

SETTING: *Various locations in the Kingdom of Mirth.*

AT RISE: *A field at night. The glow of the full moon. The sound of crickets. A dog barks in the distance. CAT enters carrying a fiddle. She looks around.*

CAT

Meow...? Mary, where are you?

(MARY enters opposite.)

MARY

Mooooo. Over here!

CAT

Thank goodness! I wasn't sure you'd be able to get out of the barn.

MARY

I slipped out when the Boy's back was turned.

CAT

What if he caught you?

MARY

I had no choice. The moon is full. Did you bring the fiddle?

CAT

Don't I always?

(CAT shows MARY the fiddle.)

I had to wait until they fell asleep, but I got it.

(They both look up at the moon.)

MARY

Look how she glows, Cat –white as milk, smooth as cheese. She beckons me, calls to me... How I ache to jump over that moon. Let the serenade begin.

(CAT begins to play as MARY sings to the moon.)

#1 *I See the Moon (Traditional)*

MARY

*I see the moon
And the moon sees me
The moon is the place that I wanna be...*

(The fiddle strings break, making a heinous sound.)

MARY

What happened?! *What happened?!*

CAT

The strings broke!

BOY BLUE (O.S.)

There you are, you darn cow! Come back here!

MARY

Oh no! The Boy!

CAT

I'll head him off. Run for it!

#2 *Have You Seen My Cow?*

(MARY runs off as BOY BLUE runs on, carrying a lantern, a horn hanging from his belt. CAT blocks his way.)

BOY BLUE

*Excuse me!
Excuse me!
Excuse me!
Excuse me!
Have you seen my cow?*

CAT

Meow. (*"There are no cows in the vicinity."*)

BOY BLUE

*Excuse me!
Excuse me!
Pardon me!
Excuse me!*

BOY BLUE (cont.)

I have to find her now!

*A cow should be content within a meadow
Swatting at the flies and chewing hay
But this girl is a most peculiar fellow
When the moon is full she always runs away!*

(We hear a "Moo" from off. They both look. BOY BLUE points.)

There she is!

CAT

Meow! (*"You're mistaken! That is an elk!"*)

(Again, CAT tries to head him off.)

Excuse me...

Excuse me...

Excuse me!

Excuse me!

I have to find my cow!

(BOY BLUE finally eludes CAT and runs off after MARY. CAT exits opposite. The scene shifts to the Market Place the next morning. BAKER enters stirring a bowl of pastry and looks about.)

BAKER

(Calling off)

Jack?! Jack Horner?!

(JACK HORNER enters opposite carrying a basket of plums.)

JACK

Hey, Mr. Baker!

BAKER

You got those plums I ordered? The King wants five dozen plum pies for the Festivities this afternoon!

JACK

Got 'em right here! Had to fight off four and twenty blackbirds, but I got your plums.

BAKER

Blackbirds?! They didn't ruin any, did they? It's hard enough to make a decent plum pie without blackbirds eating my ingredients!

(BAKER pulls out a plum and inspects it.)

JACK

These plums are perfect, sir.

BAKER

There's no such thing as perfect, Jack – not in this Kingdom. If the blackbirds aren't eating the plums then it's something else... Look! This plum has a spot! It's bruised! That's what I'm talking about!

(He hands JACK the plum.)

That is a bad plum, Jack Horner! How am I supposed to bake a pie with a bad plum?!

JACK

It's just a speck of dirt, Mr. Baker... See? Good as new.

(JACK brushes the dirt away and hands it back.)

BAKER

Every day Old King Cole eats one plum pie, and every night I have nightmares about bad plums. Now His Majesty – out of nowhere – decides to hold Festivities at one o'clock *this* afternoon – and he wants five dozen plum pies! *Five dozen* – for his “secret” Guest of Honor. I wasn't prepared for this! Were you prepared for this?

JACK

How could I be? We didn't find out about the Festivities until this very morning.

BAKER

Exactly! It was a surprise – an *unwanted* surprise – and I hate unwanted surprises! Which is why there better not be any bad plums!

(He snatches the basket from JACK and inspects them one at a time. CANDLESTICK MAKER enters, trimming a candle wick.)

CANDLESTICK MAKER

Jack Horner! Where's my beeswax? The King ordered two hundred candles!

JACK

Coming right up, Mr. Candlestick Maker!

CANDLESTICK MAKER

Hurry up, man! The Festivities are at one o'clock!

(JACK exits, bumping into BOY BLUE, who enters at a run.)

#3 Have You Seen My Cow? (Reprise #1)

BOY BLUE

Excuse me!

Excuse me!

Excuse me!

Excuse me!

Have you seen my cow?

She's black and white and answers to "Mary"

She bellows to the music from my horn

She's also the best milk cow in the dairy

Which means I got to get her back before they find she's gone!

(He blows his horn. We hear a "moo" off. BOY BLUE points off.)

Stop right there!

(He exits, bumping into the BUTCHER who enters carrying his carving knife. They do a little dance trying to get past each other.)

BOY BLUE

Excuse me...

BUTCHER

Excuse me...

BOY BLUE

Excuse me!

BUTCHER

Excuse me!

BOY BLUE

I have to find my cow!

(BOY BLUE runs off. BUTCHER tests the edge of his carving knife with his thumb then shakes his head, disgusted.)

BUTCHER

Simon!

(SIMPLE SIMON enters.)

SIMON

Yo! Butcher-man! Whassup?

BUTCHER

This blade is dull! How am I supposed to prepare a feast fit for a king with a dull blade?

