



The Beautiful Princess

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The Beautiful Princess

A Musical Comedy

Scene One.

Long Island, USA. The living room of an expensive mansion.

Two men enter carrying a bookshelf. Henrietta Hassenbaum is standing center stage, consulting a swinging pendulum that she dangles from one hand. Later in the show, this same woman will play the Fairy Godmother.

Workman: Where shall we put this lady?

Henrietta: Wait a minute... It's coming now, yes, over there, by the piano.

Enter a man with a divining rod. He will be Waldo, the Genie, later in the show.

Waldo: Wait, hold everything! You can't put that there! The energy's all wrong....

Henrietta: Just a minute. Who are you?

Waldo: My name is Waldo Wunderscheun. The owner of this residence has employed me as her exclusive design consultant and fung-shoo expert.

Henrietta: There must be a mistake. Mrs Jocelyn Clutchit has hired me, Henrietta Hassenbaum, as her personal color coordinator. I decide where everything goes around here.

Waldo: I'm afraid it is you who are mistaken. I have an exclusive contract with Jocelyn Clutchit.

Workman (*still holding the bookshelf*): Hey, this shelf is getting heavy!

Henrietta: Put it there!

Waldo: No, take it over there!

Jocelyn Clutchit breezes in with a sheaf of papers, humming a tune, singing a few words to herself. She is writing a musical.

Waldo and Henrietta (*both speaking together*): Mrs Clutchit, I have your personal authority...

Jocelyn (*to everyone*): Oh, don't worry about that bookshelf. Just put it there for now. Please, don't interrupt me. I've got this song coming: La, la-la, la.... Sometimes life gives us a chance... Why don't you both go upstairs and take a look at the master bedroom? The decor isn't quite right yet.

Waldo and Henrietta (*together*): Of course, madam. At once!

They look at each other haughtily, and walk off.

Enter Rosita, the Mexican maid, with man in coveralls.

Rosita: Excuse me, m'am. The air conditioning technician is here.

Jocelyn: Oh, thanks, Rosita. Come in, the control unit is right over there.

AC Man: Nice place you have here, lady.

Jocelyn: Yes, isn't it wonderful! We just moved in.

Rosita (*re-entering*): Excuse me, m'am. Your keyboard tuner is here.

Jocelyn: Oh my goodness! Come in. It's over there. I don't seem to be able to get it working.

Music man: I'll take care of it, lady.

Rosita: Excuse me m'am, you're personal fitness instructor and yoga teacher are here.

Jocelyn: Is it that time already? Alex will be home soon and I still haven't got this song right.

The phone rings and Jocelyn answers.

Jocelyn: Clutchit residence, Jocelyn speaking. Gary, hi! Great to hear you. Yes, I'm working on the opening song right now. Did you get a chance to read the story? Do you like it? Really? That's so sweet of you! Off Broadway? You're kidding! You think it's that good? It's just a fairy tale romance that I set to music. Oh Gary, I'd love to take a small part myself but you know how Alex is about me going back into show business. Okay, I'll think about it. Of course. Yes, I'll talk to him. I promise! Listen Gary I have to go now, we're still unpacking in the new place. Yes, there's a wonderful view of Manhattan, but I really don't know what we're going to do with fifteen guest rooms, three swimming pools and five jacuzzis. Yes, okay Gary, love you, bye.

Rosita: Excuse me, m'am, the patio paving crew is here.

Jocelyn: Oh my! When am I going to have time to finish this song? Okay, come on in. The barbeque area needs paving...over there somewhere. Now, let's see if I've got this tune right: La, la-la, la-la... Sometimes life gives us a chance... (*to the piano repair man*) Can you give me an F? Laaa...Sometimes life gives us a chance...

AC Repair Man: Excuse me, lady, but if that's the opening song of your musical it needs a little more pazzazz.

Patio paver: Yeah, more like a "ta-dah...!"

Bookshelf carrier: Or maybe a "pa, pa-pa, pa!"

Jocelyn: Goodness, how come all you people know so much about show tunes?

AC Man: Simple. We're all unemployed show people. We work for the same job agency on Broadway.

Jocelyn: Wow, so maybe you can help me get this song right. How do you think it should go?

All the people onstage either join in the song, or create a synchronized dance routine.

1st Singer:

Sometimes life gives us a chance

2nd singer:

To get up and sing

3rd singer:

To stand up and dance

4th and 5th singers (duet):

To live our dreams of true romance

Jocelyn:

This life - oh what a mystery!

Chorus:

Sometimes life gives us a chance

To get up and sing

To stand up and dance

To live our dreams of true romance

This life - oh what a mystery!

Just as long as we...

Dance, dance, dance

And throw our hearts to the sky

As long as we sing our song

Without any reason why....

As the song is reaching its climax, Alex Clutchit, Jocelyn's husband, enters the room. Shocked at the scene, he jumps up on a chair and screams.

Alex: STOP! (*everyone stops*) What the hell's going on in my house? Jocelyn, get these people out of here. You know I don't want any workers here after 5:30 p.m.

Jocelyn: Thank you, everyone. Goodbye. Hello darling, did you have a bad day?

Alex: A bad day? George Bush loses the election, the Feds cut the money supply in half, and my home becomes a stage set for West Side Story. Why did I marry an American?

Jocelyn (*playfully*): Because daddy's a billionaire, silly!

Alex: Right, how could I forget!

Jocelyn: Come and sit down. I'll make you a gin and tonic.

Alex: Where's the TV? Jocelyn... the TV! They said they'd have it set up by tonight.

Jocelyn: Don't worry dear, it's all fixed. But, honey, wouldn't you like to hear about the musical I'm writing?

Alex: Jocelyn, I told you. No more Broadway shows. It's in our marriage contract.

Jocelyn: But darling, I'm not going to play in it. I wrote it. Gary says it's wonderful and sure to be a hit.

Alex (*sarcastically*): Gary says it's wonderful, because Gary got a million bucks every time he persuaded you cut an album. Look, Jocelyn, can we talk about this later? I'm missing the big game. Where the hell is the TV?

Jocelyn: Rosita!

Rosita pulls curtains to reveal a huge video screen.

Alex: Rosita, my helmet.

Alex sits on the couch, which is downstage left (in other words, off the main acting area). Rosita brings Alex's football helmet. Alex puts on his football helmet, thumbs the remote and an American football game comes on. After a short while there is a sudden blackout.

Alex: What the... I don't believe this! (*shouting*) Rosita! Did you blow a fuse in the kitchen?

Muffled cry of denial from Rosita offstage. Then she appears, muttering in Mexican-Spanish and carrying an emergency light, which she places on a table.

Rosita (*indignantly*): It has nothing to do with me.

Jocelyn (*looking out the window*): Alex look! It's not just our house. The whole of New York is blacked out. It's a major power outage.

Alex (*panicking*): Oh my god, there's going to be riots, there's going to be looting. My enemies on Wall Street will send a hit team to blow me away. We need protection. Call the police, send a fax, get on the telex...I'm gonna have a heart attack!

Jocelyn: Don't worry, Alex, nothing bad will happen out here on Long Island.

Alex: Nothing bad? What am I going to do now? No TV, no sound system, no news service. Where's the newspaper?

Jocelyn: I didn't order it yet.

Alex: Oh my god. How about a book? Pass me a book from that shelf.

Jocelyn: Alex, you know that's a fake bookshelf!

Alex: Jesus, what's going on here? It's a conspiracy to drive me nuts. Hold my hand. Tell me story.

Jocelyn (*cooly*): I can tell you about my musical...

Alex: Okay. Anything. Just fill up this... this emptiness.

Jocelyn: Okay. Well, it starts like this. Once upon a time...

Scene Two:

As Jocelyn begins to speak, the stage is transformed into a scene from Medieval Europe. The stage is divided into two halves. On one side, the family banner of Baron von Schmusl. On the other side, the family banner of Baron von Schatzl. Hilde von Schmusl is lying in bed, onstage, motionless, with a nursemaid beside her.

Jocelyn: Once upon a time...

Alex (*sarcastically*): That's an original beginning.

Jocelyn (*upset*): Alex!

Alex: Okay, okay, go on.

Jocelyn: Once upon a time, in the central part of Europe, there lived two noble families: the von Schmusls and the von Schatzls...

