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Adapted from the fairytale, "The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship"

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A Fool and Her Flying Ship

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A Fool and Her Flying Ship was first performed at the Stage One Summer Theatre Program at Honolulu Theatre for Youth, Honolulu, Hawaii, and featured children 7-12 years old.

A Fool and Her Flying Ship

FARCE. Inspired by the Russian fairytale, “The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship.” The Tsar is offering his son in marriage to a maiden who can present the Tsar with a flying ship. The youngest of three daughters, who is called “Fool” by her family, heads out to find a flying ship. Along the way, Fool meets an old woman who tells her how to find the flying ship but reminds Fool that she must be kind to everyone she meets. Fool boards the flying ship, sets sail to the Tsar’s palace, and meets a host of odd characters with extraordinary talents: Barely Perceptible, who can hear all the beautiful sounds in the world; Eagle-Eye, who can see a speck of dust on an ant; Swift-Goer who can run exceptionally fast; Devour, who can’t get enough to eat; Guzzle, who can’t get enough to drink; Straw-Slinger, who carries a bundle of magical straw; and Twig-Tosser, who has a stack of magical twigs. Determined not to lose to a fool, Fool’s older sisters plot and scheme to win the hand of the Tsar’s son, but not without making utter fools of themselves! Audiences will love this play’s foolish, frolicking folly.

Performance Time: Approximately 45-60 minutes.

Characters

(3 M, 5 F, 8 flexible)

(With doubling: 3 M, 4 F, 8 flexible)

FOOL: Youngest of three daughters who is called “Fool” by her family because they can never remember her name and thinks she acts foolishly; female.

MASHA: Fool’s envious, older sister who thinks she is clever; tries to change the ending of Fool’s story so she can marry the Tsarevich; female.

SNEZHANA: Fool’s conniving older sister; wants to change the Fool’s story by stealing the flying ship so she can marry the Tsarevich; female.

MOTHER: Mother of Masha, Snezhana, and Fool; keeps forgetting she has a youngest daughter; female.

FATHER: Father of Masha, Snezhana, and Fool; can never remember Fool’s name; walks and talks very slowly; male.

TSAR: Inarticulate ruler who doesn’t want his son to marry Fool; man of few words; male.

TSAREVICH: Tsar’s son who is eager to get married; male.

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: Tsar’s conniving top advisor who tries to prevent the marriage of the Tsarevich and Fool; flexible.

BABUSHKA: Elderly woman who rewards Fool for her kindness by telling her how to find a flying ship; Female

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: Has large ears and enjoys listening to all the beautiful sounds in the world like butterfly wings and lions yawning; flexible.

EAGLE-EYE: Has excellent eyesight and can even see a speck of dust on an ant; wears a patch over one eye and carries a blowgun; flexible.

SWIFT-GOER: Has one leg that wants to run about wildly so a ball and chain must be attached to it; hops about on one leg since the other leg is bound with a ball and chain; flexible.

DEVOUR: Can never get enough to eat and is always trying to find a decent meal; has a large belly; flexible.

GUZZLE: Can never get enough to drink and is always trying to find a satisfying drink; has a large belly; flexible.

STRAW-SLINGER: Carries a bundle of straw; flexible.

TWIG-TOSSER: Carries a stack of sticks; flexible.

NOTE: For flexible roles, change the script accordingly.

Option for Doubling

MOTHER/BABUSHKA (female)

Setting

Once upon a time in Russia.

Set

Backdrops and/or set pieces may be used to suggest settings or a bare stage will suffice. The sets may be as simple or elaborate as your budget allows.

Synopsis of Scenes

Scene 1: Outside the Tsar's palace.

Scene 2: Fool's small home in a forest. There is a small table and four chairs. The table is set with dishes and food items.

Scene 3: Tsar's palace.

Scene 4: On the side of a road.

Scene 5: In the forest. There is a large tree.

Scene 6: On the side of a road.

Scene 7: Tsar's palace.

Scene 8: On the side of a road.

Scene 9: Tsar's palace.

