3rd Annual Fantasy Faire (2005)

**Finale (4:00 PM)**

*Characters:*
- *Princess Penelope*
- *Jack the jester*
- *Lord Desmond and his squire*
- *Rufus Saphron Magi*
- *Gypsies and other performing talent*
- *Competitors for the Bravest (Sir Sean O'Reilly and Sir Amras Felagund)*
- *Competitors for the Noblest (Sir Alan and Sir Eddington)*
- *Competitors for the Strongest (Framingham and Iago)*
- *Drummers (if available)*

*Stage properties:*
- A throne for Penelope
- Scroll with names of competitors for Penelope
- Chairs for the audience
- Ropes and posts to separate the audience from the combat area
- Five tournament weapons: two for the bravest, two for the noblest, and one for Desmond

A procession forms outside the Royal Stage, consisting of all but Desmond and his squire. Jack is in the lead; he capers and dances and makes a fuss. Penelope, escorted by O'Reilly and Felagund, follows him. The rest of the procession follows. The drummers keep up a military beat. Penelope comes to her throne, and stops; the drummers stop as well. Jack sits on the ground at the base of the throne.

**PENELOPE**

(to Jack)
You don't have to sit on the ground. You can stand with everyone else.

**JACK**

(formally)
Your Highness, the place of your jester is at your feet.

Penelope knows he's right, though she wishes it weren't true. She addresses the audience.

**PENELOPE**

Ladies and gentlemen of the Realm, and visitors from afar.
For those of you I've not had the pleasure to meet, I am
Princess Penelope, ruler of this Realm. Welcome, one and all, to the presentation of the best of the Realm!

COMPANY
(applause)

GYPSIES
(cheers, whoops)

PENELOPE
It is our hope that once Lord Desmond has seen the best that our Realm has to offer, he will consent to wed me, and unite our two realms.

COMPANY
(polite applause)

GYPSIES
(without enthusiasm)
Yay.

PENELOPE
(looking around)
Where is Lord Desmond? This ceremony has no meaning if he is not here.

JACK
Lord Desmond sends his apologies, your Highness. He is unavoidably detained. He asks that you start the... ummm... non-military competitions without him.
PENELOPE

Very well.

(sits down, unrolls the scroll)
Our first competition is for the cleverest. We have only one name on the list. Rufus Saphron Magi, step forward.

COMPANY & GYPSIES

(applause)

RUFUS

Your Highness, I thank you, but I cannot accept this honor.

COMPANY

(gasps)

PENELOPE

Rufus, I can't believe this. Everyone in the Realm knows you are the cleverest. When you placed your name in the competition, no one else would put their name forward against yours.

RUFUS

Your Highness, I still have not been able to make sense of the last riddle that the Fairies gave me. I know I am... a failure.

GYPSIES

Awww.

PENELOPE

You judge yourself too harshly. You guided many people on an adventure this day. What say the people of the Realm?

COMPANY & GYPSIES

(applause, cheers)

PENELOPE

They have spoken. Rufus Saphron Magi, take your place in the winners' section.
Rufus Saphron Magi bows, then moves into the winners' area. There's a look of deep concentration on his face as he still works on the final riddle.

PENELOPE
(looks at the scroll)
Our next competition is for the most talented. There are quite a few entries... Jack, would you please handle this contest?

JACK
Yes, your Highness.

Jack gets up and conducts the competition for most talented. He'll lead all the performers forward, hold hands over people's heads, ask for audience applause to determine who the winner is. Keep this quick; two minutes is long enough. The winners move to the winners' area. When Jack is done, he sits on the ground before the throne. Penelope looks at her scroll.

PENELOPE
Our next non-military competition is... best shoe-shiner in the Realm.

DESMOND
(from a distance)
Forgive me, Princess!

Desmond strides forward. His squire, who holds a tournament weapon and a steel weapon, accompanies him. He sits upon his throne. The squire stands to the side of the throne.

DESMOND
I apologize, Princess. I was not presentable after my last wrestling match. I wanted to make sure I looked my best for these proceedings.

PENELOPE
Very well, Lord Desmond. We have just reached best shoe-shiner in the Realm--

________________________

1 No offense to anyone, but we'd better accept that the belly dancers are going to win.

2 If Chris Liedenfrost is there, and if he's playing Agatha at that time of day, then he can start forward as if Agatha is going to claim victory.
DESMOND
Please, Princess. Let us not waste time. Show me your bravest and noblest.

PENELOPE
Let it be so.

Sean, Felagund, Alan, and Eddington come forward.

PENELOPE
(consults her scroll)
Sir Sean O'Reilly and Sir Amras Felagund present themselves as the bravest of the Realm, while Sir Alan and Sir Eddington are the Realm's most noble.

DESMOND
I will only accept one from each category. Knights of the Realm, settle this now.

Penelope nods to contestants. The four bow in unison to Penelope and say "Your Highness," then bow in unison to Desmond and say "Milord." They assume positions in the combat area and face off one-on-one. Keep this battle short; three minutes is enough. If drummers are available, they can accompany the match. At the end, the two victors (Sean and Alan) bow before the throne.

