Roderick: Aha! You weren't rude to that one! Jives! She's chosen - arrange the wedding!

(Jives runs backstage and comes back with six or seven servants, carrying an archway and red carpet, fake flowers, and a wedding dress, and they start setting up a wedding)

Amy and Penguin Prince: What?!!

Amy: No way! Just because I'm polite to a boy you're going to marry me off? What about love! I don't love him! *(to Jamie)* No offence.

Penguin Prince: None taken. I don't want to marry her either!

Roderick: You what?!

Penguin Prince: I don't feel comfortable marrying anyone who doesn't want to marry me. And if you paid any attention to your daughter, you'd notice that she's really trying to tell you something.

Roderick: Really? What is it?

Penguin Prince: Why not ask her?

Roderick: Sigh, all right then. Amethyst, what is it?

Amy: Dad, I need to talk to you. Alone. Guys, would you leave us be? Go play polo or talk about hawks or something.

(The princes file out and Jives rounds up the wedding servants and goes with them).

Amy: Dad, I've... I've met someone.

Roderick: You've found your own prince? Wonderful, wonderful! Why didn't you say something?

Amy: Weeeeellllll... He's not exactly a prince.

Roderick: A duke? An earl? Not a problem, seventh daughters can't be choosers.

Amy: Um, no, not a duke or an earl.

Roderick: Well who then? Come on girl, spit it out!

Amy: It's Rupert.

(pause)

Roderick: And who, might I ask, is this Rupert?

Amy: He's... He's a stable boy. He works in the castle. He looks after your warhorse, Monty.

Roderick: Outrageous! I won't stand for this!

Amy: Dad! Just let me explain!

SONG TIME!! To the tune of Avril Lavigne's pop classic, Sk8er Boi.

(She runs to the other side of the stage, where the FG is waiting)

FG: Forest time?

Amy: Forest time.

FG: Yippee!

(Exeunt, lights down)

END OF ACT ONE!

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE - THE DECAPITATED KING

(A dingy bar, with jazz playing. Jasper enters in the dark.)

Jasper: Uh, hello? Jef- Jafar? Is - is anybody there? *(pause)* Oh God, I'm going to get murdered. *(increasingly panicky)* He's lured me here and he's going to murder me, just to prove what a good villain he is, and then I'll be dead, and, and I'll never get to be in the cluuuuub.

(The music spikes abruptly, then stops, as a spotlight appears on Jafar, who is lounging in an armchair with a glass of whiskey.)

Jafar: Now, now, Jasper. That's hardly the way for a villain to behave.

Jasper: Sorry, sorry.

Jafar: And we *never* apologise.

Jasper: Sorry! Ah! Sorry!

Jafar: You seem awfully nervous for a bad guy in a bad guy bar. What, aren't you used to this sort of thing? You'd prefer it if we met in the park and had a little picnic?

Jasper: It's just- it's kind of dark in here.

Jafar: Is it? Tinkerbell, can you give us some of that sweet sparkle?

Tink: Sure thing, Mistah J. *(to Hook, before sticking her tongue out)* See? Some villains sparkle.

(The room lights up with a disco ball, revealing Captain Hook, Tinkerbell, Gaston, and Scar)

Jafar: So then, little Jasper. Let me introduce you to my friends, and let them introduce you to the evil inside...

SONGETY SONG. A SMOOTH (AND MORE THAN A LITTLE TEMPTING) JAZZ NUMBER ABOUT VILLAINY AND EVIL AND THE WAY EACH CHARACTER GOES ABOUT IT.

Jafar: Feeling better?

Jasper: Much. Now I just need a plan.

Gaston: That's the spirit. Then you'll get the girl!

Jasper: What girl?

Gaston: The girl you're trying to steal. Why else would you need us?

Hook: Of course he doesn't want the girl! She's half his age! Don't worry, Jasper, you'll defeat that irritating little lad yet.

Jasper: Um, there's no lad either. Only Rupert, and I don't really want to defeat him...

Scar: Don't be ridiculous, Hook. I'm the original Wicked Uncle, and I know just what you have to do...

Jafar: Original? Steady on there, Claw-dius. There's a long tradition of evil uncles.

Jasper: There is? Tell me all about them.

(lights out).

SCENE TWO – AMY'S BEDROOM

(Enter Gothel, being really sneaky. She is carrying a big bag.)

Gothel: So the others don't want to play, hey? Well, I know the best way to get rid of a princess. Never mind all that faffing about with towers and imprisonment, what you really need is...*(she pulls a large bear trap from her bag)* something with teeth!

(She places the bear trap on the floor, then drapes a blanket or something over it)

Gothel: All the better to snap your little legs with, muahahaha!

(There is a knock at the door, and Gothel dashes behind the whatever-it-was-we-made-for-Rupert-to-hide-behind-earlier. Griselda enters, carrying a cake and holding something behind her back.)

Griselda: Princess? Oh Princess, are you there? I've come to apologise!

Gothel: *(to herself)* Apologise? What kind of villain does that?

Griselda: *(sing-songy)* I've brought your favourite, totally non-poisoned cake! Not even a little bit of poison in it... Princess? Can we be friends? *(pause)* Oh damn, she's not even here.

(she draws a wicked looking knife from behind her back, sits down, and cuts a slice of cake)

Griselda: Guess there's nothing for it, then.

(She lifts the cake to her mouth, and Gothel leaps out of hiding and knocks it from her hand!)

Gothel: NoooOoooooOOooooooo! Griselda! What are you doing??

Griselda: Wah! Gothel! What are *you* doing?

Gothel: Don't poison yourself, idiot! No princess is worth that!

Griselda: What?

Gothel: You know, you were going to end it all by eating that cake.

Griselda: I was doing nothing of the sort!

Gothel: But, but.. I thought you said that cake was poisoned?

