

The Princess And The Hobo

A comedy for children by Motti Lerner

Based on a story by C. N. Bialik

The play was first performed in the Jerusalem Khan Theater in 1980, directed by the playwright. The production won the "Best Children's Play of The Year" award (1981), and was subsequently produced by several theatres in Europe.

English translation: Miriam Shlesinger



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The Characters:

The two participants are Potato, who is fat and irritable, and Tato, who is skinny and artless. The two are hobos, who take on the roles of every one of the other characters in the play.

The Set

The set consists of a bridge-like structure, about 5 to 6 feet high, with a ladder extending in either direction. The ladders make it possible to climb onto the bridge from both sides. Suspended within the space created by the bridge and the two ladders is a giant book comprising eight pictures, each of these serves as the appropriate backdrop for one of the scenes in the play. The book also serves as a kind of partition behind which the actors change costumes, masks, props, etc.

The props are enumerated below as the play proceeds.

Prologue

Potato and Tato step out and face the audience. They are playing a very elaborate musical overture, combined with a whole array of comical effects. Tato is playing a violin and Potato is playing a small accordion. It is obvious from their performance that they are very eager to endear themselves on the audience. As it proceed we soon discover that every difference of opinion between the two performers is settled by slapping and kicking. When the overture ends they seem very disappointed with the applause.

Potato: You call that an applause? Is that any way to show appreciation to performers of our caliber? It's a disgrace to the arts!

Tato: A disgrace to culture!

Potato: The sun will be ashamed to shine with you around!

Tato: The moon too!

As the applause grows louder, they introduce one another.

Potato: Allow me to introduce my very best friend, Mr. Tato.

Tato: **(teasing)** allow me to introduce my very worst friend, Mr.

Potato.

Potato: Worst?!

Tato: Worst.

Potato: Worst?!

Tato: Best?

Potato: Best!

Tato: Worst!

Potato: **(Pointing straight up) Yoo-hoo. (Tato looks up. Potato slaps him and laughs)**

Tato: Ouch... **(His feelings are hurt)**

Potato tries to hint to Tato that he ought to begin the prologue.

Potato: And...

Tato: And?...

Potato: And...

Tato: And?

Potato: Well...

Tato: Well?...

Potato: **(Hinting to Tato to begin) You...**

Tato: You...

Potato: Me??

Tato: Me?

Potato: You...

Tato: **(Agrees) Me...**

Potato is just about to begin, when Tato jumps the gun.

Tato: Ladies and gentlemen, audience and friends.

Potato: Unless we begin, you won't know how it ends.

Tato: We're about to put on a magnificent play.

Potato: You can all have a ball if you're willing to stay.

Tato: Such a form of performance you never did see.

Potato: Just you watch, as you listen to Tato and me.

Tato: What a show we've got planned just to share an old tale

Potato: About a really smart king. Paragon's his name.
 Tato: And his daughter named Abigail who was one pretty dame.
 Potato: When it comes to sheer beauty, she was really the most.
 Tato: A creature they toasted from coast to coast.
 Potato: There was poor old Ezekiel who was totally blind.
 Tato: And his son Ragamuffin who was caught in a bind.
 Potato: It's a story of love and romance, though quite brief.
 Tato: But it's also a story of heartache and grief.
 Potato: The thing I like most is how happily it ends.
 Tato: Though it does get quite sad every now and then.
 Potato: **(Protests)** Sad?!

Tato: Sad...

Potato: Sad?

Tato: Happy?

Potato: Happy...

Tato: Sad...

Potato: **(Points upwards)** Yoo-hoo... **(Tato looks up. Potato slaps him and announces)** Scene one!!

Potato hands Tato the accordion, so that Tato barely manages to hold onto the violin and bow at the same time. He can't squeeze out the exit. Potato tries to cover for Tato's clumsiness, but soon loses patience sends him packing with a kick in the behind. As soon as Tato is out the door, Potato opens the curtain in front of the picture-book.

Scene One

Potato: Scene one! In scene one you'll see king Paragon and his daughter Abigail in the royal palace in Castle-city. **(Tato tosses him a small pail, which Potato catches and puts on his head)** Now I'm king Paragon, every time I put this pail on my head I'm... **(suddenly he feels something wet inside the pail. He pulls it out and discovers a dripping floor-rag. He groans in disgust and hurls it into the wings. Sure enough, it lands on Tato. Potato puts the pail back on his head and faces the audience again)** every time I put this pail on my head I'm king Paragon. I have to tell you I'm the smartest man on earth. Soon you'll see just what I mean. **(in the direction of the wings)** Tato!

