

THE DONKEY OF OZ

A Children's Play

by: Motti Lerner

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**Translated from Hebrew by Ruth Jordan
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Cast in order of appearance:

1. OLD BARNEY - a hard-working old donkey, resigned to his lot
2. YOUNG BARNEY - his son, a lovable and rebellious young donkey
3. JULIUS - Lord of the Pigs, invader of the Kingdom of Oz
4. POMPEY - Julius's friend and counselor
5. ROSALIND - a beautiful young girl pretending to be the daughter of
King Stephen, the exiled King of Oz
6. KING STEPHEN - the exiled King of Oz
7. QUEEN STEPHANIE - the exiled Queen of Oz

Please note:

Julius and Pompey can double-up for King Stephen and Queen Stephanie.

The action takes place in the forecourt of the royal palace of the Kingdom of Oz.

Translator's apology: The songs in this version are translated verbatim, without an attempt to write them as songs in the English language.

The house lights dim. The stage is lit. The music starts. Enter Old Barney who addresses the audience.

Old Barney: You see these ears? The hooves? And the tail? Yes, you're right. I'm a donkey. In your minds you can probably see my short legs and long back. If you try hard, you'll be able to imagine how I've spent my whole life at hard labor. Whole cities have been built with bricks that I've carried on my back! Yes, I'm a donkey; a plain, simple donkey. There's no use complaining about it. That's the way it is. It's what nature intended, and you can't change nature. Donkeys are born to hard labor **(heaves a deep sigh)**. Yet not so very long ago, here in the Kingdom of Oz, there was this very special donkey who had the courage to challenge nature. That's right, he dared to stand up and bray loud and long, "I'VE HAD ENOUGH"! He wasn't quite a full-grown donkey, but a young and gentle foal. My own son, he was, my youngest. Young Barney.

Enter Young Barney wearing a knight's ceremonial hat.

Young Barney: There you are, Dad. How do you like my new hat? It must have belonged to one of the King's knights. Hides my ears nicely, doesn't it?

Old Barney: **(Accusingly)** You left me to carry these bricks all by myself.

Young Barney: I don't like carrying bricks on my back, Dad.

Old Barney: Walls are built all over the world, Young Barney, and when walls are built someone has to carry bricks on his back. and that 'someone' is usually a donkey.

Young Barney: But why us, Dad? Is it because we have long ears? Or a tail? Horses too have ears and tails, yet everyone says they are noble and graceful.

Old Barney: Horses are taller than us, their necks are longer, and when they neigh it sounds like sweet music.

Young Barney: I can beat sweet music with my hooves better than any horse in whole world. I can sing too! **(Sings)**.

Don't despise a donkey
For his ears and tail;
I can sing off- or on-key,
Trill like a lark without fail.
I can stand on two legs,
And dance hee-haw, hee-haw...
Cover me with white feathers
You'd see me swim in the pond;
Without my reins and tethers,
You'd take me for a swan.
I'd crane my long neck
And sing hee-haw, hee-haw...

Old Barney: That's enough, Young Barney. It's about time you faced facts. You're no beautiful swan. You're just a young donkey who'll soon be a full-grown donkey, just like me. Now lift a hoof and help me before my back breaks under this weight.

Young Barney: But I feel that I was born for better things, Dad, not just to carry bricks on my back. I want to be happy! I want to have fun!

Old Barney: Our master, Julius, Lord of the Pigs, has ordered us to haul bricks. If we don't obey, he'll send his pigs to whip us.

Young Barney: I'll run away.

Old Barney: They can run faster than you. They've already gobbled up all the tender grass in the meadow and if we refuse to obey them we won't even have a bit of dry hay to satisfy our hunger.

Young Barney: I'd rather starve than be a slave.

Old Barney: If you knew what hunger was, you'd soon change your mind.

Young Barney: I don't want to be a donkey! D'you hear me, Dad? I won't be a donkey! I've never in my whole life met a happy donkey. Are you happy?

Old Barney: Happy? I'm a donkey! **(Distant snorts, getting closer, are heard)**. Listen! I know that snort. Julius is coming our way! Run for it, Young Barney! **(Young Barney hesitates)**. Make for the palace wall. With any luck we might find a leaf or two to eat. Get going! We might even find a few pools of rainwater that the pigs haven't dirtied. Get going, I say!

Suddenly, enter Julius, Lord of the Pigs, with Counselor Pompey. Both are well-fattened, pink-snouted pigs, but in contrast to their characters they are very elegantly dressed. The two donkeys take cover.

Pompey: **(Announces with much pomp and circumstance)** Make way for His Smelly Majesty Lord Julius!

Julius: I'm the fattest pig in the world and no one in the Kingdom of Oz dares disobey me. Right, Pompey?

Pompey: Right, Lord Julius.

Julius: And if someone does dare to disobey me, I'll sit on him and flatten him. Right, Pompey?

Pompey: Right, Lord Julius.

Julius: The world has finally reached the Age of the Pig and we shall have everything we desire.

Pompey: Right, Lord Julius.

Julius: Pigs we were born and like pigs we shall behave!

Pompey: Right, Lord Julius.

Julius: So why isn't Princess Rosalind mine-all-mine? Why won't she ride on my broad back and run her fingers through my silky hair? Why won't she stroke my neck and plait the little hairs in my nostrils into dainty little pigtails? Doesn't a pig know how to love? The world's greatest lovers were all pigs **(he simmers with anger)**.

Pompey: Now, now, Lord Julius, calm down. Don't waste all your anger on her. How can you be a feared and terrible ruler if you don't boil with anger? **(Julius continues with his show of anger)** If you don't boil with anger the slaves won't fear you. If they don't fear you, they will rebel. **(Julius's anger reaches a peak)**. Rosalind is just a foolish

young girl. She thinks that your nose is just a squashed and hairy snout.

Julius: What?! My beautiful nose?! And what if it is squashed and hairy?