SIMON

(As if answering a riddle)

I don't know... how?

BUTCHER

It's simple, Simon – sharpen the blade!

SIMON

Yo! Good one, Mr. B!

BUTCHER

No, simpleton! *You* sharpen the blade. You're the Royal Sharpener! Do your job!

(He hands SIMON the carving knife. SIMON pulls a file out of his apron pocket and gets to work.)

I need that carving knife to be the sharpest knife in the drawer, Simon, or I'll have an ax to grind.

(SIMON stops filing.)

SIMON

You got an ax needs grinding, too?

BUTCHER

No, it's... never mind! Get to work! The Festivities are at one o'clock!

(SIMON resumes filing. BUTCHER addresses CANDLESTICK MAKER.)

Every day, I open the drawer and... *surprise!* A dull blade! I'm a butcher. Butchers don't like unwanted surprises. Butchers don't like dull blades – they add to my stress! And if things weren't tough enough, the King decides at the last minute to hold Festivities!

CANDLESTICK MAKER

You think you got problems? I gotta make two hundred candles by one o'clock!

BUTCHER

Big deal! A candle's a candle – you seen one, you seen 'em all.

CANDLESTICK MAKER

I use *beeswax* to make my candles. You know where beeswax comes from? Bees! The most vicious, dangerous... I'm looking over my shoulder twenty-four hours a day, just waiting for them bees to make a surprise attack. You think that's an easy life? You try being the Royal Candlestick Maker just one day! You'd *cry*!

BUTCHER

Bees schmees! As Royal Butcher, *I* have to prepare a feast fit for a King *and* his Guest of Honor – but I don't know who the Guest of Honor is, because His Majesty is keeping it a secret. So what do I prepare? Beef? Mutton? Pork? What if the Guest of Honor is a vegetarian? Another unwanted surprise! These Festivities got us on the brink of disaster!

(JACK runs on carrying a metal washtub full of beeswax.)

JACK

Here's your beeswax, Mr. Candlestick Maker!

CANDLESTICK MAKER

That was quick.

JACK

They don't call me nimble for nothing!

(SIMON stops filing again.)

SIMON

Nimble? I thought your name was "Jack."

BUTCHER

Work!

(SIMON goes back to work. CANDLESTICK MAKER examines the blocks of beeswax.)

CANDLESTICK MAKER

You got to be nimble, dealin' with them bees. They're vicious!

JACK

They're not vicious if you know how to communicate with them.

(SIMON stops filing again.)

SIMON

Yo! You talk to *bees*?

BUTCHER

Simon!

SIMON

He talks to bees!

JACK

I don't talk to them, Simon – I sing to them...

#4 *The Bee Song*

*Buzz, buzz little bees
Soft and fuzzy buzzy bees
Let me have your beeswax, please*

Bees will give you all the beeswax you want if you sing to them.

CANDLESTICK MAKER

I ain't singin' to no bees. I hate bees!

JACK

You use their wax for your candles. Without them, you'd be nothing!

CANDLESTICK MAKER

I still ain't singin' to no bees!

(BOY BLUE enters again, once more bumping into JACK.)

#5 *Have You Seen My Cow? (Reprise #2)*

BOY BLUE

*Excuse me!
Excuse me!
Excuse me!
Excuse me!
Have you seen my cow?*

(We hear a “Moo” from off. JACK points in that direction.)

BOY BLUE (cont.)

There she is! Somebody stop that cow!

(He exits, bumping into FIEVEL, SPEEDY and REMY, the THREE BLIND MICE, who are entering. FIEVEL carries a fiddle, all three use bows as their walking sticks.)

BOY BLUE

Excuse me!

FIEVEL

Excuse me!

SPEEDY

Perdón!

REMY

Excusez-moi!

BOY BLUE

I have to find my cow!

(He runs off.)

FIEVEL

Jack Horner?! Where’s Jack Horner?!

JACK

You looking for me, Fievel?

FIEVEL

Get over here!

JACK

Is there a problem?

FIEVEL

Is there a *problem*? Did you hear that, boys?

SPEEDY

Si. I heard him.

REMY

Moi, aussi.

FIEVEL

Yes, Jack, there is a problem. There are several problems, Jack. For example, me and Remy and Speedy, here – we are mice. Three mice who happen to be *blind*. That is a problem. Our tails have been cut off by an angry farmer's wife. That, too is, a problem. But all *those* problems, Jack, are nothing compared to *this*!

(He holds up the fiddle. The strings are broken.)

The strings on our fiddle are broken! Would you like to know who broke our fiddle strings, heh? It was your cat – your dirty, rotten, stinking cat did this to our fiddle! Our one and only fiddle!

JACK

How can you be sure it was my cat?

FIEVEL

We may be blind, Jack, but we know when a cat's been fiddling with our fiddle!

REMY

Oui! C'est vrai! Votre chat est le coupable!

SPEEDY

Si.

FIEVEL

Old King Cole has ordered *us* – his Fiddlers Three – to play for the Festivities this afternoon, so we decided to practice. Imagine our surprise when we discovered the strings on our fiddle – our *one* and *only* fiddle – had been broken by your *pet*. This is an unwanted surprise, Jack. Blind mice do not like unwanted surprises!

JACK

I'll talk to him.

FIEVEL

You do that, Jack. You do that. Because the three of us, we can't take much more. If these strings break again, we'll be replacing them with catgut, if you know what I mean... and I think you do.

JILL (O.S.)

Aggghh!! Save me! Somebody save me!