Enter Tato, squeezing the floor-rag. Potato points upwards.

Potato: Yoo-hoo!

Potato looks up. Tato slaps him. Potato exits, sulking.

Potato: **(to the audience)** See what I mean? **(laughs)** I have a beautiful daughter. The prettiest girl you've ever seen. She's got eyes as brown as doves. She's got cheeks as pink as roses. She's got lips as red as tomatoes. She's got teeth as white as bananas. And all the rest of her is like watermelons...

Tato enters, wearing a fancy wig and holding a fan.

Tato: I'm king Paragon's daughter, Abigail. Every time I put on this wig, you'll know that I'm Abigail and that I'm a princess, which means I can do whatever I want. Oh, how I love to get up with the larks and roam through the royal gardens, or just to sit still by myself in the vineyards, and breathe in the fragrance of the flowers or listen to the birds singing. I adore watching the sunset, and daydreaming to my heart's content. I could spend the whole day just dreaming.

Potato: **(teasing)** Spend the whole day just dreaming...

Tato: **(his feelings are hurt. He points upwards)** Yoo-hoo...

Potato is faster than him. He slaps Tato's face. Furious, Tato pulls off the wig and stomps out.

Potato: I absolutely adore my daughter Abigail but I'm frantically worried about her too. Let me tell you why I'm so frantically worried. Because she's been "eligible" for two years now, and she still hasn't found herself a husband. **(calls out to her)** Abigail!! **(Tato appears, not noticing that his wig has fallen off)** Are you my daughter Abigail?

Tato: Yes... **(rushes out in a frenzy, and returns with the wig back on his head)**

Potato: Abigail, wouldn't you like to marry... **(chooses someone in the audience)**

Tato: No. His teeth are loose.

Potato: How about him?

Tato: Out of the question... He's got red hair and freckles.

Potato: **(Choosing a very small child)** well then, what do you say to this one?

Tato: Forget it. He's much too big for me.

Potato: **(to the audience)** Did you hear that? See how much trouble she's been causing? How much heartache? That's a prodigal daughter for you. She's more than I bargained for. I'll tell you that much. **(he hits her on the behind, causing her to fall down. Tato quickly pulls himself together and gives Potato a kick in the backside)** what was that?

Tato: Beats me.

As Potato turns around in search of the culprit, Tato kicks him again.

Potato: Who was that?

Tato: **(trying to save his skin)** It was that guy... **(pointing at someone in the audience. As soon as Potato turns in that direction, Tato kicks him a third time. Potato spins around in time to see Tato pretending in vain to be lacing his shoe)**

Potato: **(pointing upwards)** Yoo-hoo... **(Tato looks up. Potato slaps him)**

Potato: End of scene one.

Scene Two

Potato: Scene two!! **(the two of them flip over the picture hanging behind them. Potato exits)**

Tato: In scene two you'll see poor old Ezekiel who's completely blind, and his son Ragamuffin who was caught in a bind.

Potato: **(who hasn't yet had a chance to put on Ezekiel's beard)** Do that again!!

Tato repeats his introduction and Potato asks him to say it a third time. Tato gets angry and shouts:

Tato: Enough!!!

Just then Potato enters, dressed up as old Ezekiel, feeling his way with a cane. As soon as he hears Tato scream, Potato is petrified. He freezes, dumbfounded. Tato tries different methods of getting him to snap out of it: tickling him, pulling his ear, waving a hand in front of his face. Every attempt causes Potato to keel over. Tato seems to have a brainstorm: he exits, and returns with a pump which he sticks in Potato's rear, pumping away until Potato is upright. As soon as Tato lets go, Potato lets out a whistle, as though suddenly losing air, and keels over. Potato repeats the pumping but again Tato whistles and slumps over. Tato tries a third time and quickly makes a show of stopping up the opening with his thumb. Potato straightens to an upright position. Tato kicks him in the rear and Potato moves towards the audience.

Potato: I'm Ezekiel. I'm a writer and I come from little town. All my life I used to write letters for people who can't read and read letters for people who can't write. But I'm an old man now. And I can't see **(hee... Hee...)** My hands tremble too. But I have a son, Ragamuffin, who's as sweet as can be **(hee... Hee...)** He's always there to help me **(hee.. Hee..)** Ragamuffin, don't you agree **(hee... Hee....)?**

Tato: Of course I do. I'm always there to help you. You're such a wonderful dad. A lovable father. A pop who's so good and smart and...

