

THE PRINCESS WHO COULDN'T SING

A mini-musical by Anna Rugis

(From a story by Jean Kenward)

Cast of characters:

Story teller/ Doctor
The Queen
The King
The Princess who can't sing

Story teller / doctor: Far away and a great deal further,
Than the end of Everything
Far away and a great deal further
There's a land of --- Something.
Which you have never heard of , have never heard of -

Queen and Princess: Tell the story, tell the story now.

Story teller / doctor: Listen now and I will tell
How the story goes and what befell
In the land of Something long ago
When a Princess tried to sing -

Queen: Oh no!

Story teller / doctor: When a Princess tried to sing -

Queen: Oh dear, I think she's going to try to sing again.

Story teller / doctor : In the Land of Something.

King: Quick give her a jigsaw puzzle.

Queen: I'll pop down acid pick her up a video - (*Princess starts humming horribly*) -
Oh deary me, I think it's too late.

Princess: What a glorious day, I feel like singing my head off, it must be the warm
weather. (*sings quite badly*) La la la lalala la, la la la lalala la, laaah...

King: My sweet little daughter, can I interest you in my new 15 piece pizza puzzle,
or.... perhaps a cheese sandwich would go down better?

Queen: Dearest, we'll have to call the doctor again. She'll damage her
epiglottis if we dont DO something.

King: Ho hum, here we go again. (*calls*) DOCTOR, DOOOOCTOR --

(CUE MUSIC)

(*Doctor hears the call and leaps onto his transportation, instruments at the ready. Singing while he pedals furiously in their direction.*)

Queen: Shall we try the brown paper bag til he gets here?
(*Tries to get the princess to look into the bottom of a paper bag as this usually intrigues her enough to stop her singing*)

King: Ah, I see him speeding to our aid on his Vicious Cycle.

Doctor: (*singing as he rides towards them*)

Everybody thinks I'm a helper
Everybody thinks I do good
Keeping all the muscles in order
Helping bodies do what they should
Pushing pretty pills for all problems
Trying to preserve you from pain
Only 30 seconds to listen
I would like to see you again.

Doctor: Regal Royals, I hear your call, pardon the perspiration, what's the problem?
Is it a prolapse perhaps? I hope not plague. Poultice plaster or penicilin on
prescription if needed. Let me take your pulse, Sire.

King: It's the Princess, my man, a problem of decibels. Do what you must.

Princess: Oh, hello doctor, look at the lovely clear sky, I wish I was a bird, I'd fly...
and sing.....la la lala laa

Queen: Please...how much mo-o-re can a mother take?

Doctor: It could be poisoning...hmmm... though she certainly not paralytic
(*tries to take her pulse as she dances about*) Please Princess...possess yourself! You seem
so pent up... let me palpate your pulse.

King: Pills... dont you have pills to hand, young man?

Doctor: I do indeed, Sire, and my prognosis calls for those particular
pink ones I prescribed previously for your royal self, and which you
have run out of, I presume. Fortunately, as a precaution, I put another pack in
my pocket before I came. Never fear, the doctor's here, open wide, my
Princess, you'll feel perfectly normal quite soon, apart from the twitching.
Hmm... in fact, it might be prudent to take two.

Princess: (*becomes subdued but twitches occasionally*)
Daddy... where did you put that puzzle? (*Looks for it everywhere.*)

Queen: (*Seeing the doctor out the door.*)
Ah...the relief! My ears can breathe again.

(*King and Queen see the doctor off and collapse onto their thrones. The doctor goes off
with his Vicious Cycle and rests under a tree. Takes out some promotionbal literature to
read*)

King: (*patting the Queen's hand*)

There there, my dear, we must bear up. She'll probably grow out of it.

Princess: (*finds the puzzle and wails dolefully. Throws the pizza puzzle in their direction and walks into the audience*)

That stupid puzzle...it's a ROUND one...there's no CORNers. Finding the corners is the BEST BIT. It's BORing with no corners. Well then... I'm going outside for a walk. (*puts her hand to her brow*) But I feel sort of dopey...like I can't seem to remember something. I was happy... and...I wanted to DO something... or GO somewhere... but...what could it have been?

(*To the audience*)

Can anybody help me remember? I feel a sort of twitching in my throat...

(*twitches and starts to try to hum a little*)

Was it something to do with birds perhaps?