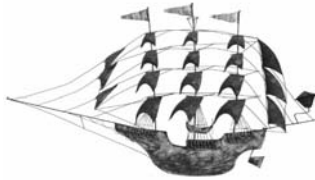
Scene 10: Along a river near a large lake.

Scene 11: Tsar's palace.

Props

Dishes, tableware	Tray of food
Bundle of food, for Snezhana and Masha	"Disguises," for Masha and Snezhana (hats, clothing, accessories, etc.)
Bundle of food (bread crusts, flask of water), for Fool	Blowgun, for Eagle-Eye
Bundle of food (meat, sweet nectar, and rolls), for Fool	Stack of sticks, for Twig-Tosser
Ship pole	Bundle of straw, for Straw-Slinger
Royal decrees	Anchor
Ball and chain, for Swift-Goer	"Water" (may be blue confetti)
Rope	Bathroom set piece

Special Effects



Flying ship. There are ample opportunities to incorporate original design elements. One suggestion is that the flying ship may consist of poles that the characters carry, as if they are the ship's masts topped with burgees (triangular flags). For example, the Fool's burgee might sport an image of a flying ship. The other poles might have images of each individual character's unique talent.

Royal music
Loud burp

*"The greatest fools
are oft times more clever
than those who laugh at them."*

—George R.R. Martin

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Outside the Tsar's Palace. Royal music is heard. The Royal Okolnichy enters.)

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: (To audience, announcing.) A proclamation to all! To all a proclamation! Our Grand Tsar calls upon all the ears of his subjects to know that the Great Quest has been achieved. Therefore, Our Illustrious Tsar proclaims a day of wonderful joy as he, the Eminent Tsar, gives his only son, the handsome and youthful Tsarevich, in marriage. All applaud our Exalted Tsar, in this, his hour of greatest joy.

(The Tsar enters with his son, the Tsarevich.)

TSAR: (To audience.) Yes, yes, it is. Oh, yes, my people. My son, give, give the Tsarevich to this one here. (Looking about for someone who is not there.) This one here. (Calling for Fool.) Here! Proved to be beyond, oh, oh, beyond all others. The—

(Fool enters.)

FOOL: (Proudly.) Fool of the world! Fool of the world! Fool of the world! (Runs about getting the audience to chant with her. Poses grandly, sings or recites.)

“I am marrying the Tsar's son
To live in a beautiful palace like none.
I am marrying the Tsar's son
To live a wonderful life.”

(Fool dances over to the Tsarevich, who gets all excited and giggly. Fool and Tsarevich dance about.)

“My ma will come. Papa will, too.
They'll have sweet food, fine clothes, and woo!
I'll be the happiest fool alive.

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I'm marrying the Tsar's son."
(Fool and Tsarevich lean in for a kiss but are interrupted by the Royal Okolnichy.)

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: (To audience.) And that, good people, is the—

(Note: For the following, Masha and Snezhana are in a separate space, unseen by the other characters.)

MASHA/SNEZHANA: (Offstage, shouts.) Stop!

(All freeze. Masha and Snezhana enter.)

SNEZHANA: Stop this!

MASHA: This must cease!

SNEZHANA: Cease to be!

MASHA: Can you believe this?

SNEZHANA: I don't believe this. We can't let you there...

(Indicates audience.) ...believe this. How—

MASHA: How could it come to this, Snezhana?

SNEZHANA: This ridiculousness, Masha?

FOOL: (Momentarily unfreezes.) Heaven knows.

(Fool starts to lean in slowly to kiss Tsarevich.)

SNEZHANA: (To Masha.) Ah! That Fool's making her move...again!

MASHA: Again? If they kiss, it's all over and done with, Snezhana, again! (Masha pulls at the Fool and Snezhana pulls at Tsarevich to keep them from kissing.) Kiss not, Fool!

SNEZHANA: (To Tsarevich.) Kiss not the Fool!

(Masha and Snezhana pull the Fool and Tsarevich apart.)

MASHA: We have to start the story again, Snezhana, again!