Alex (*splutters with laughter then chokes it back*): Sorry. Go on.

Jocelyn: They lived in two fine castles, quite close to each other, but there had been bad blood between the families for many years and they rarely spoke to each other.

Lights come up on the von Schmusl side of the stage, revealing the bedside scene. Enter Baron von Schmusl.

Jocelyn: Baron von Schmusl had no sons, and he feared that his wife was barren, until one day, to his delight, she bore him a baby girl...

Nursemaid stands up with a bundled-up baby, showing it to the baron.

Nurse: Here sire. Your daughter.

von Schmusl (*peers suspiciously at the baby, then beams in delight*). My god! She's so beautiful. You have done well, Hilde.

Hilde: (*weakly*) Thank you, Boris.

von Schmusl: Such a perfect little face. Such eyes! Look, she's smiling at me! At ME! Ha, ha! What an angel. What shall we call her?

Hilde: How about Irmtraut, after your mother?

von Schmusl (*with distaste*): Irmtraut? No, no, no. She's much too beautiful for that. She needs a very special name.

Hilde: Heidi?

von Schmusl: No, no. Something grand. I know! I have it! We shall call her Blanche Fleur, because she will grow up to be the fairest flower in all the land.

Hilde (*demurely*): as you wish, Boris.

Lights down on the von Schmusl side of the stage. Lights up on the von Schatzl side. Enter Baron von Schatzl.

Jocelyn: Meanwhile, Baron von Schatzl was waiting impatiently for news from his own wife's labor.

Nursemaid (*entering with bundled-up baby. She is obviously distressed*): Oh sire, I bring mixed tidings to you. See, here is your son.

von Schatzl (*briskly impatient*): What distresses you woman? Speak up? Is he lame? Or an idiot?

Nurse: No sire, he is as healthy as you may wish. But your wife... oh sire, I fear she will not outlive this night.

von Schatzl (*sighs in resignation*): It is as I feared. She was always a delicate creature. No stamina in her bloodline. My father warned me that she would not make a good breeder and he was right (*takes the baby*). And god help this young pup if he is to be raised without a mother.

Nurse: What will you call him sire?

von Schatzl: Call him? I've no idea. How about 'boy'?

Nurse: Oh no sire. That will never do.

von Schatzl (*impatiently*): Naming is a woman's business. What do you suggest?

Nurse: Jerome is nice, sire.

von Schatzl: Good enough. Jerome it shall be. Now take him to your breast and see that he thrives, or I shall be without a family entirely.

Nurse: Yes, sire.

Lights down on the von Schatzls.

Jocelyn: Twelve years passed, and Baron von Schmusl never tired of his love affair with his beautiful daughter...

Lights up on the von Schmusls. The baron is looking admiringly at his daughter, who is offstage. His wife Hilde is beside him, knitting.

von Schmusl: Look Hilde, see how well she sits in the saddle. (*Calling to Blanche*) That's it! Keep a tight grip on the reins! Good girl!

Hilde (*crossly*): Honestly Boris, you pay too much attention to that young lady. You'll spoil her.

von Schmusl (*not looking at his wife*): Oh, don't worry, Hilde. Look, doesn't she look stunning on that white pony I gave her for her birthday. That's it, Blanche! Ride like a princess!

Lights down on the von Schmusls.

Jocelyn: Baron von Schatzl had problems with his son Jerome, who did not seem to be measuring up to his father's standards...

Lights up on the von Schatzls. The baron is standing, looking offstage, looking irritated.

von Schatzl (*calling out*): Jerome, put down that flute and get back to your sword-fighting lessons! Yes, now! Then help the servants muck out the stables. We go hunting at dawn! What? No, dammit, you can't take your bloody poetry books with you!

Lights down on the von Schatzls.

Jocelyn: One day, when Blanche Fleur was 16 years old, something happened that would change her life forever.

Lights up on the von Schmusls. Blanche comes in, dressed in a beautiful night gown, accompanied by her father. She sits down on the couch, and her father stands behind her, stroking her face and hair.

von Schmusl (*feeling sad*): Blanche, my dear, tell me, do you still love your poor old father?

Blanche: Oh daddy, of course I do. Why do you ask such a thing?

von Schmusl: Oh, I suppose it's just that I'm getting old, and you're growing up, and soon you'll be married off to some dashing young man, and I'll probably never see you again.

Blanche (*kissing her father on the cheek*): Oh daddy, don't be silly. I will always love you the best, I promise!

Blanche gives her father a passionate hug. Hilde comes in with a supper tray, sees them, and drops the tray with a shriek.

Hilde: Blanche! (*she gives Blanche a hateful look and then composes herself*) Boris, I really think that it's time Blanche learned how to go to bed by herself. She's a big girl now.

von Schmusl (*embarrassed*): I... er... of course, dear. We were just...

Hilde: Come with me, Boris. There are things we must discuss in private. Good night, Blanche Fleur.

With a helpless look at his daughter, the baron follows his wife offstage.

Jocelyn: For the first time, Blanche became aware of her mother's jealousy. She saw how her youth and beauty had so dazzled her father that he was ignoring his wife completely. Filled with guilt and remorse, Blanche vowed never to cause her mother any more pain. Every night, before going to bed, she would repeat a secret mantra to herself, to turn away the attentions of men...

Blanche: I am not beautiful, please go away... I am not beautiful, please go away... I am NOT beautiful, please go away...

Lights down on the von Schmusls.

Jocelyn: Meanwhile, at the castle of the von Schatzls, Jerome was also suffering, for he had no taste for the life of a warrior knight...

Lights up on the von Schmusls. Enter five knights, slightly drunk, in the company of Jerome.

1st Knight: By god, that was fun, to see those peasants run for their lives when we came galloping down the street after the deer.

2nd Knight: What a stroke of luck - the deer ran right into the courtyard of the tavern!
(*Laughter*)

3rd Knight: I'd rather it had run into the whorehouse!

4th Knight: Ay, then we'd have seen what kind of stag you really are!
(*Laughter*)

5th Knight: And you, Jerome, eh? You young buck! (*nudges him in the ribs*)

Jerome (*not caught up in their jollity*): Frankly, gentlemen, I have little taste for stag parties of any kind.

1st Knight: Oh come on, Jerome, hunting stags and chasing women is just a bit of sport. We have to keep ourselves amused somehow. There hasn't been a bloody war in these parts for nigh on 70 years.

3rd Knight: Ho, Anna! Katerina! Bring us some ale and vittals. We're starving.

Enter serving maids with food. They get playfully harassed by the knights.

5th Knight: A song! A song to celebrate a good day's sport.

2nd Knight: Come on, Jerome, what shall it be?

Jerome: Well, there's a beautiful love song I've been learning...

4th Knight: Love song? Man, I've no taste for such sissy stuff.

3rd Knight: A real song, that's what we want.

1st Knight: Let it be: Might Is Right!
(*Cheers of enthusiasm*)

They all sing:

Might is right for the men who are knights
We drink bad beer and we love good fights.
After the battle, we plunder and rape
Now wonder we love to be knights.
Might is right for the knights of the land,
We ride and we rob in a hunting band.
If you're in our way, you'd better take flight,
No wonder we love to be knights!

Yo ho, happy are we,
Men who are knights on a killing spree.
Yo ho, we take our prize,
None of that sissy stuff for these here guys!

Might is right, you know how it's spelt
We lock up our wives in a chastity belt
Then we go whoring, and have a good time.

No wonder we love to be knights!
Might is right, a fact is a fact,
Might is right, to be exact,
Might is right, that's the bottom line,
No wonder we love to be knights!

Yo ho, happy are we,
Men who are knights on a killing spree!
Yo ho, we take our prize,
None of that sissy stuff for these here guys!

1st Knight: That was grand. Well, lads, time for sentry duty. (*Groans of reluctance*) You two stand the first watch. You'll be relieved shortly before dawn. The rest of you hit the sack.

4th Knight (*grabbing a serving maid*): If I'm on the third watch, I'd better get some rest while I can! (*Laughter*)

5th Knight: Good night, Jerome, sleep well.

Jerome: Good night to you all.

All exit.

Jerome: Is this my destiny? To hunt the helpless deer and go to bed with smelly serving girls? It doesn't seem to suit me.