Potato: Don't be cheeky...

Tato: Sorry...

Potato: Take this down. Take this down. **(to the audience)** he's a chip off the old block. We both have...

Tato: **(interrupting)** The flu... **(they both sneeze)**

Potato: That's right... That's right... Take this down. Take this down. **(Tato starts writing on a roll of toilet paper and winds up entangled in it).** "from Ezekiel aristocrat to Alexander the Fourth..." Hurry up... Faster... Faster... In reply to your last letter, permit me to inform you that... Faster... Hurry...

Ragamuffin has had enough. All at once, he breaks loose of the paper and shouts.

Tato: Stop!!! **(Potato is petrified. He freezes in place again. Tato turns to the audience)** enough! I've had it up to here with that father of mine! I'm going to run away from home. I know it's going to be tough. I know the road is filled with pitfalls and potholes. But I'm old enough... And I'll just get me a job in Castle-city... Or in new york... **(Tato turns to leave, but Potato follows him, undetected. A moment later, Tato turns around and bumps into him, startling both of them)**

Potato: Where do you think you're going?

Tato: **(Frightened, stammering)** G... g... g...

Potato: Yoo-hoo... **(Potato looks up. Tato slaps him and announces)**
End of scene two.

Tato flips over the picture and exits to prepare for the next scene.

Scene Three

Potato: In scene three you'll see king paragon and his daughter Abigail in the royal palace in Castle-city. **(Tato throws him the pail. Potato puts it on his head)** now I'm king Paragon. I just want to remind you that... **(feeling something wet on his head, he removes the pail and discovers the dripping floor-rag inside. He groans in disgust and hurls the rag into the wings. Of course the rag hits Tato. Potato turns back to the audience)** I want to remind you that every time i put this pail on my head, I am king Paragon. And i'd also like to remind you that i am very, very, very, very, frantically worried about my daughter Abigail who still isn't married. And right now i'm going to climb up onto the roof of my palace and gaze at the stars to see just what fate has in store for her... **(to Tato)** Tato!

Tato: Yes, Potato...

Potato: The telescope... **(Climbs up on the bridge. Tato quickly brings him two long pipes. Potato uses one of them to gaze skywards while Tato - down at ground level - uses the other to support him. Potato keeps issuing commands)** To the right. **(Tato moves to the left)** To the right. To the right. **(Tato moves to the right)** To the left... **(Tato moves to the left)** Look, a kangaroo!!!

Tato: Where?

Potato: Australia. **(turns his pipe to the right)** To the right. **(Tato shifts to the right)**. Oh, a penguin!!

Tato: Where?

Potato: Iceland... **(Moves the pipe again)** To the middle... **(Tato shifts his pipe towards the center, but lowers it. Potato looks at the audience through his pipe)** Oh, children?! **(Realizing that his telescope is pointed at the audience, he becomes angry)** Up! skywards! **(Tato obeys)** To the right. **(Tato turns to the left. Potato carries his pipe by himself as they move in opposite directions)** To the left... **(as before)** To the right... To the left... To the right... **(Potato issues his commands at an evergrowing pace. Suddenly he emits a bloodcurdling cry)** oooohhhh!! **(he drops his pipe to the ground. Tato is so startled that he drops his pipe too.)**

Tato: What happened?

Potato: According to the stars, my daughter Abigail will marry a hapless nobody from little town. **(In a singsong)** Oh, woe is me. Catastrophe! a terrible calamity! for a king as righteous as can be. Why can't my daughter be like me? I'd rather die than let that happen... **(He is about to jump off the tower)**

Tato: Hold it!! **(quickly dons the wig, returns and lets out a screech in the role of Abigail)** Oh, father dear. Oh wisest of kings. Oh revered chairman of the international boy scouts movement... Don't! please don't jump...

Potato: I will too!! **(He advances towards the edge of the bridge, but realizing how high it is, he gets cold feet, climbs back down the ladder, and prepares to jump)**

Tato: **(In despair)** no...

Potato: **(Stops)** It's too deep... **(Climbs down two rungs, and prepares to jump)**

Tato: **(In despair)** Don't... Please don't.

Potato: **(Stops)** It's too wet... **(Climbs down two more rungs and prepares to jump again)**

Tato: **(Frantically)** no!!