SNEZHANA: Again, again?! Must we live the story again, Masha? It just takes a kiss, you said.

(Snezhana tries to kiss the Tsarevich. Masha stops her.)

MASHA: Stop! It takes a whole story to get to the *winning* kiss.

SNEZHANA: A *winning* kiss?

MASHA: We must start at a beginning. *(Masha and Snezhana start pushing everyone offstage.)* And this time we will discover how to get a winning story ending for us.

SNEZHANA: An "us" ending, Masha! How perfect! How wonderful! How right!

(Masha and Snezhana reset the scene by placing Father and Mother onstage for the beginning of the story.)

MASHA: To marry the Tsarevich!

SNEZHANA: And then, merry we will be! So we begin...again!

(Masha and Snezhana exit. Blackout.)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: Fool's small forest home. There is a small table and 4 chairs. The table is set with dishes and food items. Mother and Father enter. Father is moving very, very, very slowly.)

FATHER: (To audience.) Past the woods...

MOTHER: (To audience.) Past the woods, there lived a...

FATHER: (To audience.) Deep in the mountains...

MOTHER: Yes, okay. (To audience.) Deep in the mountains, there lived a...

FATHER: (To audience.) In Russia...

MOTHER: (Impatient.) All right, yes, yes, Russia, Russia. (To audience.) There lived a...

(Pause.)

FATHER: (To audience.) A...

MOTHER: (To audience, impatiently.) There lived a woman.

FATHER: (To audience.) And her peasant husband. (Stage whisper.) Slow down.

MOTHER: (To audience.) A woman and her peasant husband.

FATHER: Yes. What?

MOTHER: Just what I said...a woman and her peasant husband. (To audience.) And they had two daughters—

FATHER: (Correcting.) Three.

MOTHER: Three? (Remembers.) Oh, oh, yes. I always forget about that one. (To audience.) Three daughters.

(Masha and Snezhana enter.)

MASHA: (To audience.) Clever Masha! (Does something clever.)

SNEZHANA: (To audience.) Strong Snezhana! (Does something strong.)

MOTHER: My girls!

FATHER: (To audience.) But the third—

MOTHER: Third? (*Remembers.*) Oh, oh, yes. I always forget about that one. (*Fool enters proudly. To audience.*) Such a little—

MASHA/SNEZHANA: (*Teasing Fool.*) Fool! Fool!

FOOL: (*To audience, proudly.*) The Fool of the world!

FATHER: (*Slowly.*) Dinner!

MOTHER: Yes! A special treat for our clever and strong daughters. One for Masha and one for Snezhana.

(*Mother serves dinner to Masha, Snezhana, and Father.*)

FOOL: And me, too.

(*Mother looks at Fool as if seeing her for the first time. Fool waves to get their attention. Others ignore Fool and continue to eat.*)

MOTHER: (*Remembers.*) Oh, yes, I always forget about her.

FATHER: (*To Fool, slowly.*) What's...?

FOOL: Huh?

FATHER: Your...?

FOOL: Huh?

FATHER: Good...?

MOTHER: (*To Fool, impatient.*) Your name? Your name?

FATHER: Name?

(*Fool shrugs.*)

MASHA/SNEZHANA: (*Laughing raucously.*) Fool!

FOOL: That's what you call me.

MOTHER: (*To herself.*) No wonder I always forget about that one. (*Exits with the dishes.*)

FATHER: (*To Fool, trying to guess her name.*) Vasilisa? (*Fool shrugs.*) Petrovina?

(*Fool shrugs.*)

MASHA: *(To audience.)* This is how it was...most days.
FATHER: *(To Fool.)* Natasha?

(Fool shrugs.)

SNEZHANA: *(To audience.)* Days and weeks and months.
MASHA: *(To audience.)* Until one day, something actually
happened.
FATHER: *(To Fool.)* Anastasia?

(Fool shrugs.)

MASHA: *(To audience.)* And it happened just like this—
FATHER: *(To Fool.)* Evgeniya?