Griselda: No, I said it *wasn't* poisoned! It was a perfectly nice Victoria sponge!

Gothel: Oh. Sorry. I thought you were doing that reverse psychology thing. So you weren't going to kill the princess?

Griselda: No, I was. I was just going to do it with the knife.

Gothel: Oh.

Griselda: Yeah.

(they pause awkwardly)

Gothel: She's not here though.

Griselda: No, I had noticed that... But you are. What are you doing here?

Gothel: Um. I brought this. *(reveals bear trap)*

Griselda: Oh my God, Gothel! Where did you even get that?!

Gothel: You remember that Huntsman that Evelyn used to employ? Tall, muscular, smells like pine forests? Well, he did always say to ask if I ever needed anything...

Griselda: But a bear trap??

Gothel: Yeah, well. You know I always come up with better ideas when I get to brainstorm with you guys. And knifing the princess is a bit more 'scumbag-in-a-dodgy-alley' than 'master-sorceress'.

Griselda: Sigh, I know. Do you maybe want to team up?

Gothel: What, split the castle between two?

Griselda: Hey, it's better than between four! And we'll get to prove to Evelyn and Maleficent that we're just as good as they are.

Gothel: Better!

Griselda: Friends again?

Gothel: Friends.

Griselda: Great. Let's go kill us a princess!

Gothel: ... Should I bring the bear trap?

Griselda: Sigh, come on.

(Gothel scoops up the trap and exits after Griselda.)

SCENE THREE - THE FOREST

(Amy and the Fairy Godfather walk in. She has a large backpack, but he is just skipping with delight.)

FG: Isn't this fun?! I told you adventures are great!

Amy: And what about the fact that we've walked past that tree three times now?

FG: Oh, have we? That's perfect then, we're here!

Amy: We're where?

FG: Well, you didn't seem to like any of my traditional ideas for your little pre-happy-ending journey, so I thought I'd arrange something for you.

Amy: I'm not sure about pre-happy ending. I'd settle for just finding a solution to my impending murder.

FG: Exactly! Now, close your eyes, aaaand... Behold, the Princesses!

Amy: *(pause)* Okay, you can just tell me if we're lost.

(During the previous sentence, three princesses have snuck on behind them, and now Snow White taps Amy on the shoulder)

Snow White: Hiiiiiii! :) Welcome to our secret hide-out!

Rapunzel: Snow, we've talked about this! You can't just tell anyone who wanders in that this is our secret hideout!

Sleeping Beauty: Rapunzel, she's not just anyone. She's a princess!

FG: I did call in advance - you should be expecting us? Princess Amy and her Fairy Godfather?

Snow White: Oh, yes, we're expecting you! We've got everything ready.

Amy: I'm sorry, I don't understand. What have you got ready? *(to FG)* I thought we were finding *help*?

Rapunzel: And here you are! We can help you! Whenever you want to escape from all those tiresome responsibilities, you can come to the hideout and pretend to be somebody else!

Snow White: Today I'm going to be a peasant girl, looking after my seven brothers. I really miss the dwarves sometimes. It was so relaxing just to stop princessing and focus on cleaning and cooking.

Rapunzel: And I come here to get away from the kids - my twins, of course. I love them to pieces, but gosh do I need a bit of peace and quiet from time to time. It's great to just come here and put my hair up.

Amy: Don't you mean let your hair down?

Rapunzel: Goodness, no! I've done enough of that already!

Sleeping Beauty: I mostly just come here to nap. No one in the castle ever lets me sleep in.

Amy: I know that feeling. But what has that got to do with my not-getting-killed?

FG: Well, I explained your situation to the girls via magic mirror, and they've agreed you can hide here until this all blows over.

Amy: Blows over? Do you think that the Evil Stepmothers' Club are just going to give up? That my dad will just repent and let me off marrying a stupid prince?

(Gasps from Snow and Rapunzel; Sleeping Beauty has fallen asleep.)

Snow White: *(gasp)* Don't want to marry a prince? But my dear, whyever not?

Rapunzel: Princes are excellent! They're so handsome, and strong, and they can sweep you off your feet! Although that did get a bit easier once I'd lost eight stone or so of hair...

Amy: I'm in love with someone else. *(to FG)* I thought you said you'd explained everything?

FG: Weeeeellll... I sort of left that bit out. I didn't want to shock anyone.

Amy: Great. Look, why don't we go and get a cup of tea somewhere, and you can all tell me how you managed to evade your stepmothers. Is there anywhere around here?

Snow White: Yes, I know just the place! Follow me!

Rapunzel: Come on, Sleepy, we're going to the Beanstalk. *(nudges Sleeping Beauty)*

Sleeping Beauty: Oh good. I'll have an espresso. *(they all leave)*

SCENE FOUR - RODERICK'S COURT/THE STABLES

(A split-stage scene! At this point, the director does NOT hit the writer!)

(Rupert is brushing Monty on one side. On the other, the four princes stand in a line and shuffle nervously. Jives joins Rupert and the King joins the princes at the same time. The two sides are oblivious to each other)

Roderick: Gentlemen, I have some interesting news.

Jives: Oh good, you're here. I have to tell you something.

Roderick: It appears that the Princess Amy has... er... been kidnapped.

Rupert: What do you MEAN, Amy's run away?

Jives: She had an enormous fight with the king about not wanting to marry anyone but you.

Rupert: Really? Oh wow.

Roderick: My daughter will marry one of you, if you can bring her back to the castle safe and sound.

Rupert: Is she in danger?

Roderick: She may have been kidnapped by the Evil Stepmothers' Club!

Jives: I think you should set off as soon as possible to find her.

Roderick: You will be provided with questing equipment, horses, and maps.

Jives: I, er, packed you some bread and cheese.

Rupert: Thanks Jives. Um, it's not that I don't appreciate it, but... why are you helping me?