(*tries a few notes*)

Oh...oh...I think it's coming back to me...yes, yes, yes, I really really really want to sing. Thats it!

(*To the children in the audience.*)

Don't let me forget again, will you.

(*wanders off into her own world again humming louder and louder*)

Hmm, hmmm, hmmmmmm... it's still a perfectly lovely day... just the kind of day to sing, sing, sing... like anything. (*sings loudly and horribly*)

La la la la lalalalalaaaa

Q: (*covering her ears*)

O0000h...here we go again! (*yells*) DOCTOR (*sadly and less loudly*) King, my dear King...(loudly again) DOCTOOOOOR

(Doctor harkens, drops his promotional literature and leaps onto his vicious cycle, stethoscope trailing in the breeze - cycle sound)

K : (Looking the wrong way.) Dont panic, Madam, I see him in the distance. (Q. starts to get a bit hysterical)

P : (hearing the doctor's music) Oh no, not the pink pills again. (to the audience) tell him to go away! I'm happy, I'm quite well, I WANT to sing. Why wont they let me? Please help a poor princess, tell them I'm fine. (interacts with audience)

K : Now, my sweet darling, Relax, it's all for your good. You must be preserved from vociferous vocal ramifications. Be brave - take your medicine!

D : Princess, listen to your wise father and your even wiser Physician. Think of the future and your poor mother's pericardium. (tries to make her take the pills - she struggles and escapes - hiding behind her hysterical mother)

P : If it's a problem it must be hereditary, I think the Queen needs them more than I do.

D : (changing course and now wrestling with the Queen) Madam; with all due respect, your daughter speaks wisely, we must go to the root of the problem. Preventitive practice, that's the new pilosophy. You're looking very puffy, hold still or there might be a perforation.

P : (strongly)This is ridiculous , King, I appeal to you to think this thing out. (a little child again) Daddy, please don't shut me up again. (strongly) I'm a normal growing girl, (uncertainly)I think?

K : Dear child, I believe I'm beginning to hear what you're saying.

(CUE MUSIC)

(sings) She's my daughter, She's my pearl

She's my lovely little girl

I must guide her on her way

And protect her come what may.

Because she is ----(Daddy's girl)

Yeah, she's my baby -----

(Daddy's girl) Definitely ----(Daddy's girl) She's Daddy's girl.

P : (In her awful voice.)

Yes, because I'm ----

(Daddy's girl) He's my Daddy --- (Daddy's girl) It's for ever --- (Daddy's girl)

Yeah, I'm Daddy's girl.

K: Well, I think that this is indeed a tricky one and I'm going to have to THINK -
reeeeeeally haaaard. (sound effects of deep thinking)

Right - I've got it!!! The Princess is emotionally exhausted and needs to recuperate in the
country air. There - I have decreed, as a king and father must.

Q : O000h. (faints)

K: (To the doctor) Please pass the princess puzzle. (administers it to Q)

P : (Excitedly.) Daddy! a perfect solution! I LOVE all those birds and trees and stuff. It's
bound to sort me out one way or another. D : King, I protest though I bow to your authority.
If you are purposeful in this course may I propose the peaceful home of my imperturbable
parents as a panacea. They live in the proximity.

K : Perfect. Will you hurry to them and ask their permission.

D : I will proceed there at once.

P : I'm so excited. I'm going to pack my princess pouch. LA LA Laaaa la La.

(King and Queen rush around the back changing their smocks backside front and inside out
- sticking their crowns in their pockets. As the doctor arrives at the door they are there to
greet him.)

M : Ah, our dear son; what a joy to see you.

D : Parents!

F : We could say it's a pleasure. What is that fine vehicle you have purchased for your
professional purposes. Might a poor peon such as myself have a little try on it, do you think?

D : I come to ask a particular favour knowing what pleasant people you are.

M: What is it, son, - yes, we're always happy to help where we can.

D : Can the Princess come to stay for a country recuperation?

M : Of course she can! But tell her she won't need her crown.

F : Do all you pisychians drive this kind of thing ?

D : Father, it's Fiz -ychians FIZ - ychians.

F: Sorry son, FUR - pisychians, silly me!

M: See you shortly, sonny.

D: Bye Mom.