PENELOPE
Lord Desmond, I present to you Sir Sean O'Reilly and Sir Alan, the bravest and noblest of the Realm.

COMPANY & GYPSIES
(applause, cheers)

PENELOPE
Take your place among the winners.

DESMOND
I beg your pardon, your Highness. You have done what I asked. The bravest and noblest stand before me. And yet, I am curious. If these two should battle, who would be the victor?

PENELOPE
Forgive me, milord. I don't understand. You wish to find out through test of arms whether it is better to be brave, or
better to act nobly? Surely there is no simple answer to that question. Sometimes it's better to be one, sometimes the other.

DESMOND
(laughs)
You make it sound so complicated! No, I just want to see which of these two fighters is better. Please, indulge me.

PENELOPE
Very well. Sir Sean, Sir Alan -- test your skill.

The two bow in unison to Penelope and say "Your Highness," then bow in unison to Desmond and say "Milord." They assume positions in the combat area and face off. Keep this battle short; three minutes is enough. If drummers are available, they can accompany the match. If possible, arrange so the battle ends in a tie.

DESMOND
I am satisfied.

PENELOPE
Neither of you did less than your best. You shall both take your place with the winners.

O'Reilly and Alan move to the winners' area.

DESMOND
Finally, let me see your strongest.

Framingham strides forward, saying "It's me." Iago also comes forward, saying "No, it's me."

DESMOND
Gentlemen, there can be only one who is the strongest. I think you know what to do.

The wrestlers go into the combat area and wrestle. Keep it short; three minutes is enough. Whether we use drummers is up to the wrestling team. When it's over, the victor (Framingham) stands before thrones.

PENELOPE
Lord Desmond, I present to you Framingham, the strongest in the Realm.
COMPANY & GYPSIES
(applause, cheers)

PENELOPE
Take your place among the winners.
(stands)
Milord, if you will accompany me?

She offers her hand to Desmond. Desmond stands and takes it. Jack buries his face in his hands. Penelope and Desmond walk to one side of the winners' area.

PENELOPE
Lord Desmond, I present to you -- the best in our entire Realm.

COMPANY & GYPSIES
(applause, cheers)

PENELOPE
Milord, we await your answer. Is our Realm worthy? Shall we be married?

Desmond releases Penelope's hand. He walks to the other side of the winners' area.

DESMOND
This is the best your Realm has to offer?

PENELOPE
(puzzled)
Why, yes milord. Again, I ask: Are we to be wed?

DESMOND
No.

COMPANY & GYPSIES
(outraged)
No?

Jack looks up.

PENELOPE
What is the matter, milord? Are we not worthy?
DESMOND
You do not understand. Worthiness has nothing to do with it. I did not want to see the best of your Realm in order to praise them. I wanted to see your best in order to kill them.

COMPANY
(gasps)

GYPSIES
Boo!

PENELOPE
Wait! I want to understand why he is doing this.

DESMOND
Is it not obvious? If I kill the best of your Realm, I can conquer it easily. Then I shall rule both our realms.

PENELOPE
This makes no sense. If we were married, you'd rule both our realms anyway.

DESMOND
Why should I get married and be miserable for the rest of my life?

FRAMINGHAM
You know, he's got a point.

The nearest female Gypsy whacks Framingham on the head.

GYPSIES
Boo!

SEAN
Enough of this!
(gives Alan a comradely slap on the shoulder)
Let's get him!

Sean and Alan take up their tournament weapons and move to the combat area. Desmond and his squire move to the area as well. Desmond takes a tournament weapon from the squire. There is a quick two-on-one combat. Desmond wins, disarming both opponents. This should be fast; ten
seconds is almost too long. Sean and Alan retreat as Framingham comes forward. Desmond hands his tournament weapon to his squire.

**FRAMINGHAM**

You lost to us twice before. You're going down now!

Framingham and Desmond wrestle. In one move, Desmond has Framingham on the ground. Again, this should be quick; ten seconds is enough. Desmond looks down on Framingham.

**DESMOND**

You mean I _let_ you win before.

As Framingham staggers back, Sean steps forward again.

**SEAN**

Let's put an end to this foolishness. All of us, together. Felagund, Alan, Eddington, Framingham, Iago -- on my signal, we charge.

Sean, Felagund, Alan, Eddington, Framingham, and Iago form a circle around Desmond. Desmond is alert, but does not look concerned.

**SEAN**

Now!

The circle of six attackers contracts around Desmond. There is a moment, then a loud sound. (This can be a slap from within the group, or a "boom" from a drum, or some other stage effect.) The six attackers fall to the ground. Desmond stands strong, confident, unharmed. The attackers stagger back.

**SEAN**

(to Penelope)

Your Highness, we have no chance. He is better than our best.

**DESMOND**

Don't worry, Penelope. Look at the bright side. Now you and Jack can get married, if that's what you want. After all, you won't be a princess anymore.