Pompey: Well, she thinks her small turned-up nose is prettier.

Julius: And is a small turned-up nose prettier than a wide, squashed one?

Pompey: That's what all the poets say.

Julius: I shall poison every single poet in the Kingdom of Oz. There will be no more poems in this cursed kingdom.

Pompey: Just a minute. I have an idea.

Julius: A pig's idea? You have my ear.

Pompey: **(Delivers a monologue in snorts and grunts lasting for at least two minutes, with Julius nodding comprehension).**

Julius: So if Rosalind refuses to marry me, I'll have every nose in the kingdom cut flat?

Pompey: Oink **(nodding agreement)**.

Julius: Including the noses of all the children?

Pompey: Oink **(nods agreement)**.

Julius: Wonderful! What a brilliant idea! Nothing can outshine the everlasting friendship of pigs! There is nothing more noble than advice given by one pig to another. How sweet you smell, Pompey, my dear, dear friend! Sweeter than the scent of all the garbage in the world! **(In his ecstasy, he hugs and kisses him)**. Go at once to the palace dungeons and bring Princess Rosalind to me!

Pompey: Oink, oink **(in agreement. Exits)**.

Julius, left alone, suddenly notices the terrified donkeys.

Julius: Frightened, are you? You haven't seen anything yet. The noses will be just the beginning, just a little something to whet the appetite. If Rosalind won't marry me I'll have the hearts and livers of all the people of Oz stewed in their own juice. I'll fill my belly with their guts if she refuses me. Not that there'll be any cruelty, Heaven forbid! We pigs are kind and considerate. We're not animals. Thus speaks Julius, the ravenous lover, before his fateful meeting with Princess Rosalind. What perfume shall I wear to impress her? I'd better crack some of those rotten eggs from the palace kitchen to put on my hair and make it shiny. There isn't a princess in the whole world who can resist the perfume of rotten eggs... **(Exits).**

Old Barney: Quick, son, give me a hoof. We're lucky to be alive after meeting Julius face to face. Let's run away!

Young Barney: But Dad, what about the people of Oz? What about the children? They don't want their noses squashed flat like pigs' snouts.

Old Barney: It's every man for himself, Young Barney, and if you don't look out for your own nose, no one will do it for you.

As Old Barney and Young Barney make to exit hurriedly, Pompey returns dragging Rosalind behind him. Young Barney holds Old Barney back and both observe the action from their hiding place.

Rosalind: Let go of me, you fat pig. Can't you see that I am a princess, the only daughter of Stephen, King of Oz?

Pompey: Of course you are.

Rosalind: Well, if you think that I'll ever marry your wicked Julius, you can think again.

Pompey: Nobody asked me to think and no one is asking you to. There is only one who thinks in the Kingdom of Oz, our Lord Julius **(drags her further)**.

Rosalind: Watch your step, pig. My father King Stephen has promised me to the brave knight who rescues me.

Pompey: There are no knights left in the Kingdom of Oz, only pigs. And what is more, your father is no longer king. Lord Julius is our king and you shall marry him before this day is out.

Rosalind: Let go of me! Julius is too thin.

Pompey: TOO THIN?!

Rosalind: Yes, too thin. And he's hardly got any bristles on his bald snout.

Pompey: Julius's snout is bald?!

Rosalind: You heard me.

Pompey: You're much thinner than him and your nose is completely bald. **(Shakes her)**. Anyone who finds fault with the beauty of pigs and the beauty of Lord Julius in particular shall be roasted alive over a slow fire!

Rosalind: **(Shouts)** Help me, Knights of Oz! Come to my rescue! Oh, where are all those brave knights who courted me in the palace gardens? Where have you gone?

Pompey: They weren't so brave, Princess, they ran away as soon as they saw us coming.

Rosalind: **(Whispers confidentially)** Actually, Sir Pig, I'm not really a princess at all and no knight has ever courted me. My

name is Rosalind, but I was just a kitchen-maid in the royal palace. When the King and Queen fled from the pigs, I picked up a dress that had fallen from one of the queen's bags, tried it on, and it fitted me perfectly.

Pompey: So you're not Princess Rosalind?

Rosalind: No, just plain Rosalind.

Pompey: Well, it doesn't really matter. A true pig can't tell the difference between a princess and a kitchen-maid. Come along! To the palace!

Young Barney, who was hardly able to contain himself during this scene, now utters a loud bray and gallops to the rescue.

Young Barney: Take your hands off the Princess, you filthy pig!

Pompey: Who are you calling a filthy pig, you stupid donkey? I am noble pig, a descendant of the great pigs of Lemuria.

Old Barney: Stop, Young Barney, stop it! We're only donkeys, beasts of burden. We mustn't provoke anybody.

Young Barney: Don't be afraid, Princess, I shall not rest until I rescue you from wicked Julius.

But Young Barney's courage is not quite enough, and in the ensuing struggle with Pompey he is forced to the ground. Just as Pompey is about to sit on him, he grabs Pompey's tail between his teeth.

Pompey: No! Not my tail! Not my tail!

Old Barney: Leave his tail alone, Young Barney, and let's get away from here.

Pompey raises his trotter to strike Young Barney, who steps back in fright, bites Pompey's tail, and is left with a piece of it dangling from his mouth.

Pompey: Oh! My tail! My pride and joy! Where have you gone? I've been robbed! Oh, Julius Lord of the Pigs, avenge the honor of your faithful servant. What shall I do without my crowning glory? Avenge me, my Lord! **(Exits in much distress).**

Rosalind: Who are you, young knight, and how did you come to my rescue?

Young Barney: Knight! The princess called me a knight!

Old Barney: What princess? Take it easy, son, calm down. I've worked here for thirty years and I don't remember ever seeing her among the royal princesses.

But Young Barney is far too excited to listen to him and bursts into song:

Young Barney: A young ass was I
Full of dreams.
Now I'm a Knight
As I dreamed by night.