Jives: I... like the princess. She's a nice girl. If she likes you better than those princes, well, I'm inclined to side with her.

Roderick: It doesn't matter what Amy wants! Just go out there and win her hand!

Princes: Cheering!!

Rupert: Come on Monty, let's go rescue Amy! *(Princes and Rupert leave, then Jives and the King wave to them and leave – END OF SCENE)*

INTERLUDE SIX - RUMPLESTILTSKIN'S HOUSE

(Rumple, dressed in apron and washing up gloves with a washing up brush, chases two children across the stage.)

Rumple: Get gone with you! Scram!

(the children giggle and run off)

Rumple: I'm never going to get all of this done! There's the washing up, the laundry, the sweeping, the cleaning, and then dinner to get sorted... *(keep making up a long list of chores until the children, having run around the back of the stage, have snuck back on and prod Rumplestiltskin from behind)*

Rumple: Gragh!! I don't know why I ever thought asking for first-borns was a good idea! Oooh, "Guess my name or I take your child!". If I was clever, I'd have said "guess my name or buy me a house", or even just "guess my name or pay for my weekly shop", but no, I had to follow tradition. *(throughout all of this, he is threatening the children with the washing up brush - when he finishes the sentence, he throws it at one of them.)*

Rumple: Go! Earn your keep! *(they leave)* Sigh. I really need to get some help around here. *(he pulls out a pocket mirror)* Mirror, mirror, very small, can you help me out at all? I need a nanny, or a friend, or else this work will never end!

(Up pops our old friend Maple from the call centre)

Maple: Good morning and thank you for calling Fairy Godmothers'R'Us, where we make all your dreams come true. My name is Maple, how can I help you today?

Rumple: I can't do this any more! I need help! Do fairy godmothers do house visits?

Maple: I just need to verify your account, Sir. Could I just have the last four letters of your name, the second syllable of your address, and the colour of your mother's eyes?

Rumple: Oh for goodness' sake, it's me, it's Rumplestiltskin! There, you can have my name for free. Now send me some help!

Maple: And may I enquire as to the nature of the help you require, Sir?

Rumple: There are all these children everywhere! Can't you do something?

Maple: Well me personally, Sir, no, however I can contact your fairy godmother and ask her- oh, it seems that your usual fairy godmother has broken her leg, Sir. Would you like me to see if we have a locum available?

Rumple: Yes, yes! Get on with it!

Maple: I do apologise, Sir, but it seems that our locum is currently on duty with Princess Amethyst of Arronia. I can arrange an appointment for you in a few weeks?

Rumple: Arronia, you say? But that's where I am! Where are they?

Maple: I'm afraid I can't disclose the whereabouts of our clients or our godmothers-

Rumple: Gragh! You'd better tell me, or I will send every single one of these snot-nosed little brats around to your call centre right now, so I will!

Maple: I'm sorry, sir, but if you continue with this threatening attitude...

Rumple: Graaaaagh!

Maple: I'm going to have to cut you off. *(getting quicker and quicker)* Thank you for calling Fairy Godmothers-R-Us and may all your wishes-come-trooooooooooooo...

Rumple: *(taking off his apron and gloves)*. Useless, the lot of 'em!

(he leaves, looking determined)

SCENE FIVE – THE CASTLE KITCHENS

(A table is on stage. Evelyn enters with a bag full of ingredients, and pulls out a pan. She fills the pan with various bits and bobs during this whole bit)

Evelyn: Aha, here's the kitchen! Right. None of this fancy stuff, let's stick to the tried and tested.

(she pulls out a shiny red apple)

Evelyn: My patented poisoned apple. One bite of this, and poor Princess Amy will have a sudden attack of the deads!

(Penelope enters)

Penelope: *(coldly, and keep being horrible)* Oh, Evelyn. What are you doing here?

Evelyn: Um, oh, um, making myself a snack.

Penelope: How funny. I was just coming down myself to make some bread and honey. What are you making?

Evelyn: Er. Um. Apple pie.

Penelope: How nice. Maybe I could try some? *(looks into pot)*

Evelyn: No! No, definitely not.

Penelope: Oh, I forgot. You don't believe in sharing – not unless it's you sharing my husband!

Evelyn: What??

Penelope: I saw you, at the Christmas party! With your hands all over my Rod!

Evelyn: You – but – what? Ew! Oh my godmother, no! He had his hands all over me! The only thing my hands were doing were trying to get him off!

Penelope: Aha! You were trying to get him off!

Evelyn: Get him off me! Off me! There's a difference!

Penelope: Oh, like I'd believe someone who puts 'Evil' in their own title.

Evelyn: Yeah, I'm bad – doesn't make me a liar!

Penelope: Oh really? And you have nothing to do with Amy vanishing, then?

Evelyn: What? The princess is missing?

Penelope: Like you don't know.

Evelyn: I don't! Um. Excuse me, will you? I need to go and... um... do something.

(She leaves, and Penelope storms off in the other direction. Jasper enters)

Jasper: Provisions, provisions... What do people eat on evil journeys... *(he picks up the apple)* Ooh, tasty!

(he leaves)

SCENE SIX - THE FOREST

(Three bandits enter with swag bags. One has a lead which trails off stage.)

Keith: What a great haul! That'll keep us fed for a while.

Barry: That giant had a lot o' nice pieces. Reckon I can sell that harp for a good few quid.

Keith: 'Ere, Alan, what did you got?

Alan: Um, well, I got this huuuuuge chicken thing.

Barry: A chicken thing? What, for dinner?

Alan: Nah, it's a sort of - it's kind of - it's got all this gold.

Keith: Gold? What? A chicken with a purse?

Alan: Nah, it's more like... Oh, I'll just show you. *(he tugs on the lead and the Golden Goose enters)*
Look. Big chicken.

Goose: As I have told you a hundred times, I am a goose!

Barry: Woah. That's a really big chicken. Can I touch it?