Potato: **(Stops)** It's too stormy... **(Climbs down another two rungs to the bottom one)**

Tato: Well, go ahead and jump...

Potato: That's just what I'm going to do! **(Tato shuts his eyes in fear)** here goes nothing! **(Potato jumps, then discovers that he's made a soft landing)** I'm saved!! **(Tato approaches to congratulate him on his remarkable good fortune. Potato grabs his ear angrily)** Abigail, you terrible, horrible daughter of mine. I've decided to send you away to a desert island, to shut you up in a tower... To lock the gate. And post guards all around the tower to protect you from that nobody of yours from Littletown.

Tato: Did you hear that? Did you hear that? Did you hear what a terrible sentence he's decreed for me? oh, woe is me. Catastrophe! a terrible calamity! for a daughter as beautiful as can be. Why won't my father listen to me? **(rushing towards the audience)** Would you agree to adopt me? I don't want to live with my father any more. I'm an abused child... I'm an abused princess... Kings make such mean and horrible fathers.

Potato: **(Running after her, menacingly)** Abigail... Abigail... If you don't come back immediately I'm going to cut you up into little bits and turn you into a thousand-piece puzzle...

Tato: Well, that's different. Now you're beginning to make sense.

Potato: Off to the tower... **(Pulling Tato by the ear)**

Tato: Let me go... Let me go...

Potato: To the tower. **(Tato resists with all his might)** You want me to let you go?

Tato: Yes...

Potato: Alright. **(drops Tato off the ladder. He falls to the ground with a thud)** Abigail, daughter of mine. How about a ride on the swing with daddy?

Tato: Ok. **(Potato signals the audience that he is planning a trap, and exits)** I really love to swing, 'cause I'm a real swinger. I'll marry, I'll marry not, I'll marry, I'll marry not...

Potato leaves and returns with a miniature broom. He places it on the floor and summons Tato to stand on one end of it. Meanwhile, he prepares to jump as hard as he can on the other end in order to fling Tato onto the bridge. Just when Potato is about to jump, Tato turns to him.

Tato: And then we'll go to the circus?

Potato: Yes... **(preparing to jump again)**

Tato: And then you'll buy me an ice cream cone?

Potato: Yes... **(Quickly jumps, flinging Tato towards the bridge)**

Tato: **(Wailing)** Oh!!

Potato: **(Announces)** End of scene three.

Tato removes his wig and climbs down to prepare for the next scene.

Scene Four

Potato: Scene four. **(Flips over the picture)** In scene four you'll see Ezekiel's son, Ragamuffin, who has set out from his home in Littletown in search of adventure. **(winks at the audience, and places a juicy yellow banana on the floor)**

Tato: And so I left home and was on my way. My satchel on my back, my hat on my head and my walking stick... Not in my hand. But my spirits are high, and I haven't a worry in the world, for my bones are filled with vigor and my heart with hope, and my hair is as curly as can be. And I'm so happy, and carefree, and carefree and happy and so on and so forth and so forth and so on...

Suddenly he slips on the banana.

Tato: Oh, goody, a banana!! a sweet banana... A juicy banana... A gift sent to me by my lucky star, the one that watches over me. **(He picks it up and peels it)**

Potato enters wearing a monkey mask. Tato spots him and stares.

Tato: What's this? a monkey? **(To Tato's amazement, the monkey repeats every move that he makes. Tato forgets the banana and dances with the monkey)** look. Monkey see, monkey do. **(the monkey takes a bite of the banana)** What a lovable monkey. **(The monkey takes a second bite)** He seems almost human. **(The monkey takes a third bite, and Tato is left**

holding nothing but a peel. He turns away from the monkey, and faces the audience) How happy am I that I left my home. How wonderful life can be. **(The monkey has left by now)** and now I'm hungry. Why don't I eat the sweet and juicy banana that my lucky star sent me. **(Discovers that the banana is all gone. Looks for it. Can't find it and gives up in despair)** I must have eaten it already... **(He's about to throw the peel on the floor, but has second thoughts)** Don't be a litterbug... **(stashes the peel in his satchel)** and now I'm tired of all this celebrating, and my stomach is rumbling... Why don't I just find a stone to put beneath my head, and go to sleep. **(Takes a small stone out of his satchel, leans his head against it, and falls asleep standing up)**

Potato enters wearing a bear mask. Suddenly he gets the impression that the audience doesn't recognize the mask. He reappears, carrying a sign with the word bear on it. He shows the audience the sign, exits and returns. He notices Ragamuffin, and sniffs his face and body. Ragamuffin thinks it's a mosquito flying overhead, and doesn't bother to open his eyes. The bear continues. After a while, Tato opens his eyes.