Rosalind: A kitchen-maid was I,
Washing pots and pans.
Now I am free,

Only a prince for me.

Young Barney: A prince shall I be,
Cheered by the crowds,
Strolling in the square
With Rosalind the fair.

Rosalind: I'll open my eyes -
My prince will be there.
He'll stand by my side
And I'll be his bride.

Young Barney: Hee-haw, hee-haw, hee-haw...

Old Barney: Bravo! Bravo! What a fine duet, you sing beautifully
together. But we'd better get out of here quickly. Julius will
soon be back.

Rosalind: Just tell me, young knight, do you always sing like that?
'Hee-haw, hee-haw?'

Young Barney: Er... yes...

Old Barney: My dear young lady, although you claim that you're a
princess...

Rosalind: **(To Young Barney)** And those ears? **(she removes his hat).**

Young Barney: What about them?

Old Barney: But even if you were a real princess it still wouldn't save
you from the anger of...

Rosalind: They're donkey's ears! And you've got a tail! You're a
donkey, aren't you? **(Laughs).**

Young Barney: I'm still only a young donkey, Rosalind.

Rosalind: But you'll be a full-grown donkey one day. Won't you?

Young Barney: I suppose so... **(She laughs again).**

Old Barney: **(Alarmed)** I can hear Julius coming!

Rosalind: **(Serious again)** I'm not sure that I can marry a donkey.

Young Barney: But Rosalind, now that I've rescued you I'm going to
rescue the rest of the people of Oz.

Rosalind: But you'll still be a donkey, won't you?

Young Barney: I suppose so, but...

Old Barney: Run for your lives! Every man for himself!

Julius enters, running furiously from the direction of the palace and brandishing a giant pair of shears.

Julius: Where is the donkey who dared bite off the tail of my beloved advisor? I'll cut off his head **(brandishes the shears)**, I'll mince it and feed it to my dogs. Oink, oink, OINK! **(Notices Rosalind)**. Rosalind, what are you doing here?

Old Barney: If Your Lordship will pardon us we'll be on our way and won't waste any more of your Lordship's valuable time. Here's the missing bit of the distinguished counsellor's tail. I'm sure that the palace doctor will be able to sew it back on without any trouble. The entire incident was a terrible mistake. It won't happen again. A regrettable outburst of youthful emotion, that's all. Your Lordship, too, was young not long ago and I'm sure that Your Lordship will understand...

Julius stops him babbling by bringing the shears down on his head.

Old Barney drops to the ground, unconscious.

Julius: Rosalind, mine-all-mine, what is a gracious Princess doing outside my palace in the company of donkeys? A beautiful girl like you should grace the company of pigs. If you'll give me your hand in marriage, I'll overlook this unbecoming conduct of yours.

Rosalind: Don't try to fool me, Sir. You are a cruel and wicked pig. You invaded our country and drove my father, King Stephen, into exile. I shall never marry you!

Julius: But why? I love you, I love you so very much. If you marry me, half my kingdom is yours.

Rosalind: Half your kingdom?

Julius: Oink.

Rosalind: That's not good enough. I want all your kingdom.

Julius: All my kingdom?

Rosalind: That's right.

Julius: And then you'll marry me?

Rosalind: We...ell...

Young Barney: **(Meekly)** And nobody will cut off noses in the Kingdom of Oz?

Julius: Who was talking to you?

Young Barney: **(Holding his ground)** I'm talking to you.

Julius: **(To Rosalind)** And you'll be mine forever?

Rosalind: We...ell...

Young Barney: And nobody will cut off noses in the Kingdom of Oz!

Julius: Shut up, you donkey!

Young Barney: Get out of here, you pig!

Julius: What did you say?

Young Barney: **(Gaining courage)** The Age of the Pig is over. Today, you and all your pigs shall leave this kingdom and return to the forests of Lemuria, to root for brambles and nettles among the rocks. The beautiful princesses will stay here and marry those who are more handsome and noble than you.

Julius: You stupid donkey! Not only have you bitten off Pompey's tail, with those words you've also pronounced your own death sentence. You shall be served up to me for lunch, with a touch of Italian garbage gravy and a small sewer salad. The very thought makes me drool!

Julius gives chase to Young Barney, catches up with him, throws him to the ground and brandishes the shears over his neck. Rosalind throws herself between them.

Rosalind: Let him be, you swine! I shall never marry you now.
You're wicked and cruel and I'll hate you as long as I live.

Julius: Oh no, Rosalind mine-all-mine, please don't hate me!

Rosalind: What has this nice young donkey done to you?

Julius: Nothing.

Rosalind: You should be grateful to him.

Julius: Grateful? Grateful for what?

Rosalind: For having the courage to tell you to your face what all the citizens of Oz feel in their hearts.

Julius: All right, all right. I'm most grateful. Just give me another chance, Rosalind.

Rosalind: Do you still want to marry me?

Julius: Yes, please.

Rosalind: Right. Go to the palace and prepare the throne that you promised me.

Julius: And then you'll marry me?

Rosalind: First get rid of those shears.

Julius: And then you'll marry me?

Rosalind: Tomorrow morning.

Julius: Are you sure?

Rosalind: Sure I'm sure.

Julius: Give me your word as a princess?

Rosalind: You have my word.

Julius: Then I shall prepare a throne for you and wait until the morning. We pigs aren't as stupid as we look, you know. If we were, we wouldn't rule the world, would we? And I won't get rid of the shears, I'll keep them under my bed, for if you don't marry me in the morning, I'll cut off every nose in the kingdom, just as I promised. **(Exits).**

Rosalind: **(Runs to Young Barney and bends over him).** Oh, dear Young Barney, are you still alive?

Young Barney: Yes, thanks to you.

Rosalind: You saved me from Julius.

Young Barney: No, you saved me!