Jerome sings:

All I ever wanted was the love of a girl
Someone to hold me tight
Someone to love me just because of myself
Someone to hold tonight.
Oh love unrequited is a painful affair
My own sorry lifelong tale
The longing for a woman is a wound in my heart
Why, in love, must I always fail?

At the end of the song, Baron von Schatzl comes in.

von Schatzl: Jerome, what's going on here?

Jerome: Nothing father.

von Schatzl: That's what worries me. Why aren't you drinking, swearing and falling on the floor like any decent young man after a good day's hunting?

Jerome (*wry smile*): We did that earlier.

von Schatzl (*sighing*): Oh well, go to bed. Jousting practice tomorrow is at noon sharp.

Jerome: Yes, father.

Lights down on the von Schatzls.

Jocelyn: One year later, the von Schmusls decided to hold a grand ball to celebrate Blanche Fleur's 17th birthday, and to introduce her to eligible young men. Reluctantly, Baron von Schmusl included the von Schatzls in his invitation list, for to ignore them would have been a grievous insult. And so it was that Jerome and his father came to the von Schmusl's castle...

Scene Three

The von Schmusl's Ball. Servants are busy arranging the banners, etc. This is a scene change with lights up. General atmosphere of getting ready for an important event. Enter Henrietta Hassenbaum with a long list of food dishes, which she is studying.

Henrietta: Let me see, stuffed turkey hollandaise, wienerschnizel au gratin, sauerkraut surprisee...

Enter two servants, staggering under the weight of a hog's head on a tray.

First servant: Where shall we put this, ma'm?

Henrietta: Let me see... put it over there with the pickled pigs trotters and the duck dumplings.

She turns away and studies her list. Enter Waldo Wunderscheun with his own list.

Waldo (*to the servants*): Just a minute. You can't put that hog's head here. This is the main ballroom. Take it to the dining hall.

Henrietta (*turning round but not yet seeing Waldo*): Stop! Are you deaf? I said put it over there with the pickled pigs trotters.

Waldo (*seeing Henrietta for the first time*): And I said take it to the dining hall!

Henrietta (*seeing Waldo*): And who might you be, to say such a thing in this castle?

Waldo: Waldo Wunderscheun, Baron von Schmusl's personally appointed maitre d'hote.

Henrietta: Haven't I seen you somewhere before?

Waldo: Now that you mention it, your face does conjure up a familiar kind of irritation. Who are you?

Henrietta: Henrietta Hassenbaum of Camelot Caterers, serving lords and ladies since the time of King Arthur.

Waldo: Ha! A likely tale. I happen to know that all King Arthur's feasts were catered by Merlin's Magic Take-Out Service, which is a direct subsidiary of Wunderscheun Foods Incorporated... so there!

Enter Baron von Schmusl.

von Schmusl: What's going on here?

Henrietta and Waldo: Baron, I have your personal authority to be the caterer for this...

von Schmusl: Look, I haven't got time for this nonsense now. The ball's about to begin. Sort out your problem somewhere else and take this... thing with you (*referring to hog's head*). Hilde! Blanche! Aren't you ready yet?

Servant (*entering*): Sire, the first guests are arriving.

von Schmusl: Hilde! I shall be left standing here like an idiot!
Ah, there you are... and about time.

Enter Hilde and Blanche. Blanche looks incredibly beautiful, and von Schmusl has to restrain himself from adoring her.

von Schmusl: Blanche, you look wonder... er, very nice. And, er, of course, you too, dear. Both of you... very nice. Now stand here with me and greet the guests. Music! Ready, here they come.

A parade of arriving guests, all costumed in their medieval finery, comes onstage, and each couple comes before the Baron and his wife and daughter, to greet them.

Servant (*announcing the guests as they enter*): The von Gottenburgers, the von Stummelhumfs, the von Pfefferminzers, the von Dammendorfs, the von Kloppengrubers... (dramatic pause) the von Schatzls!

Gasps from the others guests, who know how much these two families dislike each other. Pin drop silence as Jerome and his father enter. They are stiffly greeted, with obvious dislike, by Baron von Schmusl and his wife. Jerome is immediately stunned by Blanche, and does not want to let go of her hand, until his father sees what is happening and drags him away. Blanche, meanwhile, is looking mainly at the floor.

Jerome: Father, who is that beautiful young woman?

von Schatzl: What woman?

Jerome: Over there. She's gorgeous!

von Schatzl: That's not a woman. That's a Schmusl. And the von Schatzls have nothing to do with the von Schmusls, so just put her out of your mind.

Jerome: I don't care what her name is, I want to marry her.

von Schatzl: Are you mad? There will never be a Schmusl in my family. Never!

Announcer: My lords and ladies, baron and baroness, take your partners please for The Relationship Waltz.

This signals the beginning of the big dance number. During the first verse, the guests are dancing with their own wives and husbands, so they look bored. Even though the song suggests they are happy to be together, the tone is ironic:

It's so good to be dancing with you
Haven't we done this before?
It's so good to be dancing with you
Another affair de l'amour
It's so good to be dancing with you
Make me your partner for life
It's so good to be dancing with you
For every husband a wife

In the second verse, they swap partners and immediately become more alive and excited.

It's so good to be dancing with you
Maybe it's time for a change
It's so good to be dancing with you
Can we arrange and exchange?
It's so good to be dancing with you
How quickly the temperatures rise
Now I can see
It's you for me
Dance with me till the sunrise!

But then they realize they must go back to their marriage partners, so again, they look sad, bored and disappointed.

It's so good to be dancing with you
We're back in the same old dance
It's so good to be dancing with you
Where is the thrill of romance?
It's so good to be dancing with you
All we can do is regret
Heaven's above
Where is my true love?

Or perhaps it is best to forget.

Blanche Fleur comes to the center of the stage and all the attention goes to her. The other dancers make space for her, moving a little bit to the back and sides of the stage. The song also focuses on her.

It's so good to be dancing with you
Here comes the belle of the ball
It's so good to be dancing with you
The sweetest flower of all
It's so good to be dancing with you
Who will she choose as her mate?
They all want to win
This blushing virgin
Blanche Fleur, this is your fate.

Several young men approach her, one by one. Each man holds a red heart, which he offers to her as a symbol of love.

1st Suitor: My lady how lovely to see you
2nd Suitor: Can I get you a drink, dear Blanche Fleur?
3rd Suitor: Would you care for some tea?
4th Suitor: Will you marry me?
All together: Oh beautiful, oh wonderful Blanche Fleur!

Blanche is uncomfortable at receiving all this male attention.

Blanche:
I cannot receive your attention
I'm not thirsty but thank you so much,
I won't be at home
Please leave me alone
You can look but you may not touch.

Jerome, staggers across the stage with a huge red heart, which, kneeling, he offers at Blanche Fleur.

Jerome: Blanche Fleur! All my life I've been hoping to meet a woman like you! I love you with all my heart!

Blanche, who was already feeling embarrassed, is horrified and rushes offstage in confusion. The von Schmusls are very upset.

von Schmusl (to von Schatzl): How dare your son propose to my daughter!

von Schatzl: How dare your daughter flirt with my son! You keep your bitch on a leash when she's in heat!

von Schmusl (*enraged*): You will not speak of my daughter like that!

Both men reach for their swords, but Hilde moves between them.

Hilde (*intervening*): Boris! That's enough. Please, gentlemen, this is the social event of the year. Let us have no impoliteness...

von Schatzl: The damage is already done. Jerome, come here! We are leaving.

Jerome (*wild eyed and love struck*): No! I'm not coming home! I don't care about this stupid family quarrel! I'm going to stay in the woods outside this castle until I win Blanche Fleur's love.

He dashes off. Baron von Schmusl and Baron von Schatzl look at each other in anger and astonishment.

Barons (*together*): Damn you sir!

Black out as Baron von Schatzl storms out.

Scene Four

Outside Blanche Fleur's Castle.

Jocelyn: Well, Alex, what do you think of it so far?

Alex: Not bad. I mean, it's a bit predictable. You know, Jerome looks beaten, then pulls off some brave stunt, saves the day, the families reconcile their differences and everyone lives happily ever after... right?

Jocelyn: Not exactly.