Tato: **(Turns to the audience)** What was that? A mosquito? **(The audience will shout: no, it's a bear)** A bear? where?

The audience will shout: behind you. He turns around, but doesn't find a thing. He turns to the audience again.

Tato: where?

The audience will shout behind you again. Tato turns around, and discovers the bear growling in his direction. Tato is horrified. He emits a series of stifled groans ending in a loud sneeze. The bear is scared off by the loud sneeze and runs away, offstage. Tato examines his nose carefully but finds nothing unusual. He turns back to the audience.

Tato: I sneezed him away! now I can be on my way, full of courage and hope. You see how patience pays off and courage never lets you down. I told you life is wonderful.

Tato takes to the road. Potato, in a lion mask, is tiptoeing behind him, undetected. A minute later, Tato turns back and notices the growling lion. To Potato's dismay, he bursts out laughing. Potato growls again, but Tato keeps laughing. Potato takes off the mask.

Potato: You're supposed to be scared.

Tato: But you're not scary.

Potato: Not scary?

Tato: No.

Potato: **(Puts the mask back on and turns to the audience)** Growl...
(but Tato just laughs)

Tato: **(Encourages the audience to answer no)** No...

Potato: But I'm a lion. I'm king of the beasts.

Tato: That sure beasts me!

Potato: **(Angrily)** Not scary, eh? just you wait. Just you wait.. **(exits)**

Tato: **(To the audience)** Once he used to make a very scary lion. They even hired him to play the roaring lion at M.G.M.

Potato returns, hiding an enema behind his back.

Potato: **(Pretending to have forgotten what the next scene is supposed to be)** what next?

Tato: Uh... Uh... Sure... Sure... **(Can't remember)** um...

Potato: Well...

Tato: **(Remembers)** Rain rain go away... Come again some other day...

Potato: Oh, that's right... Rain... **(Sprays him with water from the enema - more than they had planned)** I'm not scary, eh? not scary? **(Exits)**

Tato: Oh, the rain is cold. Oh, the rain is wet. How cold am I. How cold and wet. What shall I do? where shall I go? where shall I hide? oh, no... Oh, no. **(In a singsong)** Oh woe is me. Catastrophe! A terrible calamity! For a boy as innocent as can be. Why won't my lucky star save me?

Potato enters wearing the enormous, frightening mask of a bull. He takes it off and sniggers slyly towards the audience, calling out Tato.

Potato: Head of a bull!! It's not empty, but full. **(Puts the bull mask down on the floor and exits)**

Tato: I'll take this bull by the head, and I've nothing to dread. Why don't I just hide inside it, and go back to sleep... **(Covers his head with the bull mask and snores out loud)**

Potato enters and sprays him with the enema again.

Potato: Rain, rain go away... **(Kicks Tato in the backside. Tato takes off the mask)**

Tato: What was that? it must be hailstones...

Potato kicks him again. Tato takes off the mask and sees him.

Tato: I think... I get the impression that someone kicked me. Potato **(Feigning innocence)** I wonder who it could be.

Tato: **(Handing him the bull mask)** Hold this for a minute, will you...

Potato: **(Tries on the bull mask. Tato kicks him)** Ouch.

Tato: Did they kick you too, Potato?

Potato: Yes they did. I wonder who it could be.

Tato: I think... I get the impression it might have been the bull.

Potato: The bull?

Tato: That's right.

Potato: yoo-hoo... **(Points upwards. Tato looks up. Potato slaps him and tosses the bull mask towards him. Tato topples over. Potato announces)** End of scene four. **(Tato rises and exits)**

Scene Five

Potato: Scene five. **(Flips over the picture)** And in scene five you'll see the terrible torment of king Paragon's daughter, Princess Abigail, who's been locked up by her father in a very high tower on a desert island, far far away in the middle of the deep blue neverending salty sea... Just to keep her from marrying her nobody from Littletown... **(exits)**

Tato climbs up the tower and puts on Abigail's wig.