Rosalind: You saved me first!

Young Barney: If you saved me, does that mean that you like me a little?

Rosalind: Yes, I do. I'm sure that I like you a little.

Young Barney: Only a little?

Rosalind: I'll always be grateful to you. We can be good friends.

Young Barney: Just good friends?

Rosalind: Friendship is a wonderful thing. There are so many people
in the world who need a friend.

Young Barney: Is it because of my ears and tail?

Rosalind: Yes.

**Young Barney falls silent and lowers his head. Rosalind turns to
audience and sings:**

Rosalind: I should like to love him,
But something doesn't let me.
Something in me says
Wait for someone else.
I want to be a princess,
No more pots and pans.
But princesses, they say,
Don't marry donkeys that bray.
I'll miss him when we part,
But long ears put me off.
I wasn't born to suffer pain,
But to enjoy a prince's love.

Young Barney: Are you returning to the palace? To him?

Rosalind: No, I'm going to search for the prince of my dreams.
Goodbye, Young Barney **(Exits)**.

Young Barney: Goodbye, Rosalind. **(Tries to revive Old Barney)**. Come
on, Dad, wake up.

Old Barney: What happened? Oh, it's you is it? I had the most terrible

dream; Julius came along and hit me over the head with a huge pair of shears.

Young Barney: It wasn't a dream, Dad, he really did hit you over the head. Now wake up before Julius's pigs get here. I had a dream too, but it didn't come true. Princess Rosalind has gone away to search for the prince of her dreams. Ah, well. In the world of pigs, donkeys are not even allowed to dream of love **(loads some bricks on to his back and exits)**.

Old Barney: When I saw Young Barney so sad, I thought that he'd given up his dreams and resigned himself to being just a simple donkey. But I was wrong. The desire for freedom and happiness burned like a fire inside him. All that night he stamped his hooves, swished his tail, and thought up mysterious plots for his battle against wicked Julius. Next morning, he was ready...

While Old Barney is speaking, Julius and Pompey burst into the palace forecourt, each brandishing shears. Old Barney makes a swift exit.

Pompey: Just as I thought!

Julius: Rosalind never came to the palace.

Pompey: And he waited for her until this morning.

Julius: And I prepared a magnificent throne for her, just as she asked.

Pompey: She's gone off to search for princes, the little fool!

Julius: I'll never, never, never trust stupid, sentimental girls again.

Both: And now we shall begin to chop off noses...

Pompey: Until she's forced to marry me!

Julius: Marry you?

Pompey: No, no - marry you.

Julius: Whether she wants to or not!

Pompey: And now the whole world shall witness my revenge for my lost tail. I shall not rest until I have exacted vengeance for the loss of my crowning glory.

Julius: You shall have your vengeance, but we must tread softly; without fanfares, but with cunning; not with flashing swords, but with a razor-sharp scalpel.

Pompey: **(To the audience)** We shall slice off your noses with kindness, with love...

Julius: And we shall not stop until the treacherous Rosalind gives me her hand in marriage!

Pompey: Until my pride and joy grows back!

Julius: There's no cause for alarm, people of Oz. Just form a queue. The more you obey, the less you'll suffer. We never promised you fun and games!

Julius and Pompey inspect the audience as if to chop off noses, but the children's noses all seem to be too short.

Julius: Just a moment, is this what you call a long thin nose? It looks just as squashed as mine.

Pompey: And this one looks squashed too. Did you squash it?

Julius: No.

Pompey: Someone has squashed all their noses already.

Julius: The work of the righteous is often done by others.

Pompey: Isn't it wonderful? All these little piglets will grow up into very handsome pigs.

Julius: Let's go look for noses somewhere else. **(Julius and Pompey make to exit as Rosalind enters).**

Rosalind: Stop! Stop, Lord Julius! I'll marry you, only have pity on these poor children. You can keep your half a kingdom, but please don't chop off any noses!

Young Barney: **(Following her)** Wait, Rosalind, wait. I've got an idea. We can still save everyone without you marrying him.

Rosalind: No! Only I can save them!

Young Barney: Listen to me. You haven't found your prince yet, have you?

Rosalind: So what?

Young Barney: So give me another chance.

Rosalind: But if your idea works, you'll expect me to marry you.

Young Barney: Not at all, I won't expect you to marry me. I won't even ask you again.

Rosalind: Promise?

Young Barney: I promise.

Rosalind: Really and truly?

Young Barney: Really and truly.

Rosalind: Fine. Now what's the plan? **(Young Barney whispers in her ear)** What a brilliant idea!

Enter Julius and Pompey, holding shears and strings of chopped noses.

Rosalind: **(Sees the noses)** Look! He's already chopped off a thousand noses! **(She and Young Barney exit).**

Julius: Rosalind! Rosalind!

Pompey: **(A protracted ‘oinking’ monologue).**

Julius: No way! We are civilized pigs. No pig of mine will wear a necklace of noses around his neck! We can only be truly wicked by acting with wisdom.

Pompey: **(A further ‘oinking’ monologue, lasting for at least a minute).**

Julius: Revenge is a destructive instinct, Pompey. We haven't cut off all these noses simply to take revenge, but to restore law and order. When Rosalind sees this bunch of noses she'll go down on her knees and beg me to marry her!

Pompey: **(A very agitated ‘oinking’ monologue).**

Julius: Get a grip of yourself, Pompey! Enough!

Pompey: OINK!

Julius: One more word out of you and I'll send you back to Lemuria!

As they are talking, they become aware of a terrible stench. They look around, and finally see three huge trash cans which have been brought on-stage by Rosalind, Old Barney, and Young Barney.

Julius: Does my nose deceive me? Fresh garbage compote!
(Throws the shears to one side).

Old Barney: **(To the audience)** It's poisoned! It was Young Barney's idea. He made me do it. I'm just a quiet, law-abiding donkey. I've never taken part in such conspiracies.