**PENELOPE**

(angry)

Scoundrel!
DESMOND
You can be my servant.

PENELOPE
Never!

DESMOND
Or my jester.

PENELOPE
Fiend!

DESMOND
Or my slave!

Jack snaps. He leaps up.

JACK
You're talking about the woman I love!

Jack runs into the combat area. He attacks Desmond with the same piece of business used in Scene 3. Desmond hold Jack away with one hand, looks away, yawns, is bored. This should take about ten seconds, no more. Finally, Jack is exhausted. He falls back, staggers to Penelope, and falls at her feet.

JACK
Oh, Penelope. I thought my love for you would be enough. It wasn't.

PENELOPE
(strokes his head)
Jack, I never loved you for your fighting. I love you for the way you made me laugh.

Jack's head snaps up. "Light bulb": he has an idea.

JACK
Even when the jokes weren't funny.
(gets up)
Making people laugh. It's what I'm best at.

Jack moves forward to confront Desmond again.
JACK
Desmond, about your mother.

DESMOND
(bored, uncaring)
What about her?

JACK
What is the difference between your mother and a catfish?

COMPANY & GYPSIES
(offended)
Hey!

PENELOPE
Let Jack speak! It is my command!

DESMOND
(mildly interested)
I don't know. What is the different between my mother and a catfish?

JACK
One is a scum-sucking bottom dweller, and the other is a fish!

COMPANY & GYPSIES
(they think Desmond will run Jack through)
Ooooh!

But Desmond starts giggling instead.

JACK
What do you call it when your mother is buried up to her neck in sand?

DESMOND
(through the giggles)
I don't know.

JACK
Not enough sand.
Desmond starts laughing.

JACK
How do you stop your mother from drowning?

Desmond tries to say "I don't know" but he's laughing too hard.

JACK
Take your foot off her neck.

Desmond is howling. He falls to the ground, helpless.

JACK
Why is your mother like a loaded crossbow?
(a beat)
Because when it's around, you want to shoot it!

Desmond is hysterical. He can't speak. He can hardly breath.

JACK
Desmond, we know your weakness. Leave this Realm, and never return!

Desmond manages to stagger up by leaning on his squire. He's still laughing. He seems about to respond to Jack.

JACK
Your mother is so fat...

Desmond howls again. His squire leads him away. We can still hear him laughing in the distance as the other characters speak. Penelope steps forward, and takes Jack's hands in hers.

PENEOPE
Jack, you did it!

COMPANY & GYPSIES
(cheers, applause, whoops)

SEAN
So Desmond's weakness was a fondness for sick jokes?
JACK
Partly. But his true weakness was that he didn't love his mother.

COMPANY & GYPSIES
(understanding, comprehension)
Ohhhhhh.

Throughout all of this, Rufus Saphron Magi has been cogitating. Suddenly, he figures out the answer and yells it in triumph.

RUFUS
Hero!

COMPANY & GYPSIES
What?

RUFUS
(comes forward to tell Penelope)
The Fairies told me that the answer to the riddle would bring happiness to the Princess. The riddle was, "My first is a man, my first two a great man, and my whole a great woman." It's a word, you see? The first syllable is "he," which is a man. The first two syllables are "hero," which is a great man. The whole word is "heroine," which is a great woman. The Fairies said that the middle of the riddle was the answer for the Princess. Don't you see? The answer is "hero." ³

SEAN
Indeed it is. Jack has saved the Realm. And so he and the Princess can get married.

JACK
(in disbelief)
A Princess can't marry a commoner.

PENELOPE
But a Princess can marry a hero!

³ The actual riddle doesn't matter. The point is that the answer must be "hero."
Jack's eyes grow wide. Penelope grabs him and kisses him. She bends him over. The Gypsies cheer, applaud, perhaps offer suggestions. Penelope lets go, and Jack falls on his back. He whoops loudly. The entire company applauds and cheers. Jack gets up and hugs Penelope. The two stand side-by-side and face the audience.

PENELOPE
People of the Realm and visitors from afar, I declare a revelry!

COMPANY & GYPSIES
(cheers)

PENELOPE
Let it be held at twenty minutes before five o'clock at the main pavilion. Everyone here is welcome!

COMPANY & GYPSIES
(cheers)

JACK
There's a raffle for a chance to attack a watermelon with a steel axe. Why not let the slicing of this fruit signal the start of the revels?

PENELOPE
A good idea, my Hero. Let it be so!

SEAN
(to the other tournament-weapon fighters)
The revelry starts in twenty minutes? That gives us one more chance to test our skill.

FRAMINGHAM
Well, I was the strongest. There's nothing more for me to prove.

Iago disagrees. He picks up Framingham, and takes him a few steps towards the wrestling ring.

PENELOPE
Before you leave, let us give our good wishes to all who are here!
JACK
May you find your own Princess...

PENELOPE
...or your own Hero...

PENELOPE & JACK
...for your own...

EVERYBODY
...happily-ever-after!

Cheers, applause, general exit.