Tato: Woe is me. Catastrophe! A terrible calamity! for a daughter as beautiful as can be. Why must I live here in misery? **(Crying. Shows the audience a sign that says: The unhappy Princess Abigail)**

Potato appears wearing a snake mask and hiding a big red apple in his pants pocket.

Potato: Princess, Princess. Why are you crying?

Tato: Can't you read, you idiot? It says why right here. Because I'm so unhappy.

Potato: But why are you unhappy?

Tato: Because I don't know whom I ought to marry, and meanwhile I'm all alone and miserable.

Potato: You don't know whom you ought to marry?

Tato: No, I don't.

Potato: You don't? **(Blows a snake kiss in her direction)**

Tato: I don't...

Potato: You don't?

Tato: You?!

Potato: Sure... I've got a long tongue to kiss you with. I've got a long tail to tickle you with.

Tato: **(alarmed)** No, no. You don't kiss at all like the one I love. You don't tickle at all like the one I adore. No... Please, leave me alone. Just leave me alone and go... **(sobs)**

Potato: But I've got a big red apple too.

Tato: A big red apple?

Potato: That's right. **(Shows the apple)**
Tato: You do?
Potato: I do.
Tato: You do?
Potato: I do. And I'll give it to you in return for a kiss.
Tato: One kiss?
Potato: That's right.
Tato: All of it?
Potato: That's right.
Tato: For one little kiss?
Potato: That's right.
Tato: And then we'll go to the circus?
Potato: Yes.
Tato: And then you'll buy me an ice cream cone?
Potato: Yes. **(To the audience)** what a nuisance she is...

Abigail can't resist the temptation. Potato appraoches Tato and kisses him. Tato is angry and pushes him away.

Tato: A kiss from him!! **(From the snake)** not from you.
Potato: What difference does it make?
Tato: Your breath smells of cigarettes.
Potato: No it doesn't. It's only garlic.
Tato: Oh, no. Only garlic!
Potato: **(Pulling an onion out of his pocket)** Then I'll chew on an onion...
Tato: Oh, no. I hate onions.

Tato, who hates onions, immediately runs away, straight into the audience. He chooses a cute little girl and points at her.

Tato: Kiss her! **(Points at someone else)** Kiss him... And her...

Nobody in the audience is willing to be kissed by Potato. He returns to the stage and complains.

Potato: Nobody wants to kiss me...

Tato: No wonder. I told you to stop brushing your teeth with kerosene.

Potato: Kerosene? **(Points upwards)** Yoo-hoo...

Tato looks up. Potato kisses him and rushes, laughing, offstage. Tato runs after him. From the wings comes the sound of slapping and fisticuffs, broken dishes etc. After a moment, the two of them return, bruised and limping.

Both: End of scene five. (As they flip over the picture, they both hurt their fingers and groan in unison) Ouch!! **(Potato exits)**

Scene Six

Tato: Scene six. **(flips over the picture. From the wings, Potato tosses the bull mask at him)** In scene six you'll see what happened to Ragamuffin from Littletown after he left home and fought the bear and the lion and hid from the rain inside the head of a bull. In the forest. At night. **(puts the bull mask on his head and snores standing up)**

Potato appears on the bridge in an eagle's mask.

Potato: I'm a black eagle. I'm a dreadful eagle. There's nobody as dreadful as me in the whole world. **(discovers the bull's head)** look. A head of a bull. I'm going to pounce on it and take it with me to the highest tower on the desert island in the middle of the deep, blue neverending salty sea, where I'll devour and devour and devour and devour... **(as he prepares to pounce on the bull's head, he stops in hesitation)** I've got a stomach ache. **(after straining a while, he lays an egg)** what do you know, an egg. **(he can't figure out what to do with it, and decides to hide it in his pocket. Then he sniffs Tato and tries to kick him up onto the bridge)** goodness, he's heavy... **(tries to drag him in his beak)** goodness, he's fat... **(doesn't know what to do. Takes a red handkerchief out of his pocket to wipe his forehead. Has an idea. Waves his handkerchief in front of the bull)** Toro... Toro... **(but the bull doesn't budge. Potato is at a loss. He takes off his eagle mask, and has a brainstorm. Rushing off into the wings, he returns, holding a giant ice cream cone. He pushes the ice cream right under the bull's nose. Sure enough, the bull charges right at him. Potato recoils and rushes up the tower. Tato, still wearing the bull's head, follows him up. Potato rubs his hands together, pleased with himself)**

Tato: What about the ice cream?

Potato: You want the ice cream?

Tato: That's right.