Julius: Princess Rosalind will just have to wait a little while longer. **(He and Pompey throw the strings of noses aside and lovingly sniff the trash cans).** Wow! Old banana

skins decorated with half-dead cockroaches! Rotten tomato pudding with mud icing! And heaps of live worms! Wow!

Old Barney: **(To the audience)** And the whole lot topped off with the secret poison that Hannibal used on disobedient elephants!

Pompey: Delicious! There is nothing tastier in the whole world than fresh garbage compote. It is sweeter than all the nectars of the Orient.

As they both try to drink from the trash can, Young Barney surreptitiously moves behind Julius and stabs him with a long broomstick.

Julius: Ow! Someone pricked me! Was it you?

Pompey: Me? **(Young Barney stabs Julius again).**

Julius: Owwww! Was that you, perfidious Pompey?

Pompey: No, it wasn't! **(Young Barney stabs him too).** Ow! I've been stabbed!

Julius: Garbage compote can't stab you, not even in the Kingdom of Oz. It simply flows into your mouth, over your tongue, floods your palate with thick saliva, and slides slowly down your throat.

Pompey: And then you're filled with sweet dreams of a little pig sitting in his Mom's lap. **(Drinks deeply).**

Pompey feels a sudden pang of pain and stops guzzling.

Pompey: Oh! I've got a tummy ache, Sir. May I be excused, Sir?

Please leave me my share, Sir, it's the most delicious garbage compote I've ever...(Exits hurriedly).

Julius: Be quick or there'll be nothing left! **(To himself)** Loyalty among pigs doesn't mean that I have to leave any for him. **(Continues guzzling).**

Young Barney: I don't believe it! The label on the bottle says the poison is strong enough to kill a dozen whales!

Young Barney tries stabbing Julius once again, but Julius remains unaffected. Young Barney tries again, with the same result. Suddenly, Julius stops guzzling and is seized with stomach cramps. He steps backwards in pain, knocking Young Barney unconscious without even noticing it.

Julius: That's strange, now I've got tummy ache too. Probably ate too much chocolate last night. Maybe that irritating little sting in my behind had something to do with it too. I've got to go! You stay right where you are, beautiful garbage compote, and I'll finish you off when I get back...

Julius makes a hurried exit while Rosalind and Old Barney enter. Rosalind hurries to the unconscious Young Barney's side. Old Barney removes the garbage cans.

Old Barney: I don't believe it! They've really gone! Does that mean that the plan worked? Maybe they're locked in the toilet and won't ever come out?

Rosalind: Can't you see that he's unconscious? Get some water, quickly!

Old Barney: I won't bring him a single drop. A wise donkey knows when to run away. I'll take him on my back and we'll escape. We're not courageous knights, and even if we have won the first battle, we're getting out of this war as quickly as we can.

Rosalind: If you don't bring him some water he'll never wake up!

Old Barney: I'd rather take him away before he wakes up and disobeys me. You young people are all the same, you never do what your parents tell you.

He tries to lift Young Barney on to his back, but Rosalind hinders him by holding onto his legs. In the end, Young Barney falls to the ground.

Rosalind: Will you please go and fetch some water?!

Old Barney: It was you who put all these silly ideas into his head. I'm not at all sure that you really want King Stephen to come back to Oz. You'll be found out and...

Rosalind: **(Cuts him short)** I do want the King to return. I'm not thinking only of my own good. **(Sheds a tear or two)**. You really are a donkey!

Old Barney: **(Repentant)** All right, all right, I'm sorry. But no more adventures. I'll bring him some water, he'll wake up, and we'll leave. **(Exits)**.

Rosalind: Wake up, Young Barney, wake up dear.

Young Barney: **(Comes to)** Dear? Did I hear someone call me `dear'?

Rosalind: Hello, dear, thank Heaven you're alive. We've done it. I really think we've done it. The pigs are locked in the toilet forever.

Young Barney: You called me `dear'. Twice. I heard you. Oh, I'm so

happy! **(He hugs and kisses her)**. I love you, I love you so much. I love saying 'I love you'!

Rosalind: **(Pushes his hands away)** You promised, Young Barney.

Young Barney: But I thought that you'd changed your mind.

Rosalind: As long as you haven't changed your shape, I won't change my mind.

Young Barney: But I have changed! I'm certainly braver than I was, aren't I?

Rosalind: Get your hands off me! I don't like to be forced. You're acting just like...you know what I mean...

Young Barney: Don't I deserve something for what I've done for you, Rosalind?

Rosalind: You don't get love because you deserve it, Young Barney. You're loved because you're loved. Every time I touch your ears I remember that you're just a...a...

Young Barney: Just a donkey?

Rosalind: Look, I've wanted to marry a prince since the day I was born.

Young Barney: Aren't I as good as any prince? Have any of your princes been able to drive out Julius the Pig? Even King Stephen fled from him.

Rosalind: Even a beaten prince is still a prince. **(Slowly)** Though I can't really explain why.

Young Barney: And a victorious donkey is still a donkey, is that it?

Rosalind: I suppose so.

Young Barney: And now I suppose that you'll wait for the return of the beaten Princes of Oz and find yourself one that you can love?

Rosalind: Yes.

Young Barney: Give me one more chance, I beg you, just one more...

Young Barney: **(Sings)** Can you see these long ears?

And these eyes that aren't green?

But I see and I hear, Rosalind, my dear,

And can hope without fear.

Rosalind: What he says sounds alright,

Full of courage and fight.

Together we could sail

If it weren't for his tail.

Sad Young Barney, my dear,

You must go away from here.

Both: This parting is hard,

There's an ache in my heart.

The further you drift from me,

The closer I want to be.

Rosalind: **(To herself)** I do so want to say "yes", yet I still say "no".

Young Barney: Her voice says "no", but her heart she says "yes". "Yes".

Rosalind: Goodbye... **(Exits)**.