(After dragging Dad of the vicious cycle he pedals frantically back to the palace to be
greeted by the waiting royals who have scuttled round the back again changing their clothes
back as they go)

D : Good news, plans are complete. Princess are you packed? Let us go at once. Climb
aboard. It's not as precarious as it looks. I'll do the pedalling.

P : Bye Mom and Dad.

Q : Dont forget your pills dear!

P : No you keep them.(throws them to Q.)

Q : You take your pills please! (throws them back)

P: Daddy!!!! (throws them to him)

K: (sighs) Well we might need them at that. (looking at his wife anxiously he puts them in his pocket)

P : Can I pedal the Vicious Cycle?

(As the doctor doubles the princess to the cottage, the K. and Q. rush round the back as before to greet them breathlessly) K I F : Palpitations - I better pop one myself. (takes a pill)

D : Certainly not. Pile on the back, Princess. A man in my position always pedals. Sit back and enjoy the panorama. (They arrive at the doctor's childhood home.)

M : Hello son. Thanks for the delivery. See you later. (sends him off and takes princess in hand) Well dear, as you must be tired from the trip you'd better go to bed early. There is a nightingale that comes to our window every night to sing to us. She'll put you to sleep nicely. You'll like that.

P : Wonderful, I LOVE birds, specially when they sing - LALALALaaaaaa La

M : Aah, I think I see the problem.

F : I can hear it from over here too. So much for modern medicine, my dear.

M : Time to quiet down now princess. You can sleep here by the window. Sweet dreams. (CUE MUSIC)

(P lies down and M hums the nightingale song in the dark with the lighted candle by the window)

NEXT MORNING

(M gets P up.)

M: Good morning Princess. Pop the crown, you can help me with the housework today.

P : What's housework, Mum?

M : You'll find out. Just listen to my instructions carefully and you'll get the hang of it. First, you can sweep the crumbs off the table. You'll find the brush in the work box.

P : (singing pretty horribly while she works, she rummages in box comes out with a broom tries to sweep the table - knocking over the condiments) Whoa - STRIKE - this is better than bowling.

M : Try again dear. Easy does it. That one works better on the floor you'll find.

P: NOW I get it. (sweeps it all over the cottage and finally over to father)

F: I think I'm the one who's got it now. (dusting himself off)

M : Now that that's done, you can wash the windows. Look in the work box and get a cloth for the wiping and a bowl for the water. (goes to it - water going everywhere)

P : This is fun. Much more physical than jigsaw puzzles.

M : You might try a little vinegar for the last rub. (putting the condiments back on the table) (P is getting a bit tired - looks for the vinegar on the table with the condiments)

P: Gosh, these houseworking games are quite tiring. Maybe this will pick me up a bit. (takes a swig) Yuuuuuck. (throws bottle and M catches it)

M: (patiently)No dear, just a little on the cloth.

P: Oh, I'm glad of that.

F : By George, I think she's got it. (goes back to polishing his sound effects)

M: No dear, I got it this time. (wiping herself off and looking on the floor for the lid) Well, enough for today don't you think? You're learning fast. Off to bed with you now. If you're

lucky you'll hear the nightingale again.

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P: Oh goody, I get to hear the bird again. LA LA LA Laaaaaa La La
(sings, but a bit better than before) What are we going to do tomorrow?

M: If you don't be quiet you won't be able to hear the bird. Shush now.

(CUE MUSIC)

(M tucks her in and lights the candle)

(somebody has to do something with the nightingale puppet at this point while M sings the Nightingale Song)

M: She sang of known things, she sang of unknown things She sang of everything something and nothing She sang of known things, she sang of unknown things She sang of everything something and nothing

On and on the nightingale sang of purple shadows and rising moons

And webs of stars so frail and bright

She sang and sang of midnight.

She sang of known things, she sang of unknown things She sang of everything something and nothing She sang of known things, she sang of unknown things She sang of everything something and nothing

Of dreamy morning clouds she sang, of first awakenings, rising suns

Of trees and flowers and work and play

She sang and sang of midday.

She sang of known things, she sang of unknown things She sang of (music fades out)

NEXT DAY

P : What a fine sleep I've had. Such marvellous dreams. I feel so healthy.

M: Good morning dear. It seems we have a caller. I do believe that's our fine boy arriving.

F : He appears to be without his professional persona. Things are looking up, -- possibly.