Potato: Then why don't you say so?

Potato plops the ice cream right onto Tato's face, smothering him with it. Tato groans. Potato laughs out loud. Suddenly he feels something wet in his pocket. He puts his hand in and pulls out an omelette.

Potato: Yuck... (exchanges glances with Tato. Together, looking thoroughly disgusted, the two of them toss away the ice cream and the omelette) End of scene six!

Potato steps down off the bridge, and flips over the picture. Tato tosses the bull's head into the wings and prepares for the next scene.

Scene Seven

Potato: Scene seven! in scene seven you'll see the fateful meeting between princess Abigail and poor Ragamuffin from Littletown who has reached the tower thanks to his lucky star, and the eagle, and the ice cream cone. **(exits)**

Tato: Now I'm Ragamuffin, the poor nobody from Littletown. And let me remind you that every time you see me put on this hat, I'm Ragamuffin. **(pretending to wake up)** what a horrible dream I had. I dreamed that a terrifying eagle carried me off on its wings and took me to a high tower on a desert island. We climbed up mountains and down into valleys... We travelled on buses and we crossed over oceans... What a ridiculous dream. **(discovers that he is on the tower)** it wasn't a dream. It's all as real as can be. **(looks terrified)** i'm on top of a high tower... **(in a singsong)** water water everywhere and not a boat in sight. Oh, woe is me.

Catastrophe! a terrible calamity! for a boy as innocent as me.
 Why can't I be where I want to be? I'd rather die... **(prepares to jump off, but suddenly hears a voice)**

It's Potato who climbs up the tower from the other side, wearing Abigail's wig, and imitating her voice. Tato hears the voice, but doesn't see a thing. He continues.

Tato: As I was saying, I'd rather die... **(hears the voice again. Looks around)** what's this I hear?

Potato: **(spotted by Tato)** What's this I see?

Tato: A beautiful maiden!

Potato: A handsome young man!

Tato: Her eyes like doves...

Potato: His eyes like gloves...

Tato: Am I dreaming, or is this really happening?

Potato: Is this really happening, or am I dreaming?

Tato: **(slapping himself)** It's happening...

Potato: **(slapping Tato's face)** Like in a dream... Who are you and what brings you here?

Tato: Ragamuffin from Littleton am I. A horrible eagle brought me on its wings. Water water everywhere and not a boat in sight. **(he is carried away, flailing his arms and hitting Potato so hard that he almost pushes him off the bridge)**

Potato: Do you like me enough to marry me?

Tato: And who are you, if I may ask, so I can go and tell the gang...

Potato: I am princess Abigail, daughter of king Paragon.

Tato: Daughter of king Paragon. **(a double take)** daughter of king Paragon?! **(faints)**

Potato: **(bringing him to)** And I want to marry you.

Tato: Marry me... **(double take)** marry me?! **(faints again)**

Potato: That's right. That's right. Marry you. **(draws closer, to give him a kiss, but loses his pants in the process, exposing his funny underpants. Tato laughs out loud. Potato quickly pulls up his pants and gets annoyed with Tato)** end of scene seven. **(climbs down off the bridge and exits)**

Scene Eight

Tato: In scene eight you'll see king Paragon visiting his daughter Abigail, who is high up in the tower on the desert island in the middle of the deep blue neverending salty sea. **(in a singsong)** water water everywhere and not a boat in sight. And meanwhile, Abigail and Ragamuffin have been whiling away their time in love.

Enter Potato. His body is lodged in a large vat from which the bottom has been removed. He has a pail on his head and is holding a broom, poised as an oar.

Potato: **(singing)** Row, row, row your boat, down the stream I sail.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily. To see my Abigail. **(spots Tato wearing Abigail's wig, holding Ragamuffin's hat and kissing it)** Abigail! Abigail! you ungrateful excuse for a daughter!

Tato: **(as Abigail)** Papa!

Potato: **(turning to the audience)** Did you see what she has the audacity to do behind my back? did you? kissing an unidentified foreign object!! **(Tato, alarmed, quickly removes the wig and puts on Ragamuffin's hat. Potato turns to him)** and who are you, you bump on a log?!

Tato: And who are you, with the face of a frog?

Potato: Face of a frog?

Tato: Face of a frog...

Potato: Face of a frog?

Tato: Bump on a log?

Potato: I'm king Paragon... King of Castle-city and the land all around... Just look it up in the phonebook if you don't believe me.