Goose: No you may not! In all my days, I've never seen such a stupid bunch of bandits. Have you honestly never heard of the Golden Goose?

Keith: Err... nah.

Barry: Boss? I think I can hear something.

(At this point, Monty and Rupert crash in. Both parties pause and stare at each other for a few moments, before-)

Rupert: Oh no! Bandits!

Monty: *(whickering and prancing)*

Keith: What a lucky day! An adventurer! Get 'im!

(Alan lets go of the Goose's lead)

Goose: I'm free! Bye, suckers!

(What ensues is the most ridiculous fight ever. Monty ends up sat on Barry and Alan, while Keith is defeated by Rupert.)

Rupert: Not your smartest move. Now look, we don't want any trouble...

Barry: Don't want any trouble?? What do you call this then?

Rupert: ...What happens when you mess with someone on a quest to save their True Love.

Alan: True Love?

Keith: A quest?

Barry: Oh no! 'E's some sort of prince or somethin'.

Rupert: Not exactly. Now listen, are you going to help me?

Keith: Why should we 'elp you?

Rupert: Well, in the traditional stories, there's two ways this could end. Either you get defeated, ridiculed, and are never taken seriously as bandits again - that's if you cross me - or, you let me become your leader, and then you get all sorts of rewards at the Happy Ending.

Barry: Boss, we shoul-

Keith: Shut up, Barry. *(to Rupert)* Boss, we're all yours.

Rupert: Great. Now, have you heard anything about a runaway princess?

Alan: No, but I bet someone will know down at the Beanstalk.

Rupert: What's the Beanstalk?

Keith: Oh, it's Jack's cafe. Everyone goes there. Story goes, Jack was ever so poor, and his mother sent him to the market to sell their cow for money, but Jack met this guy on the way.

Barry: He swapped the cow for some 'magic beans' from South America, and when he got home, his mother was really mad!

Alan: But Jack planted those beans, and they turned out to be coffee beans, and now he owns the most successful coffee shop in the whole forest! Everyone goes there. The Starbucks down by the magic pool is almost completely empty!

Rupert: Right. Well, someone there should have seen something. Let's go.

(They all leave)

INTERLUDE SEVEN – THE DECAPITATED KING

(Jasper, Jafar, Gaston, Hook, Tink and Scar are in the DK. Gaston has several bits of rope.)

Gaston: And this here's the Widowmaker. Ooh, and this one is the Floggerator 9000!

Jasper: Okay. I've definitely learned the ropes.

Jafar: Gaston, do you think we could do something of a slightly higher calibre? Ropes are *such* a henchman thing.

Gaston: Just because I'm only a secondary villain doesn't mean you have to be rude!

Jafar: Let's talk plots and plans.

Scar: And kings and successions!

Hook: Jafar, don't you think we ought to get him kitted up, first? I mean, we villains are known for our devilishly good style and unexplainable sexual appeal. *(to audience)* Don't pretend you don't know what I'm talking about.

SONG! A dressing up Jasper song in which he gets a fabulous sexy villain makeover.

Jasper: Phew, that's made me peckish.

(He pulls out the apple he took from the kitchen and goes to take a bite.)

Jafar: Jasper! Don't eat that!

Jasper: What? Why not?

Scar: Well, it's clearly poisoned.

(Jasper rotates the apple to show a skull and crossbones.)

Jasper: Oh yeah. Well, better just chuck it then.

Jafar: You fool! Don't you see what you've got there? I think, Jasper, we finally have a plan for you...

(lights down on manly cackling)

SCENE SEVEN – OUTSIDE THE BEANSTALK

(Rupert, Monty and the bandits enter from one side of the stage)

Keith: There you go, boss, the Beanstalk.

Rupert: Thanks, Keith. I'm going to try to sneak in and listen to the local gossip, see if anyone's heard anything about Amy. Can you guys look after Monty?

Barry: Sure! Come on, horse.

Alan: Does the horse have any gold?

(He attempts to search Monty, but Monty squeals and dances about. While Monty is messing about, Amy, the FG, and the princesses come in from the other side.)

Amy: Monty! What are you doing here?!

(Monty rushes across and starts nuzzling Amy)

Rupert: Monty! What are you doing? Gasp! Amy!

Amy: Rupert? Oh my gosh! Rupert! *(they hug)*

Rupert: Jives told me you'd run away! I've been looking for you!

Amy: I've been looking for help!

Fairy Godfather: This is your True Love?

Princesses: Awwww! *(Seriously, give it the girliest squeal you've got)*

Snow White: He's gorgeous!

Sleeping Beauty: He could cut down my wall of thorns.

Rapunzel: Aww, yay! You're reunited!

Snow White: You know what that means, girls...

Princesses: Happy Ending!! Yay!!

Amy: Well, I mean, we still need to solve the various me-getting-murdered and my-dad-hating-Rupert issues-

Princesses: Happy Ending! Happy Ending!

(They run off, still singing and skipping.)

Alan: 'Ey, boss. You thinking what I'm thinkin'?

Keith: Follow the princesses and rob 'em?

Alan: Yeh.

Keith: Let's do it!

(They all run after the princesses.)

Rupert: Guys! Guys! Don't- oh, they're gone.

Amy: Don't worry, the princesses have been attending self-defence classes. They said they'd had enough of being kidnapped for plot purposes, so they learned to fight back.

Rupert: Anyway, we're together now. Let's go and get a drink and sit down, and work out what to do next. Monty, stay here.

Amy: Godfather, keep an eye on Monty, will you?

(They leave, hand in hand)

SCENE EIGHT – THE BEANSTALK

(Lights up on the café, where shit's going down. Robin Hood, Little Red, and the Three Bears are lined up on one side of the stage (barricades?), while the ESC are on the other side, similarly arrayed. Jack is standing in the middle, attempting to make peace.)