Young Barney is left alone, despondent. Enter Old Barney.

Old Barney: Come on, son, let's get away from here. I've found us a pool of clear rainwater to drink and a field of fresh green grass to eat. There's some hay to chew on, too...

Young Barney: No, dad.

Old Barney: I heard you, Young Barney. You have no choice. You're not a prince, and you never will be. You'll never realize princes' dreams. You're a donkey. Admit it! And then perhaps you'll realize donkeys' dreams.

Young Barney suddenly notices the shears which have been left on the ground.

Young Barney: If no one wants me as I am, then I don't want myself as I am either. I'll cut off my long ears with the shears. They're sharp enough to snip off my hooves, too. Then I'll no longer be just a donkey.

Old Barney: Stop it, son, stop that right now!

Young Barney: **(Hesitantly)** No, I'll start with my stupid tail. Who needs a tail?

Old Barney: You do, to keep the flies off!

Young Barney: **(Tries to cut off his tail but finds the operation somewhat painful)** Perhaps I should start with my ears. They don't have to be so long.

Old Barney: And how will you hear?

Young Barney: Horses have short ears and they hear just as well as us. **(Tries to cut off an ear, but that too is very painful)**. Oh, damn it!

Old Barney: Come on, son! **(Young Barney threatens him with the shears and he retreats)**.

Young Barney: Maybe the hooves will be easier. Who needs them anyway? Without them I'll be able to wear shoes, or even

high boots. Why in Heaven's name are they so hard to get rid of? **(Tries unsuccessfully to cut off a hoof, loses his temper and throws the shears away in despair. He tries kicking everything in sight, but his hooves stay fixed to his legs).** I don't want to be a donkey, I won't be a donkey, I won't...!

Enter Rosalind.

Rosalind: The pigs are coming! I saw them coming out of the toilet, washing their disgusting faces in mud!

Old Barney: Come on! Let's get away before they get here.

Rosalind: What about the Kingdom of Oz? And what will become of these children? You are the only ones who can stop the pigs.

Young Barney: Us? Have you forgotten that I'm just a donkey with hooves, a tail, and long ears?

Rosalind: Yes, you are. But I saw how you stood up to Julius.

Young Barney: You saw it with your own eyes but your heart remains cold.

Rosalind: That's not true!

Young Barney: I felt it. If you want me to defend you and you have no love for me, then you're not worthy of my love.

Rosalind: If you're prepared to abandon these children just because you think that I have no love for you, then you're not worthy of my love.

Young Barney: **(To Old Barney)** You were right, Dad. I should have run away. Even if I were to fight for them for ever and a day, they still wouldn't really love me. It's better that we leave. I

couldn't care less if the Kingdom of Oz will never be free.
We'll find a better place to live in.

Old Barney: I can't go with you, son, I'm too old to start looking for a new home. I don't have to live in a free country. Old donkeys must be a lot less choosy than their children.

Young Barney: Then I'll go alone. Yes, I'll go alone. I know I'm only a donkey and wherever I go people will laugh at my long ears and my tail. I just don't care any more. But I'll never be a slave just because someone, even a prince or princess, thinks that my ears are too long. No one can force me to give up my dreams. The world belongs to donkeys too and it's big enough for them to perform magnificent deeds too! In spite of their long ears, hooves, and a tail. I hope I won't see you again. **(Turns to leave).**

Rosalind: **(Angry)** I hope I won't see you again either! Go chase your dreams and don't come back! I'll try my new plan alone. **(Turns to Old Barney)** I'm ready to face danger despite what you think of me. I'll fight the pigs alone and I'll beat them too! **(Exit Old Barney. Rosalind, to herself).** I know that I've never succeeded at anything by myself. I know that I'm just a...**(hesitates).** But since I met Young Barney, for the first time in my life I've managed to do something that needed courage. **(The pigs' snorts and grunts are heard from afar).** He really is very special. He's no ordinary donkey. **(Alarmed)** The pigs are coming! What shall I do? Even if I were really a princess I wouldn't know where to start. All the princes fled when the pigs

invaded the Kingdom. **(Plucks up her courage).** But not me! I'm staying right here even though I'm just a...(can't say the words).

The snorts and grunts increase in intensity. The two donkeys return at a run and drag Rosalind offstage. The two pigs enter.

Julius: Where's that garbage compote? I'm sure I left it here.

Pompey: Judging by what you just did outside, oink, you drank it all.

Julius: I think that while I was sitting there, oink, you came back and guzzled it.

Pompey: While you were sitting there, oink, I was throwing up!

Julius: Liar!

Pompey: Me?

Julius: Yes, you.

Pompey: No, you!

Julius: Me?!

Pompey: Yes, you.

Julius: I'll have you thrown into a bath with a thousand slaves to scrub you clean.

Pompey: I'll tell everyone that every night when nobody's looking you brush your teeth.

Julius: I'll have your hair shampooed and tinted.

Pompey: I'll tell everyone that you clean the lice from your mane once a week.

Julius: Liar!

Pompey: Me?

Julius: Yes, you.

Pompey: No, you!
 Julius: Me?!
 Pompey: Yes, you.

The argument develops into a full-scale fight. Enter Young Barney disguised as a wizard.

Young Barney: Stop where you are, Julius Lord of the Pigs! I am the mighty Wizard of Oz. I command you to leave this land at once. **(The two pigs stop fighting).**

Julius: **(Jeeringly)** I eat wizards like you for breakfast!

Young Barney: Who do you think spirited away your garbage compote? If you don't leave this minute, I'll spirit both of you away too.

Julius: If you don't hurry up you're going to be a very squashed wizard because I'm going to sit on you.

Young Barney: I've warned you!

Julius: And I've told you what I think of your warnings! **(He makes to jump on Young Barney. Young Barney signals to Rosalind who enters).**

Rosalind: Julius, my beloved!