Tato: **(quaking)** I am nothing but a nobody from Littletown, your highness. And a terrible eagle carried me off on its wings and brought me to this tower. **(in a singsong)** water water everywhere and not a ship in sight. That's how I met your beautiful daughter. I fell in love with her and now I want to marry her...

Potato: You're from Littletown.

Tato: That's right. Just look it up in the phonebook.

Potato: **(astounded)** Woe is me. Catastrophe!

Tato: **(as Abigail)** The best thing that ever happened to me!

Potato: This is the same nobody from Littletown that the stars warned me would marry my daughter...

Tato: **(as Abigail)** This is the same cute and chubby young man I saw myself marrying in my dreams.

Potato: Cute and chubby?! no, no, no. Out of the question.

Tato: **(as Ragamuffin)** If it please your royal highness. I fought off the monkey. I fought off the bear and the lion. I beat them all. And I can beat you too.

Potato: **(to the audience)** This excuse for a flea thinks he can beat me?! this bee in my bonnet? this undersized insect? this pulverized microbe? this synthesized virus?

Tato: **(as Abigail)** I love him and I want to marry him. And unless I do, I'll spread my hands and jump into the water.

Potato: No. No. Out of the question.

Tato: **(as Ragamuffin)** If you don't give me your daughter, I'll fill you with water. **(pours water out of a small bottle into Paragon's boat)**

Potato: **(as Paragon)** No! don't! i won't let you have my daughter.

Tato: **(as Abigail)** In that case, I'll take off my socks and jump off the dock.

Potato: No. Don't! don't! please don't jump. You'll get wet. **(rushes over to the spot where she is about to land)**

Tato as Abigail spreads his arms and seems about to jump. Potato rushes over to the spot where Tato is likely to land and holds out his arms to catch him. Tato starts getting confused between his alternating roles as Abigail and as Ragamuffin, and loses his composure. He launches into a muddled, choppy monologue, in the course of which he keeps changing voices and mumbling fragments of the lines he has had in the course of the performance, trying to figure out what he is supposed to be saying.

Tato: **(in Abigail's voice)** unless I can have your daughter, I'll fill you with lots more water... **(realizes that he is using the wrong voice)** If I jump I might drown and my pants will fall down. I'm just a hapless nobody from Littletown... Oh, woe is me. Catastrophe... Water water everywhere... Look, a banana... I'll sneeze him away... We both have a cold... I'm a princess and I love to daydream... A penguin... Father... Papa... Yoo-hoo...

Potato stands, dumbfounded, under the bridge, trying to help Tato by signalling that it's time to pour out some more water. Tato finally snaps Abigail's wig, on top of which he places Ragamuffin's hat. He pours the rest of the water out of the bottle onto Potato and declares:

Tato: Then let's both jump, and you'll drown with a bump.

Potato: Help. Help. I'm drowning. **(sinks deeper and deeper. Turns skywards)** what do you say about uhis, up there in heaven? should they be allowed to get married? should they? should they?

Tato: **(in a deep voice)** yes!

Potato: I didn't hear you.

Tato: Yes!!!

Potato: **(to the audience)** What do you say? should we let them get married? **(the audience is bound to answer yes)** Abigail and Ragamuffin? **(the audience will answer yes)** then a marriage it will be!!

Tato: **(who hasn't heard clearly)** A carriage?

Potato: A marriage...

Tato: A carriage?

Potato: A wedding.

Tato: Oh, a marriage. **(jumps off the bridge)**

Potato takes off Paragon's crown and puts on Abigail's wig. Tato puts on Ragamuffin's hat. In the background comes the sound of the wedding march. Potato grabs Tato in an effort to kiss him. Tato gently pushes him away. Potato tries again. Finally, Tato loses his patience and points upwards

Tato: Yoo-hoo...

Except that Potato is wise to him this time, and quickly sneaks in a kiss. Tato is horrified. Potato escapes into the wings, with Tato following on his heels. Behind the scenes we hear the sound of slapping, fisticufls and dishes breaking, ending with a loud bang. A moment later, they both emermge, bruised and limpinp. Potato is holdinp a violin, Tato an accordion. They are battered and exhausted, barely managing to get their instruments into position. As soon as the music is sounded for them to bow, they begin playing, but here again - just as in the prologue - they get into a fight and wind up slapping and kicking each other. A moment later, they give in to the audience applause, shake hands, kiss one another and take a bow.

THE END