Evelyn: What are these plebs doing at our table, Jack?

Jack: It's Monday evening! You never come in on a Monday!

Evelyn: That's beside the point! This is our cafe, and I want to sit down and have a drink! Go on, get out, the lot of you!

Little Red: Um, no, actually.

Robin: Red! Sh!

Papa Bear: No, I'm with the little girl. This coffee shop is for good guys now.

Baby Bear: Yeah! Punch them!

Mama Bear: Baby Bear!!

Maleficent: Look, I'm only here to work out how to kill Princess Amethyst!

Evelyn: Tcha! Good luck with that – she's vanished.

Gothel and Griselda: She's what?

Evelyn: Yup, vanished. And I had nothing to do with it, before you ask. I was going to poison her.

Gothel: Bear trap.

Griselda: Knife.

Maleficent: Godmother, you guys are quick! I was still planning!

Evelyn: Well, anyway. We've all failed. *(to the good guys)* You happy? We're terrible bad guys. Once again, we've failed. We've lost the princess, and we-

(In walk Amy and Rupert)

Gothel: Evelyn.

Evelyn: Totally screwed up.

Gothel: No, Evelyn, look.

Evelyn: *(finally paying attention)* Princess Amethyst!

Amy: Oh no. The Evil Stepmothers. Rupert! Run!

(they turn and flee)

Griselda: Wait! Princess!

Maleficent: Come back!

(They chase after them. The good guys pause, then cheer.)

Robin Hood: We did it!

Little Red: We got our coffee shop back!

Jack: *(shouting after the ESC)* And stay out! You're barred!

(Lights out)

SCENE NINE – OUTSIDE THE BEANSTALK

(Monty and the FG are standing on stage when Amy and Rupert run past and off again.)

FG: Amy! What's going on?

(The ESC come running on, and Monty rears and prances, getting in their way.)

Gothel: Move, horse!

FG: Eek! The Evil Stepmothers! Wow, you lot are scary in real life! The book doesn't do you any justice. *(pulls out a book (with handful of glitter) and shows them stick figures drawings)*

Griselda: Aw, thanks!

Evelyn: Griselda, not now! Did you see which way the princess went?

FG: Well, yes, but why should I tell you? She's happy. Let her be happy with her stable boy!

Maleficent: Stable boy?

FG: Ugh, right, listen, 'cause I'm only doing this once more. Princess Amy loves Rupert the Stable Boy, her father hired you lot to get her married, she ran away with her lover, and I won't help you kill them!

Gothel: No, Roderick hired us to *kill* her.

FG: Same difference. He just thought you'd fail, so he banked on a prince coming along to rescue her and then marry her and get half the kingdom, yadayadayada. Don't you know your fairy tales?

Evelyn: That sneaky rat-bastard king! What an awful thing to do to your daughter!

Griselda: He thinks we're bad villains? Great. Everyone thinks we're a joke!

Gothel: I've got a good mind to help the stupid princess to marry the stable boy.

Maleficent: It'd certainly show that horrible king.

FG: Wait! Yes, that's it! Wouldn't it be super evil to break your contract with the king, and help Amy instead?

Gothel: It's not the worst idea in the world...

FG: Well come on then! Let's go find them and help them get married!

(they all chase off after Amy and Rupert)

SCENE TEN – RUMPLE'S HOUSE

(Rumple is back in his apron, sweeping the porch, when Amy and Rupert run in.)

Rumple: Waargh! Get away! No more children welcome!

Amy: We're not children!

Rumple: Aren't you? Aren't you? How old are you?

Amy: Eighteen.

Rupert: Eighteen.

Rumple: Okay, fine, fine. What do you want?

Rupert: Could we hide here for a bit? We're running away from the Evil Stepmothers' Club.

Rumple: Well I don't know where you think you'd have space to hide. Fifteen children! Fifteen! In a one bedroom cottage! Nobody ever thinks of that, do they! I've got children in the cupboards, children in the bath, children up the chimney! So unless you can get rid of the kids, or make yourself the size of fleas, then no, you can't hide here!

(The ESC come skidding onto stage)

Rumple: And I don't think you need to!

Amy: Rupert, run!

(He starts to run but the FG and Monty skid on to stage)

FG: Rupert, wait!

Rupert: Monty! You found us!

Amy: Okay, grab Monty, and then let's run!

FG: Wait! It's safe! The Stepmothers' are going to help you!

Evelyn: We don't help people! We're not helping!

Maleficent: We're just actively *not* helping Roderick any more.

Amy: You're not trying to kill me anymore?

Gothel: No! We want you to marry Rupert!

Amy: You want what?!

Griselda: Oh, has he not proposed yet? Godmother, boy, you're slow.

(Griselda and Gothel walk over and push Rupert onto one knee.)

Gothel: Now you say 'Amy, will you marry me?'

(Rupert shakes her off)

Rupert: I know what to say! Let me do this in my own time, okay?

Griselda: *(backing off, hands up)* All right, fine.

Rupert: Um, Amy? I know this is kind of awkward, and I promise this has nothing to do with the witches telling me to, but I really would like to marry you. We could live like we've always dreamed, out

here in the woods, make a little cottage garden, keep horses, and live a nice quiet life. What do you say – will you marry me?

Amy: Oh Rupert! Of course I will! Never mind all those awful princes, you're the man I love!

Everyone: Cheering!

Rumple: Oh brilliant, what a wonderful day, whoopee. Might not be children, no, but I bet there's a firstborn coming soon. Well, I won't have it! I refuse. Look, princess, listen to me. RUMPLE-STILT-SKIN. That's my name, okay? Rumplestiltskin. Repeat it back to me.

Amy: Rumplestiltskin? But what has that-

Rumple: Look, I'll write it down for you, okay? Do not lose this piece of paper. If anyone ever asks you what their name is, you guess Rumplestiltskin, okay? Okay? I refuse to have your child!