(Fool shrugs.)

SNEZHANA: *(To Masha.)* No. Not like before, Masha. We
want a *new* story.
FATHER: *(To Fool.)* Zlata?

(Fool shrugs.)

MASHA: First, Snezhana, we have to show what has always
happened.
FATHER: *(To Fool.)* Oksana?

(Fool shrugs.)

SNEZHANA: *(Annoyed.)* Enough, Papa! *(Father stops.)*
Masha, we want the story to happen different this time.
MASHA: First, the story has to happen the way it has always
happened. Then we can change the story to occur
differently than the way it endlessly transpires and direct it
to proceed the way we desire it to conclude.
SNEZHANA: What?

MASHA: Let the story happen naturally, Snezhana. Our turn will come.

(Royal music is heard. The Royal Okolnichy enters regally.)

SNEZHANA: When?

MASHA: Shhh!

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: *(To Snezhana, Masha, and Fool as if announcing to a large crowd.)* People of Russia!

MASHA: That's us!

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: *(Announcing.)* Peasant, lord, and lady alike.

SNEZHANA: We're them! *(Points to Fool.)* But not her.

MASHA: *(To Royal Okolnichy.)* No, not her. She's not one of them.

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: *(To Masha and Snezhana.)* Shhhhhh!

SNEZHANA: The only them that are, are us.

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: Shush! *(Announcing.)* The Tsar of all these lands is offering his son, the Tsarevich, in marriage to the one who can prove her worth above all others.

MASHA: Strong and clever are us!

SNEZHANA: *(Correcting.)* Clever and strong are *we*.

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: *(Announcing.)* The one who brings him a flying ship.

FOOL: *(In awe.)* A flying ship.

SNEZHANA: A *Flying Ship*?

MASHA: *(Dreamily.)* The handsome Tsarevich...

SNEZHANA: But *flying Ship*?

MASHA: *(Dreamily.)* The gorgeous Tsarevich...

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: *(Shouts.)* Enough!

FOOL: *(Running about like a flying ship.)* Flying ship! Whooo!

MASHA: *(Dreamily.)* The *stunning* Tsarevich...

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: *(To Fool, shouts.)* Be still!

FOOL: *(Continues running about like a flying ship, really getting into it.)* Flying ship!

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: (*Announcing.*) Aye, a ship with wings!
(*Pause.*) It should sail gracefully through the blue sky like a
ship on the sea. Make one and get the Tsarevich. That's all!
(*Exits.*)

MASHA: (*To Snezhana.*) That is the challenge for clever us.

SNEZHANA: Us that are the them that aren't her. (*Points to
Fool.*)

FOOL: (*Running about.*) Flying shiiiiip!

MASHA: (*Calls.*) Mama! Papa!

(*Mother enters.*)

SNEZHANA: (*To Mother.*) We're heading off—

SNEZHANA/MASHA: To marry the Tsar's son!

MOTHER: Here's a bundle of food for the road... (*Hands them
a bundle.*) ...soft white rolls, cooked meat, and bottles of
sweet nectar.

MASHA/SNEZHANA: Goodbye!

MOTHER: (*Calls.*) Goodbye, my girls!

SNEZHANA: (*To audience.*) And that's where the story of us
two has always ended.

(*Father enters.*)

FATHER: (*To Snezhana and Masha, calls.*) Bless you, my
daughters!

MASHA: But this time we'll learn that Fool's secrets,
Snezhana.

SNEZHANA: We will learn how she builds a flying ship,
Masha, and then we can build one, too.

MASHA: We'll just *take* the ship.

SNEZHANA: (*Confused.*) I thought we're getting the
ravishing son, Masha.

MASHA: To get the son, we need the ship.

SNEZHANA: So we take the ship?

MASHA: To take the ship, we need to follow the Fool.

SNEZHANA: (*Confused.*) Eh? (*Gets it.*) Oh! Ah! Good plan, that one!

MASHA: Yes, Snezhana, so watch our foolish sister closely...