Alex: Well, then it's obvious: Blanche falls madly in love with Jerome, they're in a no-win situation, so they have night of passionate love-making and then jump off a cliff. Am I close?

Jocelyn: Why don't I just go on with the story?

Alex: Sure, go ahead. Surprise me.

Suddenly the lights come on in the Clutchit household. The power is back.

Alex: Oh great! The power's back! I can catch the rest of the game!

He flicks the remote, and the video comes on.

Jocelyn (*upset*): Alex, really! You're so insensitive!

Jocelyn starts to cry loudly (she knows this is her husband's weak spot, he can't stand her crying). Alex is torn between watching the game and his increasing discomfort at his wife's tears. Eventually, his wife wins.

Alex: Okay, okay. I'll turn it off (*he switches off the video*). There, there, don't cry, dear.

Jocelyn (*continuing to wail loudly*): Sometimes I think you don't appreciate me at all.

Alex (*wanting desperately for to stop her tears*): Darling, of course I appreciate you. Please stop crying. You know it's bad for my allergies.

Jocelyn (*sniffing noisily and feigning innocence*): Sniff, sniff. Do you want to hear the rest of the story?

Alex: Yes, yes, of course. Just turn off the faucets, please.

Jocelyn (*sniffing coyly*): Are you sure?

Alex: Yes, yes, don't make me beg. Go on, dear.

Jocelyn (*recovering immediately and winking at the audience*): That night, Jerome stood in the dark shadow of the castle, under Blanche Fleur's window, shivering with cold and writing melancholy poetry...

Jerome enters as she is saying this.

Jerome (*writing and saying aloud*):

Oh fairest one,
Look what you've done,
My heart is shattering
My teeth are chattering...

Oh radiant pearl,
Whose hair doth curl,
My heart please take,
Give me a break.

Blanche appears on the battlements above Jerome. He does not see her, but she sees him. They sing their duet.

Jerome:

I sit by this window writing in vain
Of a love that I know but cannot arrange
With words that elude me

Words that confuse me
Of a love that I feel, a love oh so real.

Blanche:

I want to say yes, but I have to say no
It's always goodbye and never hello.
I want to be free and do just as I please
But the thought of these men makes me weak at the knees.

Jerome:

Doesn't she know, can she not see
The love that I hold is as true as can be,
This fatal attraction is dangerous, mad,
I'm happy, I'm desperate, I'm joyful, I'm sad.

Blanche:

I want to say yes but I have to say no,
I always say 'Stop!' when I want to say 'Go!'
This fear in my heart stands in my way
Whatever the reason, I just cannot play.

Both:

Do I remember this love from a past
What is this memory I cannot grasp,
What is this mystery I cannot see
Without its answer, can I be free?

At the end of the song, Jerome picks up a stone and wraps his poem around it.

Jerome: With the help of this stone I will gently toss this poem into Blanche Fleur's window and see if I can win her heart.

Jerome (*seeing Blanche on the battlements*): Blanche Fleur! It's you! Here, catch!

He throws, she tries to catch it but misses it. There is a sound of breaking glass and angry shouts of a man in pain. Blanche's father storms out of the castle with his guards.

von Schmusl (*rubbing his head*): So, it's you! I might have guessed. Listen, you Schatzl welp. I am a peace-loving man so I am going to give you one hour to get off my land, otherwise I will cut off your head with my own sword and send it to your father on a tray for breakfast. Now get out of here!

Jerome hesitates, defiantly blows a kiss to Blanche Fleur, then turns proudly on his heel and walks away.

Scene Five

In the woods, near Jerome's father's castle.

Jocelyn: Jerome wandered sadly through the forest. He was in no hurry to return to his father's castle. Hours passed and then, by chance, he met a band of gypsies.

Gypsies run onstage, setting up for a feast and party. Jerome wanders in.

Jasmine, a gypsy woman: Look, it's the young squire. It's Jerome von Schatzl.

Gypsy man: Dammit. Now our camp has been discovered. The baron will send his soldiers to drive us off in the morning. Ah, there's no peace for a gypsy.

Jasmine (*who clearly likes Jerome, touches his hand seductively*): Jerome, you won't tell your father we're here, will you?

Jerome (*who doesn't even know what's going on*): What? Er, yes... I mean no. Whatever you like.

Jasmine: We're having a little party. Would you like to join us?

Jerome: Umm... No, no thank you.

2nd Gypsy woman: Oh please, Jerome, spend a little time with us. It's not often we such noble company.

Jasmine: My name is Jasmine. Here, let me see your hand. Perhaps I can tell your future. Oh my! It seems that you are going on a long, long journey to a far away place where you will meet all kinds of strange and wonderful people.

Jerome: But I don't want to anywhere. I want to stay here and marry Blanche Fleur.

Gypsy man: Come, Jerome, don't worry about the future. Have a cup of wine and relax awhile.

Jerome takes it and sips it, absent-mindedly. Music begins to play and the gypsy women gradually seduce Jerome into the dance, which he begins to enjoy.

They say there was a garden
A long time ago
Where two folks ate an apple
That plunged them into woe.
But that's just an old story
That we don't believe,
The real thing happened later
Not to Adam, but to Eve...

When Eve ate the mango
Then she felt her juice

All she really needed
Was a good excuse.
When Eve ate the mango
Adam lost his wife.
Then he found a woman
Burning up with life.

Oh the mangoes,
Oh the mangoes,
Squeeze the juice of life.
Oh the mangoes,
Oh the mangoes,
Let there be lovers but never take a wife.

At the end of the dance, Jerome is embraced by Jasmine, then he suddenly remembers his broken heart.

Jerome: What am I doing? I can't fool around like this. I am in love.

Jasmine: In love? But that's wonderful!

Jerome: No, no, it's terrible. My father and Blanche Fleur's father hate each other, so they will never let us be together.

2nd Gypsy woman: Then stay with us and forget your troubles for a while.

Jasmine: Stay for one more dance. Just one more...

Jerome: No, no, I have to go. My life is in ruins.

Jasmine (*good naturedly*): Oh well, you heart breaker, go if you must. But here, take this gypsy ring with you... let me put it on your finger. There. May it bring you luck.

2nd Gypsy woman: I think he's going to need it.

Jerome: Goodbye, goodbye, and thank you.

Gypsy women (*sighing*): Goodbye Jerome.

Gypsy man (*looking after Jerome*): It's a hard life...being an intellectual. (*He says this with a deadpan face, then turns to the women and breaks into a laugh. They laugh, too, and playfully whack him for his sarcasm.*)

Scene Six:

Baron von Schatzl's castle.

Jocelyn: Back at the von Schatzl castle, the baron had just gone to bed when he was disturbed by an unexpected visitor.

Enter a messenger.

Messenger (*calling loudly*): Baron! Baron! Are you still awake? I have urgent news for you.

Angry cry offstage. Then the baron appears in his nightcap and nightshirt.

von Schatzl: What the devil! I thought I told you to stay in the forest and watch over my son?

Messenger: I did, sire. Then Baron von Schmusl came out of his castle and told Jerome that if he did not leave his land immediately he would cut off his head and send it to you for breakfast.

von Schatzl: This is the last straw! First I am humiliated by my own son, then von Schmusl makes a mockery of me and my family. Well, we shall see who eats who for breakfast. Guards! Guards!

Sleepy, half-dressed guards come rushing onstage.

von Schatzl: Sound the alarm. I want every able-bodied man in armor, ready to march within the hour.

Enter Jerome, deep in thought.

von Schatzl: Ha! There you are, my young dreamer. Well, I have some good news for you. I have decided to let you marry your precious Blanche Fleur.

Jerome (*delighted and bewildered*): Father, that's wonderful! But Baron von Schmusl will never give his consent.

von Schatzl: That small detail is about to be rectified. At dawn, I will storm von Schmusl's castle, personally skewer him on my sword, burn the place to the ground and drag that silly little bitch back here in chains and force her to marry you. Guards!

Jerome (*astonished*): Father, you've gone mad. You're crazy!

von Schatzl: On the contrary, you young wimp, I'm just coming to my senses. This is something I should have done a long time ago.

Jerome: I'm not going to let you do it. I'll ride right now and warn them.

von Schatzl: Fortunately, I have anticipated this weak-kneed response. Guards, seize him! (*Guards hesitate*) Yes, you heard me right, seize my son! (*Guards hold Jerome*). Find him some temporary accommodation in the dungeons till I return with his bride.