D : Morning all. It's rather quiet at the palace. Thought I'd just pop in and check my patient, if you don't mind. M : Lovely. Take her for a small walk. Breathe deeply now.

P : I'm feeling wonderfully well, Doctor, in fact I feel like singing, singing like a regular nightingale.....

D : (hurriedly) Take it easy now. You're still a little pallid.

P : La La lalalala La (quite sweetly this time)

D : My, you do sound better. So much better! I want to tell you that I've missed curing you very much. In fast..., by the way, what is your actual name, if it's permissible that I ask?

P : I believe it may be Phyllis, though I've rarely heard it used.

D : Pillis? what a very appealing name.

P : No, Fyllis, not Pillis, its a Fuh at the beginning.

D : Pardon me, Princess, Fuh -pillis. Though I prefer it better the other way. Mine is Phillip as it happens, though I've rarely heard that either.

P : Pillip? well that's a REALLY odd name so I'm not surprised.

D : No no..... oh well never mind.

P : I think I've missed being cured in an odd sort of way too; - though I don't miss the twitching. Would you stay and listen to the nightingale singing tonight. It's like nothing you've ever heard before.

D : At the risk of sounding presumptuous, I was planning to ask you that very thing myself. I vaguely remember it from my early years. M: Son, don't you keep the Princess out too late now. She still needs her rest. (Brings them in and settles them down) Be still now, both of you, and you might hear our nightingale sing before you drop off. (she lights the candle)

(CUE MUSIC)

(This time the Princess sings the obligato and the Doctor the lines from his song)

M: She sang of known things, (D : I used to think that I was the helper.....) She sang of unknown things

She sang of everything, something and nothing

She sang of known things, (D : I used to think that I could do good.....) She sang of unknown things

She sang of everything, (everything)

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something (something) and nothing.

NEXT DAY

D : Another beautiful day. I feel well again myself and didn't even know I was sick. How paradoxical.

P : (wakes humming sweetly to herself) You DO seem well. You've only used one pretentious P word so far.

D : And you sound as sweet as a bird.

P : It's true, and I always wanted to be able to sing. I used to try so hard. D, M, F : We know.!

D : And I always just wanted to be helpful.

P, M, F : We know.!!

D : If we got married you know, we might belkble to help each other remember what we really want to remember and perhap

: Another P word! Yes, I can see that it just might work. We'll have to remember to listen carefully.

D : I will try hard to listen to my patients - 3 minutes each, do you think?

P : Well it's a start. And I will promise to listen carefully to our children even if they sound awfully raucous at first.

D : Lets run to the palace... whoops.... and ask the King and Queen. (they do so)

D: Sire, we are both well, and wish to get married.

K: No problem with that, Son, you'll make a perfect pair. Q: A really Princely personage!

D: Now for your parents, Pillis. (Abashed at his utterance of more P words.) Oh pardon me ! (And then even more abashed with the Pardon.)

P: Let's not get persnickety about it. And this time, Pillip, I propose to do the pedalling. No pouting now!

D : WellI suppose..... (thoughtfully) If you can sing, perhaps you can pedal. I'm not too proud to ride pillion. (Boldy) PROCEED. (Cuddling her form behind.) My plump little Pomegranate. My Plum Pudding. (With a "you've got to be kidding" look, the Princess floors it.)

(Falls off and chases after. To the audience.) Whoa!!! what a pistol!! (P crash parks the Vicious cycle. Crash sounds.)

M: (Hearing the arrival.) Here come the kids, Father, get ready for the finale. D: Father, Mother, -----

M, F : (exhausted from the quick change) We know, we know. (all break into finale song)
(CUE MUSIC)

D: Far away and a great deal further than the end of Everything -

Far away and a great deal further, there's a land of --- Something.

Which you have never heard of have never heard of -

Can you find it, can you find it now? M, P: Look up, Look down, Look all around D: Can

you find it?.

M, P: Look up, Look down, Look all around D: Can you find it?.

M, P: Look up, Look down, Look all around. D: Can you find it?

You can find it if you listen

If you listen you can find it

Will you listen now?

(blackout, or kids close their eyes as all the sound effects are played for 10 seconds or thereabouts, then back into the last chorus)

ALL: Far away and a great deal further than the end of Everything -

Far away and a great deal further, there's a land of --- Something. Which you have never heard of , have never heard of -

Now the story's,

Now the story's done.

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