(*Masha and Snezhana hide and watch.*)

MOTHER: (*To herself, sadly.*) Oh, now I will be so lonely without any daughters.

FOOL: What about me?

MOTHER: (*Remembers.*) Ah! Oh, I always forget about you.

FOOL: I could fly a ship.

MOTHER: Fool, you'd walk right into the arms of a bear.

FOOL: I could marry the son.

MOTHER: Or get eaten by wolves.

FOOL: I could bring you and Papa to the palace to live a wonderful life. (*Chanting.*) I am going...I am going... (*Note: Continues chanting during the following.*)

MOTHER: I liked it better when I forgot about you.

FOOL: (*Chanting.*) I am going...I am going...

MOTHER: Enough!

FOOL: (*Chanting.*) I am going.

MOTHER: Here... (*Tosses a bundle at Fool.*) ...a bag of bread crusts and a flask of water. Now, go!

FATHER: (*To Fool.*) Or get sat on by an elephant.

FOOL: Goodbye, Mama, Papa! I'll send for you from the palace!

MOTHER: (*To herself.*) I'm going to forget about that one.

FATHER: (*To Fool.*) Or bitten by a badger—

(*Mother exits, pulling Father off with her. Fool exits. Masha and Snezhana exit after Fool. Blackout.*)

Scene 3

(AT RISE: *The Tsar's palace. Tsar and Tsarevich enter, followed by the Royal Okolnichy.*)

TSAREVICH: (*Excited.*) My bride is coming, Papa? She's on her way?! Is she?! Is she?!

TSAR: Yes, yes, coming. Oh, yes, oh, dear son, my favorite.

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: (*To Tsarevich.*) She'll float straight down from heaven.

TSAR: (*To Royal Okolnichy.*) Sssssh! Sssssh!

TSAREVICH: (*To Royal Okolnichy.*) To me?

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: Sailing in just for you.

TSAR: (*Pointedly.*) Quiet, there, Royal O! Shush!

TSAREVICH: So exciting! The wedding I always dreamed of! (*Realizes.*) Oh! I have to get ready...ready to meet my magnificent bride! Thank you, Papa. Thank you! (*Rushes off.*)

TSAR: (*To Royal Okolnichy.*) You! Quiet! Quiet! Nothing. Speak nothing!

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: Don't you think he should know you stipulated a *flying ship*, Illustrious One?

TSAR: For his own good, yes. (*Royal Okolnichy gives him a hard look.*) What? For his own good. Only the cleverest...will come. Yes, only the most worthy will come. (*Exits.*)

ROYAL OKOLNICHY: (*Under his breath.*) Only crackpots and fools, I think. (*Exits. Blackout.*)

Scene 4

(AT RISE: *On the side of a road. Fool enters, traipsing about. Masha and Snezhana enter, closely following her. In a series of near hits and close misses, Fool abruptly switches directions or stops suddenly to smell a flower etc. Masha and Snezhana come dangerously close to being discovered.*)

FOOL: (*Sings/recites.*) "That royal boy will marry me!

I'll live in the beautiful palace, tee-hee!

To marry him will be such fun!

And I'll live such a wonderful life."

SNEZHANA: (*To Masha, irritated.*) Singing! Singing! Can you believe this fool?!

MASHA: I do believe we can fool this Fool, that's for true.

SNEZHANA: I truly want the Fool's life for myself this time around.

FOOL: (*Sings/recites.*) "My ma will come, and Dad will, too.

They'll have sweet food, fine clothes, and woo!

I'll be the happiest fool alive.

When that royal one marries me!"

(*Babushka enters near Masha and Snezhana.*)

BABUSHKA: (*To Masha.*) Good day, young lassie.

MASHA: Out of my way, old lady.

(*Masha shoves Babushka out of the way.*)

BABUSHKA: (*To Snezhana.*) Good morning, young lady.

SNEZHANA: Old dame, move on!

(*Snezhana shoves Babushka out of the way. Babushka bumps into the Fool and they fall.*)

FOOL: *(To Babushka.)* Oh, oh! I'm sorry! I am so sorry!
Please forgive this fool!