Rupert: Chill out, man. I don't think there are children on the cards just yet.

Rumple: There better not be.

(He walks a little way away, mumbling and sweeping.)

Amy: Look, I'm very happy no-one's trying to kill me anymore, but can anyone please explain what's going on?

FG: Let's all go inside and have a nice cup of tea and I'll explain everything.

(They all leave, except Amy, who is barred by Rumple with the brush.)

Rumple: I've got my eye on you, Princess. I want you to stand there and repeat my name 100 times, til I'm sure you've got it.

Amy: Sigh, fine. Rumplestiltskin. Rumplestiltskin. Rumplestiltskin. Rumplestiltskin. Rumplestiltskin. Rumplestiltskin. Rumplestiltskin.

(Jasper enters – he's still dressed like a villain, but pretending to be nice.)

Jasper: Oh, Amy, there you are! Everyone in the castle is so worried about you!

Amy: Er, hello. You're Rupert's uncle, aren't you? Jasper?

Jasper: That's right, just your friendly neighbourhood uncle.

Amy: Gosh. That's quite a coat. Have you always been so... Gothic?

Jasper: Thanks, do you like it? Now then, princess, you must be starving after wandering out here for so long...

Amy: I am pretty hungry, actually. We tried to go to the Beanstalk for some supplies, but we were chased out by the Evil Stepmothers' Club!

Jasper: Oh no! How terrible! Here, would you like this apple?

Amy: Um, is that a skull and crossbones?

Jasper: Oh! Um. No. It's a... bruise. From my pocket. Sorry. I didn't have any... bubble wrap.

Amy: Oh, okay.

(she takes a bite of the apple, then falls down in a faint)

Jasper: Yes! It worked! Now maybe Evelyn will smile at me! Time to go claim my castle!

(he leaves. Rumple keeps sweeping, until the broom gets stuck on Amy)

Rumple: Oh no. *(shouting off)* Oi, you lot! Come and deal with your princess!

SCENE ELEVEN – RODERICK'S CASTLE

(Amy is lying on a table in your typical dead-princess pose. Crowded around her are the King and Queen, the ESC, Rupert and Monty, the Fairy Godfather and Jives)

Penelope: I told you it wasn't going to work!

Roderick: Now now, you were quite as invested in the plan as I was!

Penelope: And now our poor daughter is gone forever!

Roderick: *(to ESC)* This is all your fault! You weren't meant to kill her!

Griselda: What? You hired us to get her out of your hair!

Rupert, FG, Jives: You did what?!

Roderick: No, it's okay! I only hired them because they're so bad at being evil! Every princess they touch ends up happily married! I tricked them!

ESC: You did what?!

Roderick: No, look, it's actually a very clever plan...

Penelope: I think you'd better shut up with your clever plans.

FG: Hold on, hold on, hold on. This has all gone a bit Greek tragedy, and that's not really in the traditional Godparent wheelhouse...

Gothel: Well we tricked you back, you... horrible king!

Maleficent: Yeah!

(A ringing noise occurs, and the King fishes his magic mirror out of his pocket. It's Rumplestiltskin.)

Rumple: Mirror mirror, I'm getting mad, get me the King!

Penelope: Er, that didn't rhyme.

Rumple: I don't care about rhyming! I'm furious! I demand that the King order the Fairy Godmothers to help me with all these stupid children everywhere!

Roderick: I'm terribly sorry, Rumplestiltskin, but we have a slightly more urgent problem. You see, Princess Amy is dead.

Rumple: Dead? Dead? The wench isn't dead! That loomy evil-looking fellow came snooping around, gave her an apple, boom, silly girl's taking a nap.

Roderick: Loomy fellow? *(to everyone else)* Does anyone know a loomy evil-looking fellow?

Rupert: That sounds a bit like my uncle J-

Rumple: Jasper! She called him Jasper! Anyway, back to me. I need you to send a Fairy Godparent and take-

FG: *(taking the mirror)* Sorry, sorry, I'll be there as soon as I can, buh-bye, ta-ta, bye now...

Rumple: Oooh you just wait, I'm coming up to find you – I'll show you what for!

(He storms off, and FG gives the mirror back to the King)

Rupert: So Jasper killed Amy? But-

Griselda: But that little angry man said she isn't dead.

FG: Hold on - there is one thing we could try... Let me just consult the handbook... *(he pulls out a small book, spilling glitter everywhere)*

Jives: I hardly think glitter is appropriate at a time like this.

FG: Sorry, sorry... *(flipping through pages)* A-ha! Yes! Here it is! If the princess isn't dead, and someone gave her something to make her sleep, then it looks like we have an Aarne-Thomson type 709!

Roderick: A what?

FG: A Snow White!

(Everyone turns to look at Evelyn)

Evelyn: Don't look at me! I didn't do anything!

Penelope: I mean, you did try to drown her, then poison her, then do godmother-knows-what with her in the forest... *(to FG)* No offence.

Griselda: And anyway, Rumplestiltskin saw Jasper slip Amy an apple!

Roderick: Wait, hang on. Jasper's to blame?

FG: Yes, but it's okay. All we need to wake Amy up is a true love's kiss.

Rupert: Um, I could-

Roderick: Jives, Jives! The princes! Fetch the princes!

Rupert: Sir, I really think I-

(a fanfare, and in rush the four princes, being shooed by Jives)

Jives: The eligible bachelors, sire. Is there one you wish to go first?

Prince Charming: Allow me, sir. I am the charmingest and most wonderful prince in the whole land, and I should be honoured to kiss Princess Amethyst awake.

Roderick: By all means...

Rupert: No, not by all means! This isn't going to work!

Penelope: Shush! Let him do it.

Penguin Prince: Charming, you can't just kiss people!

Charming: You can in a fairy tale!