Jerome: Father, no! Listen to me...

von Schatzl: Take him away! The rest of you, follow me. We ride for von Schmusl's castle!

Soldiers (*enthusiastically*): Hurray! Victory to Baron von Schatzl! We ride! We ride!
Exit.

Scene Seven
The Dungeon
Jerome is escorted to the dungeon by two soldiers.

1st soldier: Sorry about this Jerome, but orders is orders.

Jerome: Listen, you're always saying that you're my friends. Then let me go. There's still time to warn Blanche Fleur and her family.

1st soldier: That's an easy way to lose my head.

2nd soldier: There's nothing we can do. Once your father is set on a course of action, there's no stopping him.

1st soldier: Okay, Jerome, in you go.

Jerome enters the cell. The soldiers leave.

Jerome: What strange and disastrous events have overtaken me. If my father succeeds, as I know he will, Blanche Fleur will hate me for the rest of her life, and who will blame her? (*looks at the ring*) Ha! And what have we here? A Gypsy ring to bring me luck in love! What a cruel joke to play on this poor fool. (*Looks more closely at it*). That's most peculiar. As I look at this red jewel, it seems to glow. Could it indeed possess some magic power? And there, inside the stone, some words are written: "Rub me." Rub me? Well, certainly I have nothing more to lose... (*rubs the stone*).

Noises, flashing lights, enter the Fairy Godmother, Henrietta Hassenbaum.

Henrietta: Jerome, my boy, this is a most happy day for you. You have summoned Henrietta Hassenbaum, the best-loved fairy godmother in the whole world, to help you in your time of deepest need.

Jerome: Good heavens, a real fairy godmother! But why are you walking so strangely?

Henrietta: You'd walk like this too if you'd been trapped in a magic ring for 700 years. That's the last time I ask a Zen master to show me the goose in the bottle trick.

More noises. Enter Waldo Wunderscheun.

Waldo: Jerome, my boy, this is your lucky day, for you have summoned the Great Waldo Wunderscheun to solve your problems.

Together: What can I do for you?

Henrietta: Waldo, this is intolerable! This is my assignment.

Waldo: Henrietta, my dear, your age must be affecting your brain. This job was given to me.

Henrietta: I don't know if you can read, but look, here is my authorization from the Fairy Godmother Guild: Job Number 9177. Romance in jeopardy. Sensitivity required - that's hardly your strong point, is it?

Waldo: Oooh, bitchy, bitchy!

Jerome: Just a moment, both of you! What is going on here? Am I to understand that you... one of you... is here to grant me a wish?

Henrietta & Waldo: That is correct. But this is my job....

Jerome: Wait! This is a miracle! You've come just in time. My wish is simple. Just bring Blanche Fleur here to me, right now.

Both: Sorry, can't do that.

Jerome: What? But you just said....

Henrietta: It's against the rules.

Waldo: She's right.

Henrietta (*checking book*): Here we are: "No third party shall be transported without his or her prior consent. Or, in the event of a young person under the age of 18 – that includes Blanche I'm afraid – without written consent from his or her parent or legal guardian. Original signature required. No xerox copies, no faxes, no pdf files, no emails allowed."

Jerome: Oh this is sheer torture. First I get a magic ring, then I get a wish, then it can't be done. My life has become a nightmare. I wish I was dead!

Waldo: Oh, that's easy!

Waldo makes a quick gesture, there is a bang, and Jerome crumples to the floor.

Scene Eight
The Underworld

Henrietta: Waldo, you killed him!

Waldo: Of course, that's what he wished.

Henrietta: He didn't mean it, you imbecile. You can be suspended for this!

Waldo: Oh well, everyone makes mistakes! There's no need to be so picky.

Henrietta: Picky! Do you know what's going to happen to Jerome now? You've sent his spirit to the Underworld. The zombies will claim him as one of their own.

Waldo: Ha, zombies! That's an old fairy tale.

Henrietta (*looking in her spell book*): I've got to find a spell that can rescue him before it's too late.

Waldo: Zombies! In 5000 years of supernatural adventures I've never met anything that even looks like a distant cousin of a zombie.

Spooky music starts to play and the light start to go down.

Waldo (*nervously*): Er... is there any special kind of music that goes with zombies?

Henrietta (*not looking up from her book*): Yes, this kind.

Waldo: Ah. And any special lighting effects?

Henrietta: It tends to get rather dark.

Waldo (*as the lights dim*): Like this?

Henrietta (*not looking up*): Yes, like this.

Waldo: And then what happens?

Henrietta: Usually, they call out the victim's name as they come to get him.

Spooky cries of "Jerome!" from offstage.

Waldo: Like that?

Henrietta (*still absorbed in studying her book and not realizing what is happening*): Yes, like that.

Waldo: Aha.

Now the stage is dark and the zombies come on, only their faces showing, illuminated in black light.

Waldo: And just supposing there were such things as zombies, what would they look like?

Henrietta: In the beginning, you just see the face and a few bones.

Waldo: Hmmm, interesting. And then what happens?

Henrietta: Well, as they get closer, you tend to see more of them.

Lights come up. Zombies are moving steadily towards Jerome.

Waldo: And if you wanted to stop a zombie, how would you do it?

Henrietta (*angrily*): With a spell of course, why else would I be thumbing through this book so fast? Haven't you get anything better to do.... (*turns around and sees zombies*) Eeek, zombies! Well, don't just stand there, keep them busy while I find the right spell...

Waldo (*worried*): Keep them busy? How do I do that? Shoo! Go away! (*He waves his hands in front of the zombies. They ignore him and all move relentlessly forward towards Jerome*) Haven't you found the spell yet?

Henrietta: It's difficult. I can't read Latin very well.

Waldo: What? I thought every fairy in the universe knew Latin.

Henrietta: No, I majored in Sumerian hieroglyphs.

Waldo: Just my luck. Hurry up, Henrietta, I can't hold them.

Henrietta: Let's try this one.... umma schummubba cummubba kebab.

No effect on zombies.

Waldo: Kebab? We don't need a Middle Eastern recipe!

Henrietta: You're negative attitude isn't exactly helping you know.

Waldo: Quick! They're going to get him, Henrietta. Do something!

Henrietta: Abba Schamabba Cammabba Kebbabba!

Jerome suddenly sits up in a state of shock.

Henrietta: That's it! I did it! Jerome, hold my hand and come with me... now!

Jerome leaps to Henrietta. She puts him behind her. Suddenly, the zombies can't see him. She edges around the zombies toward the exit.

Henrietta: Waldo, keep these guys busy for another five minutes.

Waldo: But where are you taking him?

Henrietta: Somewhere that's safe from zombies and genies. Goodbye!

As Henrietta and Jerome leave, the zombies suddenly all turn and start walking towards the genie.

Zombies (*together*): Waldo!

Waldo: Whoa! Easy guys! I'm a genie, a bad genie! I can hurt you! Shoo! Go away! Help! Henrietta, wait for me!

He dodges around the zombies and heads for the exit. Black out.

Scene Nine

The Osho Commune in Pune: Mariam Canteen Dining Area

Alex: Zombies, Jocelyn? I didn't know you were interested in zombies!

Jocelyn: Neither did I. You know, Alex, it's a funny thing, but this script took on a life of its own. It started off as my idea, but then kind of wrote itself...

Alex: Hmm, interesting. What happens next?

Jocelyn: Now it gets even more strange. Just watch...

Lights come up slowly on the eating area. Sound of birds singing. Jerome is sitting in a chair, slumped over a table, asleep. There are three other tables, with chairs.

A female sannyasin in a maroon robe enters slowly with a tray of food. She looks around, then sits at one of the tables (*this part is played by Rosita, the Mexican maid*). Meditatively, she starts to eat. Two female sannyasins come in, talking in Italian. One of them is Jasmine, the gypsy woman who met Jerome in the woods. The other is the second gypsy woman. Jasmine is telling the other about her date last night (*in Italian*). They sit at one of the tables near Jerome. They notice Jerome.

Jasmine: You tell him...

2nd Italian: No, you. Go on...

Jasmine: Shall I?