BABUSHKA: Think nothing of it. 'Twas my fault for sure.

FOOL: Let me help you, Grandmother.

BABUSHKA: Thank you, kind miss. And where might you be
off to so merrily?

FOOL: If I find a flying ship, I get to live in the palace.

MASHA: *(To Snezhana, aside.)* Oh! I can't believe she's giving
away the news!

SNEZHANA: *(Aside.)* Giving it away to that worthless old
matron.

BABUSHKA: *(To Fool.)* Ah, and you can make such a ship?

FOOL: Heaven knows?

(Babushka laughs.)

BABUSHKA: Well, let's rest for a bit and share a bite of food.

SNEZHANA: *(To Masha, aside.)* Ah, what a waste. I wouldn't
give that old lady anything.

MASHA: *(Aside.)* Yes, nothing! Move on, Fool! We're
waiting for the Tsarevich, you know.

*(Frustrated, Masha and Snezhana sit and watch. They don't see the
Fool open her bag.)*

FOOL: *(To Babushka.)* But, please, I have hardly anything to
offer.

BABUSHKA: Never mind that. Let us eat what heaven has
provided.

(Fool opens her bundle.)

FOOL: Oh! Oh, goodness, Grandmother! What a wonder!
(Takes out rolls.) Fresh white rolls...

(Snezhana stands.)

SNEZHANA: *(In disbelief.)* What?!
FOOL: *(Takes out meat.)* Cooked meats...

(Masha stands.)

MASHA: *(In disbelief.)* What?!
BABUSHKA: Heaven loves simple folk. Now how about a sip
of sweet nectar? *(Reaches into the bag and removes a bottle of
nectar.)*
MASHA/SNEZHANA: *(In disbelief.)* Sweet nectar?!
FOOL: Sweet nectar!

(Fool giggles. Fool and Babushka eat and drink.)

MASHA/SNEZHANA: *(In disbelief.)* Meats...nectar...sweet—
BABUSHKA: *(To Fool.)* You have been very kind to share. So
off with you now into the forest. At the first big tree, strike
it three times. Fall backward onto the ground and lie there
until someone wakes you. Then you will have your ship.
FOOL: A flying ship?
MASHA/SNEZHANA: *(Excited.)* A ship!
BABUSHKA: *(To Fool.)* But be sure to share your kindness
with all who you meet on the way.
FOOL: *(Acts out the following as she commits it to memory.)*
Walk tree... *(Walks to tree.)* ...strike three... *(Strikes tree
three times.)* ...lie... *(Lies down.)* ...wake... *(Wakes up.)*
...fly. *(“Flies” off.)*
BABUSHKA/FOOL: But be sure to share your kindness with
all who you meet on the way.
FOOL: Thank you, Grandmother, and goodbye! *(Babushka
exits. To herself.)* Walk.

(Fool exits. Masha and Snezhana follow. Blackout.)

Scene 5

(AT RISE: *In the forest near a large tree. Fool is near the tree. Snezhana and Masha enter unseen by Fool and watch.*)

SNEZHANA: (*Aside.*) Let's stop this fool now, Masha!

MASHA: (*Aside.*) Now, wait, Snezhana. Let's see what happens.

SNEZHANA: (*Aside.*) Nothing happens! You don't believe that...that...old grandmother, do you?

MASHA: (*Aside.*) That...that...old woman made sweetmeats magically appear.

(*Fool approaches the large tree.*)

FOOL: (*To herself.*) Tree...

SNEZHANA: Flying this...magical that...I can't believe any of it!

FOOL: Strike! (*Strikes the tree once.*)

MASHA: (*To Snezhana, aside.*) Believe this, if the ship comes to Fool—

SNEZHANA: (*Aside.*) You're now as foolish as she.

FOOL: (*To herself.*) Two! (*Strikes the tree a second time.*)

MASHA: (*To Snezhana, aside.*) We two can fool Fool.

SNEZHANA: Which fool is being fooled, eh?