Julius: **(Astounded. Restrains himself and answers politely)**
 Rosalind, mine-all-mine!

Rosalind: I've had second thoughts, my Lord, and I'm prepared to be your Lady and Queen.

Julius: For ever and ever?

Rosalind: For ever and a day. **(Pompey oinks in disgust).**

Julius: **(Reprimands Pompey)** Come here, you, and bow to your princess.

Pompey: What princess? She's just an ordinary kitchen-maid.

- Julius: An ordinary kitchen-maid? How dare you insult Princess Rosalind who shall this day be crowned Queen of the Pigs? Guards! Guards! You shall dance on the gallows in the morning!
- Pompey: I assure you, my Lord, she herself told me that she was nothing but a kitchen-maid.
- Rosalind: So what if I did?
- Julius: So what if she did?
- Pompey: A thousand pardons, my Lord. **(To Rosalind)** Please accept my humble apologies, your Highness. **(To Julius)** I've always served you faithfully, my Lord. Remember how we dined together on rotten water-melons in Lemuria....?
- Julius: Tell it to the hangman while you're begging for mercy. Guards!
- Pompey: There's no need to call the guards, my Lord. I know the way to the dungeons by myself. **(Exits).**
- Julius: **(To Rosalind)** Rosalind, mine-all-mine! My princess! Put your hand in mine and let us go to the palace.
- Rosalind: Now that you know I love you, aren't you going to kiss me, my Lord?
- Julius: A kiss? But of course. A thousand kisses, a thousand and one if you so desire.
- Rosalind: You must close your eyes first, my Lord. This is the custom in the Kingdom of Oz for a first kiss. Young girls are shy, you know...
- Julius: But of course. When in Oz, do as the Ozians.

Rosalind blindfolds him with a colored scarf. He reaches out to

embrace her, Rosalind ducks away, and her place is taken by Young Barney. Julius embraces him, feels donkey's ears and is astounded.

Julius: I didn't know that the Princesses of Oz have such long ears.

Rosalind: That's how it is in the Kingdom of Oz, my Lord. When a young girl falls in love her ears grow longer.

Julius: How peculiar **(Tries another kiss).**

Rosalind: Keep your eyes closed, my Lord.

Julius: Of course. When in Oz... **(He reaches out for Rosalind, but Old Barney interposes himself between them with upraised tail. Julius's hands encounter the tail).** What the devil is that? A tail?

Rosalind: That's how it is in the Kingdom of Oz, my Lord. When a princess is happy she grows a tail.

Julius: Obviously I've never seen a happy princess before. **(Tries to remove the blindfold).**

Rosalind: No, no, my Lord, you must keep your eyes closed.

Julius: Of course, I forgot. When in Oz... **(He reaches out for Rosalind, but Young Barney raises a hoof which he grasps).** What's this? Hooves?

Rosalind: That's how it is in the Kingdom of Oz, my Lord. When a girl grows up, she grows hooves.

Julius: Most peculiar. It's different with us pigs. Perhaps it's because we eat garbage. **(Makes to remove the blindfold but catches himself just in time).** Oops! Nearly forgot. Shy young girls and all that...

Old Barney and Young Barney let loose an ear-splitting bray. Julius is taken aback.

Julius: What was that? A donkey braying?

Rosalind: That's how it is in the Kingdom of Oz, my Lord. When a girl gets excited she brays. What do the girls of Lemuria do when they get excited?

Julius: Just a moment, Rosalind. I'm a bit confused. I'm sure I heard a donkey braying. I'm going to kiss you with open eyes, just as we do in Lemuria. **(Removes the blindfold. Old Barney and Young Barney exit, leaving Rosalind to appear behind Julius, enveloped in a cloud of white smoke).**

Rosalind: Here I am, my Lord. Come, take me in your arms...

Julius: **(Turns around in surprise)** How did you get there? I just heard you bray over here! **(He hurries towards the cloud of smoke, while Rosalind rushes to the other side of the stage).**

Rosalind: **(From a fresh cloud of smoke)** Here I am. Come, take me in your arms...

Julius: What's going on? First you're here, now you're there!

Rosalind: **(Enters yet another cloud of smoke, laughing.)** Here I am!

Julius: Enough! Stop it! The whole world has gone mad! I'm totally confused. It's all because I forgot I was a pig. Since when have pigs fallen in love? Everyone knows that love is blind. Pigs are pigs and they should act piggishly! Wickedly! Cruelly! Filthily! Just as nature intended! I'll never ever fall in love again. I'll never ever be merciful

again. I'm going to squash you, those stupid donkeys, and every living thing in the Kingdom of Oz! **(Charges towards Rosalind who exits hurriedly. Enter Young Barney in his wizard's costume. He blocks Julius's charge).**

Young Barney: I am the mighty Wizard of Oz. You've just seen one of my simpler pieces of wizardry, but now I'm going to show you the most difficult and complicated piece of magic the world has ever seen!

Julius: Not before I squash you flat!

Young Barney: Not before you see how I turn a huge fat pig into an itsy-bitsy mouse!

Julius: **(Alarmed)** What pig are you going to turn into a mouse? I'm the only pig here.

Young Barney: Exactly.

Julius: You mean...me?

Young Barney: Just as I turned your servant Pompey into a mouse. **(Takes a mouse from his pocket and throws it at Julius who holds it lovingly and bursts into tears).**

Julius: Oh, brave Pompey, my dear friend. Love of my life! What has he done to you? Turned you into a mouse! **(Turns to Young Barney)** No, you can't do this to me.

Young Barney: If you want to remain a pig then you must leave the kingdom of Oz and take all your pigs with you. Now!

Julius: Is that your last word?

Young Barney: It is. **(Starts counting)** One!

Julius: I'll make you Minister of Wizardry...

Young Barney: Two!

Julius: Stop counting! I'll give you gold and diamonds...

Young Barney: Three!!