2nd Italian: Yes. I'll watch.

Jasmine walks over and gently taps Jerome on the shoulder:

Jasmine: Excuse me, swami.

Jerome wakes with a start. He doesn't have a clue where he is.

Jasmine (*in a kindly way*): This is a maroon robe area. You probably just arrived, so it's okay today. Just remember next time, okay?

Jerome: What?

Jasmine: Robe. A maroon robe?

Jerome: Don't I know you from somewhere?

Jasmine: Me? Last year in Pune maybe? You were here, this time last year?

Jerome: That face....

Jasmine: Maybe, a lot of people come through here every year. Bye.

Jasmine goes and sits with her friend.

Jasmine (to her friend): He's a funny one, hmm?

Enter two Indian sannyasins, talking in Hindi with occasional words in English like "guarding." They look around and then join Jasmine and her friend.

Enter another female sannyasin, who joins Rosita at her table.

Female sannyasin: Hi! How was your past life session?

Rosita; Oh great. Fantastic! You know I was a famous actress in the eighteenth century. I always had a feeling I'd been someone like that...

Enter three group leaders, intensely discussing the events in their workshops. They start off in French or German and then break into English.

1st group leader: Well, I knew it was going to happen. I just didn't know it would affect her so strongly.

2nd group leader: It was amazing. When she let go into it, the energy was just huge.

3rd group leader: Yes, it just shows how much emotion gets locked up in projections...

Jerome (*looking around*): Where am I? What is this place? Who are these people?

3rd group leader: I think this guy may be a little cuckoo. Maybe we should call somebody?

1st group leader: No, I'll check him out.

1st group leader goes over to Jerome, stands next to him, closes her eyes, and does an energy reading, scanning his chakras with one hand while holding her other hand in the air.

1st group leader: It's okay. he's fine. Just a little jet lagged.

Enter Henrietta Hassenbaum, the fairy godmother.

Jerome: Henrietta, it's you! Where am I? People in heaven wear white robes, don't they?

Henrietta: I have no idea, I've never been there.

Jerome: What happened? What did you do?

Henrietta: Well, Jerome, I've brought you 500 years into the future to the best psychotherapy institute on the planet. I thought it was time to take care of your fixation with unattainable women.

Jerome: You what? You ripped me away from my one true love to send me to this... this funny farm?

As he is speaking, Blanche Fleur enters, dressed in a maroon robe, with a tray of food, walking very meditatively, with an "in silence" button on her robe.

Jerome (*starting to get up*): Blanche Fleur...

Henrietta (*holding him down*): You can't talk to her now, she's in silence... But don't worry, you'll see her later. Now listen, Jamie, I don't have much time, so I can't explain the whole thing. Here's your passport, your gate pass, some travelers checks, three hundred rupees in cash, and the key to your hotel room. Oh yes... and this... (*puts a necklace with a locket of Osho marble around his neck*)

Jerome: What's this?

Henrietta: Osho marble. Something to keep you out of trouble, or in it, depending on how you look at it. Now, you'd better go over to the Welcome Center right away. They'll tell you everything you want to know... I really have to be going now... bye.

Jerome: Henrietta, wait!

But she has gone. Jerome walks downstage, looking in bewilderment at all the things Henrietta has given to him. Everyone else leaves the stage, except Jamsine, who comes downstage after Jerome. Behind them, the scene is being changed from Mariam Canteen to the Welcome Center.

Jasmine: Swami...

Jerome (*absently*): Hmmm?

Jasmine: You just arrived, yes?

Jerome: I guess you could put it like that.

Jasmine (*pulling a robe out of her bag*): Look, I've got a robe here. I washed it for my boyfriend but he suddenly decided to go to Goa, so he doesn't need it for a while. If you like, I can borrow it to you until you buy some for yourself. I think it's your size.

Jerome: Ah. I should put this on?

Jasmine nods. Jerome can't seem to find the right way to do it. Laughing, Jasmine helps him put on his robe over his costume.

Jasmine: Yes, very good! You look very spiritual now!

Jerome: I think I'm supposed to go to the Welcome Center.

Jasmine: You know where that is? No? Okay, I take you, then I have to go to work.

Jerome: What do you do?

Jasmine: Oh, I repair computers in Computer Support, in Omar Khyyam....

Jerome: Computers...?

They walk offstage.

Scene Ten

The Welcome Center

The Welcome Center team comes onstage with various signs, notices, chai and coffee urns, etc. They are getting ready for the newcomers. The Welcome Centre staff are cheerful, fresh and completely unfazed by anything that is said by the new arrivals.

1st Staff: Okay, everybody ready? Let's welcome the newcomers.

Jasmine comes in with Jerome.

Jasmine: Here we are. They are opening now. Take care. Bye, bye.

Jerome: Thank you!

1st Staff: Hi. Where are you coming from?

Jerome: I've been travelling for 500 years.

1st Staff: Wow. Come on in. (*to another member of the Welcome Team*) Book this guy an individual session for a foot massage. His feet must be killing him.

More newcomers arrive, one by one, in street clothes.

1st Staff: (*to the next arrival*) Welcome. Where have you been?

Woman (*wearily*): I've been in a relationship for 35 years – and I'm finished!

1st Staff: Oh my goodness!

2nd Staff: Looks like you got here just in time.

3rd Staff: Sit down.

4th Staff: Have some tea.

1st Sannyasin (*to the next newcomer*): Hi, where have you been?

Man (*holding his head in despair*): I've been a professor of philosophy for 25 years and I've got a permanent migraine.

1st Staff: Wow! Book this guy for Fresh Beginnings immediately.

2nd Staff: Here, have a cup of chai.

3rd Staff: Sit down, relax.

1st Staff: Where are you coming from?

Woman (*disoriented*): I've been doing Transcendental Meditation for seven years and I can't stop repeating my mantra.

3rd Staff: Hmm. Gibberish meditation might help. Come and have some chai.

1st Staff: Hi. Where have you been?

Man (*blessing everyone*): I've been a guru in California for just over a week....I bless you...god bless you...blessings and more blessings....

3rd Staff: Oh good heavens! Poor guy.

4th Staff: That's a tough one.

1st Staff: Hi. Where have you been?

Woman (*hysterically*): I've been the wife of a politician for 24 hours!

3rd Staff: Okay, come over here.

4th Staff: Have some herb tea.

1st Staff: I think that's all for the moment.

Jerome: Excuse me, but I'm really confused. What exactly is this place all about?

1st Staff: I know, it is a little confusing at first, but don't worry, we have a song that tells you everything you need to know. Is the choir ready?

Sannyasin choir: Ready.

1st Staff: It goes like this:

Sannyasins:

We welcome you all to the Osho Commune

A mysterious place

It's one of a kind

A place to remember your buddhahood

By watching your ego and losing your mind.

Newcomers:

But how shall we do this, oh where to begin?

When the mind is so busy

And the body so tight?

Sannyasins:

Jump in at once, don't hesitate,

To bring in the light, just meditate.

Osho Commune

Dynamic will clear out your tension and stress,

Osho Commune

And help you to see that the world's in a mess!

Osho Commune

And then Kundalini will help you so much,

Osho's Commune

Even the Germans, the Jews and the Dutch!

Osho's Commune

Osho's Commune

Osho's Commune...

1st Staff (*at end of song*): See? It's very simple.

2nd Staff: Okay, your time. This way please, everybody. Now over here you see Gautama the Buddha Auditorium and the world's largest mosquito net....

Newcomers exit. Staff also exit.

Scene Eleven

Zazen Meditation Group: a group room in the Commune.

Slowly the Zazen group participants walk onstage in a line, carrying their meditation stools, chanting softly. Blanche Fleur is part of the group. With them is a group leader, wearing a black robe. This group leader is the same person who plays Hilde von Schmusl, Blanche Fleur's mother.

Group: Watching the wall... watching the wall... watching the wall...

They sit down and look straight ahead.

Together they sing:

Watching the wall is just watching our thoughts
On the movie screen of our mind.
There's nowhere to go and there's nothing to do
But to watch the whole movie unwind.

Watching the wall, watching the wall
The bugs are a'crawlin, the cuckoos a'callin,
Watching the wall, watching the wall,
When will it be time for tea?