FOOL: (*To herself.*) Three! (*Strikes the tree a third time.*)

MASHA: (*Aside.*) The Fool's ship'll come to us then, Snezhana!

FOOL: (*To herself.*) Lie. (*Lies down and falls asleep instantly.*)

SNEZHANA: (*To Masha, aside, skeptical.*) The ship'll come right to us, right here, land right in this field? Hah!

MASHA: Shhh!

SNEZHANA: (*Stage whisper.*) Hah! Hah! (*A flying ship flies on manipulated by Babushka. Surprised.*) Oh, hey! Look, Masha! Look up there! (*Points to ship.*)

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MASHA: (*Excited.*) There we are, see?! Oh, my Tsarevich, soon I will be coming for you!

SNEZHANA: (*Indicating ship.*) It's coming right for us! Unbelievable!

(*Snezhana steps over the sleeping Fool to get to the flying ship, but Masha grabs her.*)

MASHA: Stop, Snezhana!

SNEZHANA: Stop? (*Trips over Fool and she and Masha fall down.*) But the ship, the flying ship!

MASHA: This isn't our story, yet.

(*Snezhana tries to free herself from Masha. Tumbling about, they wake Fool.*)

FOOL: (*To herself.*) Wakey-wakey.

SNEZHANA: (*Aside.*) This story can be our story now, Masha!

(*Fool looks up and sees the flying ship.*)

FOOL: (*Indicating ship.*) Oh, pretty!

MASHA: (*Aside.*) The change only comes at the end, Snezhana, if our plan works.

(*Fool "boards" the ship as Masha and Snezhana comically wrestle about.*)

FOOL: Fly!

(*Fool starts to "fly" off in the flying ship. Snezhana and Masha stop wrestling.*)

MASHA: (*To Snezhana.*) After that fool! Away! (*Runs off.*)

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SNEZHANA: *(To herself.)* My way would've been better:
Take the ship, leave the fool.

(Snezhana follows Masha off. Blackout.)

Scene 6

(AT RISE: *Alongside a road. Barely Perceptible enters, listening carefully with his enormous ears.*)

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: A bit of pollen tickling a bee. Tee-hee! Tee-hee! (*Hearing something new, skips over to it.*) The flipper slap of dancing penguins. Toodle-li-doodle-li-doo! (*Suddenly hears a new sound and starts laughing.*) Giggling baby hyenas under a banyan tree!

(*Searching for the Fool and the flying ship, Masha and Snezhana enter.*)

MASHA: Do you see her, Snezhana?

SNEZHANA: The fool, or the ship?

MASHA: Either.

SNEZHANA: Which?

MASHA: Doesn't matter which.

SNEZHANA: It does if I am looking for one, Masha.

MASHA: Whichever one you see first!

SNEZHANA: First...of course.

(*Masha and Snezhana continue searching.*)

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: (*Hearing something.*) Oh-ho!

(*Startled, Masha and Snezhana jump.*)

MASHA/SNEZHANA: What?!

(*Barely Perceptible twirls around, and Masha and Snezhana get caught in his ears like a revolving door.*)

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: (*Hearing something.*) Twirling octopi—

SNEZHANA: Hey!

MASHA: *(To Barely Perceptible.)* What are you doing?

SNEZHANA: *(To Barely Perceptible.)* Let go of me!

MASHA: *(To Barely Perceptible.)* Stop the twirling!

(Barely Perceptible twirls faster.)

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: *(Twirling.)* Whizzing through the sea—

SNEZHANA: *(Calls.)* Masha!

MASHA: *(Calls.)* Snezhana!

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: *(Twirling.)* Whoosh-shooo!
Whoosh-shooo!

SNEZHANA/MASHA: *(Shout.)* Stoooooop!

(Snezhana and Masha each grab one of Barely Perceptible's ears, and he stops twirling.)

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: *(Annoyed.)* You needn't shout.

SNEZHANA: *(Indicating his ears.)* Remove these enormous flappers.