(He leans in to kiss Amy, but Monty interposes himself so that Charming gets a lipful of horse.)

Charming: Ugh!

Rupert: Monty!

Roderick: Get that horse out of here!

Rupert: But-

(Roderick glares at him, so Rupert leads a reluctant Monty off)

Evelyn: Well really, Roderick, are you as blind as all that?

Gothel: I doubt any of those princes are going to help.

Griselda: Rupert's the only one who can save Amy now.

Maleficent: Rupert, hold on!

(The ESC rush off after Rupert.)

Roderick: Ahem. Please continue.

(Charming kisses Amy, but she doesn't wake up)

Charming: Damn. Oh well. Plenty more princesses in the sea. *(he begins to walk off, pulling out a mirror)* Mirror mirror, in my pocket...*(he leaves)*

Penelope: Arthur next?

Frog Prince: Ribbit-um, me? Uh, okay.

(he kisses Amy, and nothing happens)

Frog Prince: Oh bother. I don't suppose you have any more daughters?

Roderick: No. Seven is quite enough.

Frog Prince: Okay. Back to the well, then, I guess.

(he leaves)

Penelope: Well, I wouldn't mind having Dick for a son-in-law...

(Dick kisses Amy but no response)

Dick: Fine. Stupid princess. I like my cat more anyway. Kitty!

(from the side of the stage enters a very sexy cat-girl, who beckons to him.)

Dick: What? I didn't tell you she was a shapeshifter?

(they leave)

Roderick: Fine, fine, Prince Jamie then.

Penguin Prince: Um, thank you, but... I'd rather not.

Roderick: Oh, this is you being moral again, is it? Jives, make him kiss Amy.

(Jives chases the Penguin Prince around the stage, and eventually off)

Roderick: Well that's blown it then. We haven't anyone left to give Amy a true love's kiss!

Penelope: Oh, my poor daughter! Dead forever!

Jives: Sire, if I could just interject-

Roderick: Not now Jives, we're grieving!

(Roderick and Penelope leave, with Jives trotting after.)

INTERLUDE EIGHT – THE STABLES

(Rupert is brushing Monty. Monty is subdued this time, probably because Rupert is brushing him quite hard.)

Rupert: I don't believe it! Stupid King. I can save Amy, I know I can.

(Monty jumps away)

Rupert: Sorry, Monty. I'm just so mad!

(Enter the ESC)

Gothel: Well don't take it out on the horse!

Griselda: Yeah, animal cruelty's way beyond even the normal evil remit!

Monty: Whickers of agreement.

Rupert: Sorry, sorry. I just... Argh! Why won't the King see that Amy and I are meant to be together?

Maleficent: We can help, you know.

Evelyn: We can cast a spell to sneak you into the throne room, and you can kiss Amy awake, and-

Gothel: Boom! Happy ending.

Rupert: Really? That's amazing! Thank you! You guys are the best.

Griselda: *(cough)* The worst.

Rupert: But you're so helpful!

Gothel: No! We're not helping! We're hindering!

Maleficent: We're being really evil!

Evelyn: We're getting in the way of Roderick's plans!

Rupert: If that's what you need to tell yourselves... But thanks anyway.

(Suddenly there is a crash, and Jives comes in dragging a bound Jasper.)

Jives: Come *on!* To the dungeon with you!

Jasper: Never! I killed the princess just like Roderick wanted!

Jives: Why would Roderick want that? You're just plain evil!

Jasper: Aw, thank you! But seriously, don't put me in the dungeon.

Jives: To the dungeon!

(They exit.)

Rupert: Gosh.

Evelyn: Quick, we'd better go and get Amy while they're distracted!

(They all run out.)

SCENE TWELVE – RODERICK'S COURT

(Amy's on the slab again with the FG standing over her. Rupert and the ESC enter)

Griselda: Go on, kiss her!

Rupert: And you really think the King won't mind?

Evelyn: Mind? He'll be thrilled.

Gothel: Did you see how upset he was? He'll just be happy to have her back.

Maleficent: I reckon he'll only shout at you for a couple of hours...

Griselda: Yeah, and if he puts you in the dungeon it'll be quite a nice dungeon...

Rupert: Okay...

(He walks over to Amy and kisses her. Nothing happens.)

Rupert: Oh no, why isn't it working? Did I do it wrong?

FG: Do *you* wake up and leap out of bed in a single bound every morning? Give it a second...

(Amy stretches and wakes up.)

Rupert: Amy!

Amy: Rupert!

(they hug)

Amy: You saved me! But how?

Rupert: With a-

FG: With a kiss, dear girl, with a true love's kiss!

Amy: But we've already kissed! Lots of times!

FG: It doesn't have to be the first one! If you still love him, it still counts! Yippee! You've done it! You've got your happily ever after! Well done! Call me when your firstborn child is ready to be rescued!

(He casts glitter everywhere, then leaves)

ESC: Cheering! Whooping!

(Enter Roderick and Penelope)

Roderick: What is all this noise! This is a solemn chamber of death!

Penelope: Amy! You're alive!

(She embraces her, and Roderick eventually notices and joins the hug)

Penelope: Oh, I'm so happy, I'm never going to try to marry you off again!

Roderick: Um, well, we should probably discuss that, dear.

Amy: Dad, it's okay. I... I'm willing to consider getting married now.

Roderick: What? That's great! That's wonderful! *(shouting off)* Jives! Get the princes back!

Rupert: Sir, no. I think she means she's going to marry me. *(to Amy)* I... er... I have got that right, haven't I?

Amy: Yes. I love you, Rupert.

Rupert: I love you too, Amy.

Roderick: Preposterous! You can't marry the stable boy!

Evelyn: If we might interrupt, Roderick...

Griselda: Jives!

(Jives runs in with the flipchart, and the stage manager does not hit the writer.)

Evelyn: Here we have one king, with seven daughters.