Julius: I'll give you the most beautiful princess in the Kingdom.
The King's daughter, Rosalind!

Young Barney: Abracadabra, Cadabra-abra, Rabbacadabra, Barradabarra.
Piggy-Piggy, Mousy-Mousy, Piggy-Mousy, Piggy-
Mousy...

Julius: Heeeeelp!!

**Julius flees in panic. Young Barney throws off his wizard's disguise.
Enter Old Barney and Rosalind.**

Old Barney: Brilliant, Rosalind, just brilliant! For the first time in my
life I was happy to have long ears. And I felt so proud to
bray aloud.

Young Barney: **(Hugs Rosalind)** You were very brave, Rosalind.

Rosalind: So were you, Young Barney, so were you...

**Young Barney suddenly remembers that he is a donkey. He breaks the
embrace and moves away from her. She turns back to him.**

Rosalind: I love you so much. I so love to say 'I love you'. I just can't
understand how foolish I was. You are the only true knight
that I've found in this palace. You are the noblest of them
all. And you're so handsome, I look at you and all I see is

beauty.

Young Barney: What about my ears? And my tail, what about that? Are my hooves beautiful too?

Rosalind: Yes, yes, because they're yours. I must have been blind not to see how beautiful they are. Didn't they help us get rid of the pigs?

Young Barney: I suppose so. You know, until I met you I never thought that my ears were so ugly, my hooves too... **(To Old Barney)** What do you say, Dad?

Old Barney: What is there to say? Are elephants' ears any more beautiful?

Rosalind: There's not a single ugly thing about you, Young Barney. But I have to tell you that there is ugliness in me. I lied to you. I'm not a princess at all, just a simple kitchen-maid.

Young Barney: I can't see anything ugly about you, Rosalind, even though you are only a kitchen-maid.

Rosalind: If you still want me, I'm yours.

Young Barney: Truly?

Rosalind: Really and truly.

Young Barney: Forever?

Rosalind: Forever and a day.

Young Barney: I love you too.

Rosalind: Truly?

Young Barney: Really and truly.

Rosalind: Forever?

Young Barney: Forever and a day. **(They embrace and turn to exit)**
When you hold me in your arms I feel a love so gentle, like a beautiful melody inside me, like the notes of a golden

flute or the tinkling of silver bells.

Rosalind: I feel exactly the same. **(Both exit).**

Old Barney: **(To the audience)** I watched the two of them, happy in each others arms, and I started to think about my own life. It was then that I realized that I'd never known such happiness. It saddened me. I'd spent all my life hauling bricks on my back like any other donkey. Had I never had a chance to shed my burden? To rid the kingdom of the pigs or find a beautiful princess to love? Tails and ears and hooves aren't really an obstacle, are they? Young Barney proved that it was possible to win through despite them, and that it was possible to love and be loved in return. If you really want. If you really fight. Perhaps I was too scared to fight, perhaps I didn't want it enough...

During this monologue, the actor playing Old Barney starts to take off his costume and wipe off his makeup. The actor playing Young Barney hurries to reprimand him.

Young Barney: What are you doing? The play isn't over yet. The King and Queen are about to arrive!

Fanfare. Enter King Stephen and Queen Stephanie. The King finds it difficult to hide his fear of Young Barney and Rosalind.

Old Barney: Their Majesties the King and Queen of Oz! I'm sure that they've heard that the pigs have been thrown out of the kingdom.

Queen: Stephen, that girl is wearing my gown!

King: Oh, stop it Stephanie! You have a thousand others like it.

Queen: But it's my favorite gown!

King: Keep your voice down or they'll get rid of us just like they got rid of the pigs...

Rosalind: What's going to happen to me, Young Barney, they know I'm not a real princess.

Young Barney: So what?

Queen: **(Points at Young Barney)** He's got a tail and long ears!

King: And I still love you though you're not as slim as you used to be.

Queen: Not slim?! How can you say such a thing? And in front of all these people, too!

King: Shhhh! Those two are very dangerous. Who knows what they may do to us if we annoy them. **(To Young Barney and Rosalind)** We, Stephen King of Oz and Lady Stephanie Queen of Oz thank you for saving our kingdom from Julius and his pigs. In token of our gratitude we confer upon you, brave young knight, the style and honors of a Prince of Oz.

Young Barney: I thank you, Your Majesty.

King: And upon you, fair maiden, we confer the style and honors of a Princess of Oz.

Rosalind: I thank you, Your Majesty.

Queen: But she's only a kitchen-maid...!!

King: Stephanie, we fled from the pigs. They stayed behind and fought them. They are braver and certainly more honest than us.

Queen: I'm not brave? How can you say such a thing? And in front of all these people!

King: Shhhhh!! It's the time for the song. Music! Lights! **(Raises an imaginary conductor's baton).**

Young Barney: I was only a donkey when we met.

Rosalind: And I was a kitchen-maid.

Julius: I was a cruel and wicked king.

Pompey: And I was a friend in need.

Old Barney: **(Declaims)** And a donkey I remain!

All: But only in the theater, only on the stage,

Rosalind: **(Declaims)** And sometimes in real life too.

All: Only in the theater, anything can be staged.

Young Barney: Did a miracle really happen?
Was a wonder here performed?

Pompey: Did a foal defeat a piggy?
Did an ass defeat a lord?

Old Barney: **(Declaims)** And a donkey I remain!

All: But only in the theater, only on the stage,

Rosalind: **(Declaims)** And sometimes in real life too.

All: Only in the theater, anything can be staged.

Young Barney: If we stop dreaming,

Rosalind: And if we don't fight,

Julius: Our dreams won't come true,

Pompey: And then nothing goes right.

Old Barney: **(Declaims)** And I'll always be a donkey!
All: But only in the theater, only on the stage,
Rosalind: **(Declaims)** And sometimes in real life too.
All: Only in the theater, anything can be staged.

THE END