1st Voice: My body is aching
2nd Voice: My heart's really breaking
3rd Voice: My boyfriend is out on a date.
4th Voice: Is this meditation?
5th Voice: I miss celebration!
6th Voice: I'm simply too scared to relate.

Watching the wall is just watching our thoughts
On the movie screen of our mind.
There's nowhere to go and there's nothing to do
But to watch the whole movie unwind.

Watching the wall, watching the wall,
What is this silence? This stillness inside us?
Watching the mind, dropping the mind,
So simple, so natural, so free.

At the end of the song there is a bell, and everyone except Blanche Fleur gets up, slowly and meditatively, and walks out. The group leader comes over to Blanche Fleur and sits beside her.

Group leader: How is the meditation going for you?

Blanche Fleur: It is always the same. I see the same pictures on the wall, over and over again... There is a castle, and a young man, and somehow I am attracted to him but there is darkness, a great darkness all around us, and a feeling of doom.

Group leader: Can you just allow it to be there, and watch it from a distance, as part of your meditation?

Blanche Fleur: No, not really. It is too powerful, it draws me in, like a magnet. I feel trapped... helpless.

Group leader: Hmm. May I make a suggestion?

Blanche Fleur: Yes, of course.

Group leader: My feeling is that, tomorrow, when the group ends, you could book a Past Life Maxi Session. I think that may trigger some memory that will give you more understanding, more insight into what is gripping you.

Blanche Fleur: Okay, I'll try it. Thank you.

Group leader: You're welcome, now let's get some lunch.

They both exit.

Scene Twelve

On a walkway somewhere in the Commune.

Enter two male sannyasins, deep in discussion. These are played by Baron von Schmusl and Baron von Schatzl.

von Schatzl: Look, it's not that I want to take the space away from your department. It's not something against you personally. It's just that Computer Support needs another room, otherwise we won't be able to service the new generation of desktops, and the only room with a UPS hook-up is the one right next to our existing facility.

von Schmusl: Which happens to be our session room.

von Schatzl: Right.

von Schmusl: Well, it won't work for us. We've spent the last six months trying to figure out where to put the massage session room. You wouldn't believe the space shortage - every department needs more space.

von Schatzl: You know, somehow I feel it's not just the space that's the issue here. I feel there's also a personal element in whatever's going on between us.

von Schmusl: Well, you do tend to push my buttons. Whenever I talk with you I feel that I have to be really strong or else I'm going to get run over by you.

von Schatzl: That's funny... I feel the same thing about you.

Enter Jerome, looking lost.

Jerome: Excuse me, can you tell me the way to Multiversity Plaza?

von Schatzl: Yes, it's back there, to the right.

von Schmusl: Are you okay? You look a little spaced out.

Jerome: Yes, I've been here for a week and I can't seem to shake off this feeling of disorientation.

von Schatzl: Looks to me like you should do a Zen martial arts program. Get some grounding in your hara, young man.

Jerome: I keep think I'm dreaming and I'm going to wake up and find myself back in the Middle Ages.

von Schatzl: Jump in the swimming pool, swim a few laps, that'll wake you up.

Jerome: I tried that. It really feels like I'm only half here. I keep thinking about Blanche Fleur...

von Schmusl (*somehow moved by the name*): Blanche Fleur?

Jerome: Yes, back then... in the Middle Ages... I was in love with her.

von Schatzl: Ah, relationships! Do Dynamic Meditation – for about a year.

Jerome: She seems to be here, although I never get a chance to speak with her. But really she's back there, although I never got a chance to speak with her then, either! If only we could somehow connect...

von Schmusl (*to Jerome*): I don't know if it will help, but I've heard there's a Past Life Maxi Session scheduled for tomorrow. Maybe that will help you clear up this problem. Would you like me to take you to the Plaza? We can see if there's a vacancy.

Jerome: Thank you, yes. I've got to do something or I'm going to go crazy.

von Schmusl: Okay. Let's go. (*to von Schatzl*) I guess we can sort this out later.

von Schatzl: Sure, I'll give you a call this afternoon.

Exit von Schmusl and Jerome.

von Schatzl (*shaking his head*): Past lives! Ha! A lot of esoteric nonsense...

Exits.

Scene Thirteen

The Past Life Maxi Session: a group room in the Commune.

Enter Waldo, with a large photo of Osho. He is about to hang it on the wall, when he looks around, expecting interruption.

Waldo: Well, isn't anybody going to tell me I can't put it here? (*nothing happens*). Oh well then (*he hangs the portrait*).

Genie: I knew it would come to this one day. I mean, I've spent the last 5000 years interfering with other people's lives, and it's been fun, it really has. Oooh, the trouble I've caused! The laughs I've had! But coming here, I realize that I've been totally fixated on 'the other'. I haven't looked at myself at all. Of course, there's only one solution: go in...drop the mind...become enlightened... become an enlightened Master... and then I can really cause trouble for everyone! Ha, ha!

1st Assistant: Okay, everything ready? Here comes the Past Life team.

Exit genie and mattress crew. Enter three sannyasins in black robes. Deep Buddhist chanting booms out from the sound system. Soft lighting. Illuminated crystals. The black robe team stands in a line, facing the audience.

Group leader: Okay, let's run a systems check through the chakras. Ready? Eyes closed, legs shoulder width apart, breathing slowly and deeply, centering in the belly, connecting with the first chakra...

2nd leader: Check. Connecting with the first.

3rd leader: Check. Tuned in and vibrating at 3,000 megacycles.

1st Leader: Opening the doorway to the second chakra, breathing and moving together.

2nd leader: Check. Moving up. Entering the second chakra.

3rd leader: Check. Vibrating at 4500 megacycles and holding.

1st leader: Locked in on the second. Opening the door to the third chakra and preparing for the jump to the astral plane.

2nd leader: Doorway open.

3rd leader: Severe disturbance on the astral plane. Major turbulence ahead.

The three group leaders start to wobble and sway, as they try and stabilize the force.

1st leader: Anchor the space. Hold the rotation at 5000 megacycles.

2nd leader: Rotation not holding... major disturbance!

3rd leader: Falling off to 4000, 3800... falling fast!

1st leader: Emergency procedure: access the hara and ground the energy.

All (deep chant accompanied by pelvic hip thrust) Hoo! Hoo! Hoo! Hoo!

2nd leader: Stabilizing in the third.

3rd leader: 5000 megacycles and holding.

2nd leader: Check. Anchored in the third. Access to the astral plane secured. No disturbance.

1st leader: Wow, that was touch and go for a while. (*calls offstage*). Okay, we're ready for the first two people, you can send them in.

Blanche Fleur and Jerome come in from either side. They see each other at the same time.

Jerome and Blanche Fleur: You!

1st leader: Good morning. Welcome to the Past Life Maxi Session. There is really nothing for me to explain. Simply take the positions which are given to you, tune in, and watch (*two of the group leaders show Jerome and Blanche Fleur where to stand*). Ready? (*They nod*).

1st leader: Silence please. Okay, here we go...

Soft, spacy music as the person symbolizing the Wheel of Time and Death walks into the center of the room.

Singers:

On the wings of time

We are carried, we are carried

On the wings of time

We are carried, back to the Wheel.

Pulled by our desire

We are carried, we are carried

Back into the fire

We are carried, back to the Wheel.

Give me one more chance
Take me back there, take me back there
To fulfill romance
Take me back, back to the Wheel.
Love will bring me home
No more sorrow, no more sorrow,
Don't leave me all alone
Take me back, back to the Wheel.

Back to the Wheel
Back to the Wheel
Again and again we go back to the Wheel
Back to the Wheel
How does it feel
Again and again to go back to the Wheel

Jerome and Blanche Fleur watch as their past lives are acted out before their eyes. Four scenes are acted, showing them as children, as lovers, as husband and wife, as mother and child. As the last scene fades, Jerome and Blanche Fleur walk slowly toward each other, as if seeing each other for the first time.

Jerome: I knew it! I knew there was a deep and lasting connection between us.

Blanche Fleur: I feel ashamed.

Jerome: Ashamed? Why?

Blanche Fleur: I've been wearing such a mask. I've been playing such a game with you, with all men.

Jerome: But that's over now. Blanche Fleur. Will you be my beautiful princess and marry me?

Blanche Fleur: Marry you? No, Jerome. No, I won't.