Penelope: And a wife.

Evelyn: And a wife *(draws in Penelope)*.

Maleficent: He marries off six, one is left.

Evelyn: He hires the Evil Stepmothers' Club to get the princess married.

Gothel: *(threateningly)* Which we'll talk about later...

Evelyn: Add one forest, one Fairy Godfather, one *(pause)* Wicked Uncle, equals one seemingly dead princess.

Griselda: With us so far? *(Roderick nods)*

Evelyn: One seemingly dead princess plus one True Love's Kiss equals –

All ESC: One. Happily. Married. Princess.

(Jives leaves with the flipchart)

Roderick: All right, all right. Fine. Look, Rudolph, or whatever your name is.

Rupert: Rupert, sir.

Roderick: Rupert. Do you love my daughter?

Amy: Dad, he's been trying to tell-

Roderick: Sh. I'm asking Rupert.

Rupert: Yes. Yes I do.

Roderick: Fine. I hereby make you the Duke of Madeuppia, and you can marry my daughter. I even have a spare castle hanging about.

Griselda: But that was going to be ours!

Roderick: Only if you killed her.

Gothel: But you-

Maleficent: Never mind. I've had a better idea. If everyone thinks we're so good at getting princesses married...

Griselda: Which apparently we are...

Maleficent: Maybe we should consider a slight change of career.

Evelyn: Ooh... A matchmaking service?

Maleficent: Exactly!

Gothel: Plenty of rewards...

Griselda: A great reputation...

Evelyn: A chance to stretch our magic...

Maleficent: And, invites to parties!! Come on, let's go plan!

(they all run off, excitedly)

Roderick: As I was saying. You can have this castle-

(Jives enters, barely restraining Rumpelstiltskin)

Jives: I'm sorry to interrupt, Sire, but there's an irate little man here to see you.

Rumple: Not him, you idiot! I don't care about kings! I want to see that glittery tosser who refused to help me!

Amy: The Fairy Godfather's gone, Rumpel. We got our Happily Ever After.

Rumpel: Whaaat?? And where's my Happy Ending, huh? I'm stuck in that little old cottage with seventeen kids!

Rupert: Seventeen? I thought it was fifteen?

Rumpel: New Queen. Twins. Stupid cow said she 'couldn't remember which one came first'.

Amy: Oh! Rumpelstiltskin! I've had a wonderful idea! Rupert, wouldn't you rather live with me in the forest, looking after Monty, no more speeches and balls and all that faff?

Rupert: Oh yes, just like we used to dream of.

Amy: And Rumpel, wouldn't you like a whole castle full of rooms for all your children? You could start a proper institution, hire teachers and staff, turn it into a school for firstborns!

Rumpel: That sounds interesting....

Amy: Right then! Rumpel, you have our castle in Ruritania, and Rupert and I will take your cottage in the forest!

Roderick: Amy, you can't-

Amy: Dad, if this whole thing has proved anything, we really really can.

Penelope: Roddy, let her go. She's happy.

Roderick: Oh, all right then. Come here.

(they hug)

Roderick: Ooh, but now there's the wedding! Jives, set everything up! Come on, everyone! To the chapel!

(they all leave)

INTERLUDE NINE – THE DUNGEON

(Jasper is in chains, sitting on the floor. Rupert enters.)

Jasper: Rupert? Come to kick me while I'm down?

Rupert: Actually, no, Uncle. I've come to let you go. I'd really like you to be at the wedding.

Jasper: What? Really?

Rupert: Yes. You've got to stop trying to kill Amy, though.

Jasper: Oh, of course! I only wanted to prove I was evil enough to do it! I like the girl! I don't want her dead!

Rupert: Oh Uncle. You're plenty evil enough. You're my Wicked Uncle. *(he frees Jasper)*

Jasper: Oh Rupert. That's so sweet. *(they hug)*

Rupert: Now come on, let's get you cleaned up.

(They leave)

SCENE THE LAST – THE JAS BAR

(Lights up on Jasper's new bar. Soft jazz is playing, Jasper is polishing a glass, and the ESC is sat at a table in the centre of the stage)

Gothel: Well, this is nice, isn't it?

Evelyn: Much more fitting for villains like us.

Griselda: I like it here. That coffee shop was getting far too nicey-nicey. I'm glad we decided to change meeting place.

Maleficent: You do realise they kicked us out of the coffee shop?

Griselda: I don't care. This is great.

(Jasper enters, suavely dressed, with a round of drinks.)

Jasper: Your drinks, ladies.

(He hands out cocktail glasses all around. Griselda takes a sip.)

Griselda: Really, Gothel? There's not even such a *thing* as a pumpkin spice martini!

(Gothel laughs. Enter Hook, Gaston and Jafar.)

Jasper: Hook! Gaston! Jeff-Jafar! You came!

Jafar: It's not every day your old buddy opens his new bar, is it?

Hook: It's high time someone opened a truly villainous drinking place.

Gaston: This is way better than the Decapitated King.

Jasper: Well, thank you. Do grab a table.

(Tinkerbell enters with Scar)

Jasper: Tink! Scar!

Tink: Just coming to add a little sparkle to the place.

Jasper: What'll you have to drink? *(gestures at menu board)*

Scar: Oh, I think a... Mufasa. On the rocks.

Gothel: Is that everyone, then? Come on, gather round.

(Everyone sits or leans around the table, except Jasper, who polishes a glass and pretends not to be interested.)

Evelyn: Jasper...

Jasper: Oh, do you need more drinks? Let me just- *(he reaches for a glass on the table, and Evelyn grabs his wrist)*

Evelyn: Sit down, will you? *(stunned, Jasper sits)* Right. I hereby call to order the first weekly meeting of the Evil Stepmothers' – and Wicked Uncles' - Matchmaking Club.

(lights go down to hopefully rapturous applause)

A FINAL SONG!