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: I'm trying to enjoy all the beautiful sounds of the world. *(Listening.)* Butterfly wings and lions yawning—

MASHA: Well, listen close to us.

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: *(Annoyed.)* It's hard *not* to hear you two.

SNEZHANA: Have you seen a foolish girl, about yea high...
(Indicates Fool's height.) ...silly grin on her face?

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: I see so little, but heed so very much.
(Hears something.) Oh! Oh! Come, listen! Come hear!

MASHA: You hear her?

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: I sense a lovely jingle on the wind.

SNEZHANA: What now, Big Flappered One? Clouds burping?

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: There's something magical about this sound.

SNEZHANA: Well, unless it's a ship, buddy, get out of our way!

MASHA: *(To Barely Perceptible.)* We're on important business here!

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: It's a ship.

MASHA: A flying ship?

SNEZHANA: *(To Barely Perceptible.)* A flying ship?!

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: A ship, flying. *("Flies" toward the sound.*

SNEZHANA: *(Excited.)* Okay, this time we take that ship, Masha!

MASHA: We don't. We follow the story.

SNEZHANA: I don't follow where this is going.

(Flying ship flies on with Fool aboard.)

MASHA: Sssssh, Snezhana!

SNEZHANA: Don't shush me!

MASHA: Trust me. Shush!

SNEZHANA: Trust, hah!

FOOL: *(Calls.)* Helloooo, down there!

(Masha pulls Snezhana behind Barely Perceptible's ears to hide from Fool.)

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: *(Hears something.)* Oh, so sweet...

FOOL: Well, that's very kind of you, but we haven't even met yet.

SNEZHANA: *(To Masha, aside.)* A story won't get us to the palace, you know.

MASHA: *(Aside.)* But a ship won't win us the Tsarevich!

SNEZHANA: *(Disagreeing.)* Uh, that's what the royal guy said.

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: *(To Masha and Snezhana.)* Quiet.

FOOL: *(Stage whisper.)* Oh, sorry.

MASHA: *(To Snezhana, aside.)* From the story, we'll learn how she wins the love of the princely boy.

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: *(To Masha and Snezhana.)* Shhhhhhh.

FOOL: What are we being quiet for?

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: Listening to a kitten's "meow" as its mother licks its tiny ears. *(Listens.)* Awwww.

FOOL: Kitten? *(Listens but can't hear it.)* What kitten?

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: A kitten curled up by the Tsar's great fireplace.

FOOL: In the Tsar's palace?

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: Such a delicious sound. Good day to you, sky-flier.

FOOL: *(Surprised.)* You heard that kitten?

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: As loud as those two... *(Indicating Masha and Snezhana.)* ...who keep lurking about.

(Scared, Masha and Snezhana wrap up even tighter in Barely Perceptible's ears.)

FOOL: Lurking about? Where? Ah, you made me look! Tricky! You mean lurking about the Tsar, right? How amazing you are. What are you called?

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: I'm Barely Perceptible.

FOOL: What?

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: *(Louder.)* Barely Perceptible.

FOOL: I can hear you, all right, my finely eared friend. I just want to know your name.

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: That's it: "Barely Perceptible." And you, Sky-Flier?

FOOL: Fool.

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: Don't be so down on yourself. You have a lovely attitude and even a magical flying ship.

FOOL: That's what my family always calls me: "Fool."

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: How awful of them!

FOOL: No, no! My family sent me on this wonderful journey!
(Sings/recites.) "That royal boy will marry me!

I'll live in the beautiful palace, tee-hee!" (Spoken.) Come,
Barely Perceptible, join me on the magical ship!

BARELY PERCEPTIBLE: Oh, yes, please, friendly Fool. I
would hear so many delightful noises from up there!

(Fool lowers a rope or pole to Barely Perceptible and he boards the
"ship.")

MASHA: (To Snezhana, aside..) She's off again!

SNEZHANA: (Aside.) Not again, she's not! Come on!

(Snezhana grabs Masha and they try to grab the rope and jump
aboard the ship.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]