Jerome: What? After all we've been through?

Blanche Fleur: Jerome, what I am beginning to experience here is a totally new vision of life, and I want to be free, so that I can explore all of it - so that I can explore all of me.

Jerome: Don't you feel anything for me?

Blanche Fleur ((breaking into a big smile and opening her arms): I love you, you fool! I just don't want to marry you.

As they embrace, the voices of Baron von Schatzl and Baron von Schmusl are heard thundering through the room.

von Schatzl: My son will never marry a von Schmusl. Do you hear me? Never! I'll see the whole countryside in flames first! I'll never give my consent to it...never, never, never!

von Schmusl: Blanche Fleur, how can you betray your father and want to marry von Schatzl's son? That man is a maniac! A killer in royal colors, a wolf that eats the innocent and the weak...I can never let you marry his son... never, never, never!

Lights flicker, everyone staggers as if hit by a blast of wind. Henrietta Hassenbaum comes rushing on.

Henrietta: Something's gone wrong. The time jump into the future is failing. We must all go back to the past and forget everything!

Blanche Fleur: No, no! I don't want to go back!

Henrietta: You must! You have no choice! I'm so sorry, I feel I've let you all down...!

Everyone is crying out in alarm, as the lights dim, and the music rises, marked mainly by a rhythmic marching sound of a military drum.

Scene Fourteen

Outside Baron von Schmusl's castle.

There are drums, alarms, the sound of people shouting.

Enter the Gypsies, fleeing for their lives before the advancing soldiers of Baron von Schatzl. Some have crude bandages, covered with blood. They are seeking refuge in Baron von Schmusl's castle.

Gypsies: von Schatzl is coming! von Schatzl is coming!

Two soldiers run out from von Schmusl's castle.

Jasmine: Baron von Schatzl is coming with his soldiers! They have burned our camp and stolen our horses!

2nd Gypsy woman: Let us into your castle, before we are all killed!

1st Soldier: There's no room for any stinking Gypsies in this castle.

2nd Soldier: Get back in the woods where you belong.

Jasmine (angrily): You heartless pigs! You spit on us and pretend that we are lepers because we do not belong to your society, but you are the real criminals! You are the real thieves! You steal everything from us in the name of the law and call it justice!

1st Soldier (threateningly): Go! get out of here, before we finish you off!

The Gypsies head for the exit, but then look ahead, gasp and shrink back. Baron von Schatzl's men are approaching. The Gypsies rush downstage and cower in a huddle, trapped between the two armies. More men are pouring out of von Schmusl's castle. Soon the two armies are facing each other across the stage, with the two barons leading them, with the Gypsies trying hard not to get in the way.

von Schatzl's men: Death to Baron von Schmusl!

von Schmusl's men: Death to Baron von Schatzl!

Sudden lighting change, tinkling of bells. Jerome and Blanche Fleur walk onstage, between the two armies, holding hands, in maroon robes. Henrietta follows them, and moves quickly behind the armies to join Alex and Jocelyn.

Jasmine: Jerome, save us!

They run to him and huddle behind him.

Jerome: I doubt if I can even save myself.

Blanche Fleur: Jerome, I don't understand. How is it that we can still remember the future but these people cannot?

Jerome: Well, I guess it's because I hung onto my Osho marble with one hand, and you with the other, and said to myself "Jerome, remember you are a Buddha." But I don't think it can help us now.

von Schatzl: Jerome, I don't know how you got out of your prison cell in my castle, but if you think you can stop this you're making a big mistake!

von Schmusl: Blanche Fleur! Come here, immediately!

Blanche Fleur: No, father. I no longer belong to you or your family.

Jerome (*to the men with von Schatzl*): I want you all to know that I am against this stupidity that has been created by my father. I will not fight with you.

von Schatzl: I'm warning you Jerome, get out of my way!

von Schmusl: If you don't come here, Blanche Fleur, I cannot save you! This fight is destined to happen.

von Schatzl's men (*getting ready to charge*): Victory to Baron von Schatzl!

von Schmusl's men (*readying themselves*): Death to the invaders!

Alex Clutchit leaps up from his seat.

Alex: Jocelyn! What the hell is going on! You can't let the story end like this - in a tragic bloodbath.

Jocelyn: I'm sorry Alex, but I don't seem to have any choice. The script is out of my control.

Alex: Henrietta, do something!

Henrietta: It's beyond my power to interfere.

Alex: Goddamit, give me that wand!

He snatches the wand and grabs the TV remote, then makes a violent gesture with the wand. Instantly the huge TV video screen is filled with charging football players, smashing into each other. The armies are astonished and overcome with fear. Everyone falls to their knees and starts praying, except Jerome and Blanche Fleur. Alex rushes into the middle of the stage, puts the video on freeze-frame and cuts the sound.

Alex: I am the god of the New York Giants and you have screwed up bad!

Everyone is looking at him, scared to death, as if Judgement Day has come.

Alex: You have broken the sacred commandment of Hollywood that there should always be a happy ending! And now you are going to be punished!

von Schmusl and von Schatzl: Spare us!

Jocelyn (*coming to center stage*): Alex, wait! I know you're trying to help, but this isn't the way to end the story.

Alex: What do you mean? I just stopped a war!

Jocelyn: I know, but you're still proving that might is right. It's just that your might is bigger than their might - or so they think.

Alex: Ssssh, don't tell them it's only a video or we'll spend the rest of our lives in a castle dungeon.

Jocelyn: I think I have the answer.

She goes to the two barons and offers her hand, raising them up from the ground to a standing position.

Jocelyn: Gentlemen, listen to me for a moment. In every person's life there comes a moment - a moment when we can see a vision of life that is greater than our own beliefs. In that precious moment we have a chance, a chance to finish with the past and open into something completely new. Do you have any idea what I'm talking about?

The Barons (*mystified*): No.

Jocelyn: Okay, let me put it like this...

Music starts and Jocelyn sings:

Sometimes life gives us a chance
At unlived ambition, unfinished romance
To do what was left undone
To sing what was left unsung
So many lifetimes ago...

Oh life! Giver of mystery
The heart full of longing, the spirit is free.
The wheel of time and death turns round
Until the keys of life are found.
And so life gives us a chance...

Everyone:
Oh yes, there is a way through
Yes to this moment will bring something new
The peaks and the valleys on the way
The landscape changing every day,
Once more life gives us a chance.
Again, life gives us a chance,
Life gives us this chance,
Life gives us this chance!

At the end of the song, Jerome and Blanche Fleur come forward to join with their fathers.

Jerome (*to his father*): Father, who is this woman?

von Schatzl: I don't know, but what she is saying has a profound effect on me. (*to Jocelyn*) Tell me, what is this new moment of which you speak so movingly?

Jocelyn: It's a moment when you just drop the whole past and be completely open to the unexpected.

von Schatzl (*drops his sword and stands with open hands*): Like this?

Jocelyn: Yes.

Everyone (*doing the same*): Like this?

Jocelyn: Yes, like this! Just open and available to whatever happens next.

Everyone is silent, waiting. There is a moment of expectation, then Waldo rushes onstage.

Waldo: Hey, Henrietta, I found out where the spell went wrong!

Henrietta: Waldo!

Waldo (*showing her a spell book*): Yes, look here, you didn't read the fine print, silly. It says that you can make the jump to Pune only if there are at least 50 people celebrating together.

von Schatzl: Pune?

Jerome: Oh yes, father. You'd love it. There's a men's group where they all go into a sweat lodge and sing and sweat and do all kinds of macho stuff.

Blanche Fleur: Yes, let's all go to Pune!

Jasmine: And get out of this horrible place!

All: Yes! Take us with you!

Jocelyn: Henrietta, Waldo, can you arrange the transportation?

Henrietta: Yes, If all of these people (*indicating the audience*) can sing with us, we'll create enough energy to make the time jump.

Jocelyn: Well, why not make my opening song the closer as well?

Alex: Right! That song you were all singing when I came home tonight!

Jocelyn: Okay, everyone, ready?

All: yes!

Everyone sings:

Just as long as we dance, dance, dance

And throw our hearts to the sky

Just as long as we sing our song

Without any reason why...

(repeat this verse 3 or 4 times and then finish with a flourish)

End