

# WILDE AT HEART

ADAPTED FROM OSCAR WILDE'S *THE STAR-CHILD*

By Jon Boustead

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**SYNOPSIS:** Oscar hates stories, but when he disturbs Once, Upon and A Time, his world is thrown upside down as he learns about courage, greed and forgiveness...There is lots of scope for physical theatre and simple staging is this wonderful adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Star-Child*.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 females, 8 males, 16-22 either, extras, doubling)

OSCAR (f/m).....	(49 lines)
ONCE (f/m).....	(52 lines)
UPON (f/m).....	(32 lines)
A TIME (f/m).....	(51 lines)
WOODCUTTER 1 (m).....	(30 lines)
WOODCUTTER 2 (m).....	(22 lines)
STAR CHILD (f/m).....	(88 lines)
WIFE (f).....	(25 lines)

### *The children of Woodcutter 1 and Wife:*

LUCINDA (f).....	(2 lines)
CLAUDIA (f).....	(1 line)
MATILDA (f).....	(6 lines)
GREGORY (m).....	(7 lines)
TIMOTHY (m).....	(5 lines)
NATHANIEL (m).....	(3 lines)
MICHAEL (m).....	(2 lines)
SIMEON (m).....	(8 lines)

ENTOURAGE 1 (f/m).....	(6 lines)
ENTOURAGE 2 (f/m).....	(5 lines)
ENTOURAGE 3 (f/m).....	(5 lines)
JESTER 1 (f/m).....	(1 line)
JESTER 2 (f/m).....	(1 line)
JESTER 3 (f/m).....	(2 lines)

PRIEST (f/m).....(9 lines)  
 BEGGAR WOMAN/QUEEN (f)....(8 lines)  
 LEPER/KING (m) .....(13 lines)  
 TOWNSPERSON 1 (f/m).....(5 lines)  
 TOWNSPERSON 2 (f/m).....(5 lines)  
 TOWNSPERSON 3 (f/m).....(4 lines)  
 TOWNSPERSON 4 (f/m).....(3 lines)  
 EVIL MAGICIAN (f/m).....(35 lines)  
 HARE (f/m) .....(16 lines)  
 BIRD (f/m).....(7 lines)  
 MOLE (f/m).....(6 lines)  
 SQUIRREL (f/m).....(8 lines)  
 SOLDIER 1 (f/m).....(15 lines)  
 SOLDIER 2 (f/m).....(8 lines)  
 STRAWBERRY SELLER (f/m).....(3 lines)  
 MEAT SELLER (f/m) .....(2 lines)  
 FLOWER SELLER (f/m) .....(3 lines)  
 BOOZE SELLER (f/m) .....(3 lines)  
**EXTRAS:** Peasants, Minions

**DURATION:** 45 minutes

### **DOUBLING POSSIBILITIES**

- The following characters double to create the forest in SCENE 2: Woodcutter 1's Wife, Lucinda, Claudia, Matilda, Gregory, Timothy, Nathaniel, Michael, Simeon.
- There is much scope for doubling to suit a much smaller cast, but some suggestions would be: CHILDREN / SELLERS, ENTOURAGE and JESTERS / TOWNSPEOPLE, ENTOURAGE 1 / BIRD, ENTOURAGE 2 / SQUIRREL, ENTOURAGE 3 / MOLE)
- Lines that are spoken by more than one character (Example: Jesters) could be absorbed by one actor.
- Beggar Woman must double as Queen. Leper must double as King.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

- SCENE 1:** Bare stage with a pile of books
- SCENE 2:** Forest that segues to Woodcutter 1's home
- SCENE 3:** Bare stage
- SCENE 4:** A city
- SCENE 5:** A different city
- SCENE 6:** Forest
- SCENE 7:** Inside the Magician's dungeon which segues back into the forest
- SCENE 8:** Inside the Magician's dungeon which segues back into the forest
- SCENE 9:** Bare stage

## COSTUME SUGGESTIONS

The items noted below are simply suggestions. It would be possible to produce this piece with simple costumes. For example, the main characters could wear all black and have a signifying prop or costume accessory, such as an apron, a scarf, soldier hat, etc.

- Oscar in pajamas
- Woodcutter 1's Wife wears an apron
- Starchild wears a star necklace or similar

## SET SUGGESTIONS

In the original production, the set consisted of fairy lights, piles of books and two ladders, which acted as levels. With much of the transitions requiring a fluidity, the suggestion would be to make use of signage and physical theatre to signify the locations.

## MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

This could make a terrific project for a competent composer in the cast to create some music for the production. Otherwise, thematically relevant instrumental pieces could be sourced.

**PROPS LIST****SCENE 1**

- Piles of books (these remain on stage throughout the play becoming props later in the play) Preset on stage.
- Three pieces of paper that read BED, TIME and STORY. Preset on stage.

**SCENE 2**

- Sign reading, YOU ARE RIGHT HERE (brought on by cast building the forest)
- Starry blanket wrapped up to look like a baby is inside (brought on by cast building the forest)
- Toy car (rolled on by available cast member), or remote controlled car driven on by an actor
- Mixing bowl, socks, a pair of socks with holes, undies, and toys (Brought on by WIFE)
- Wooden spoon puppet (brought on by Simeon)
- Dirty undies (thrown on by Gregory, Timothy and Nathaniel)
- Star Child (baby doll) in blanket (brought on by Woodcutter 1)

**SCENE 3**

- Starry blanket (remaining on stage after Scene 2)
- Torn bits of paper (remaining on stage after Scene 1)
- Bible (brought on by Priest)
- Damp cloth
- Jester's hat
- Grapes and a drink (brought on by Woodcutter 1 and Wife)

**SCENE 4**

- Disfigured mask (brought on by Once, Upon and A Time)

**SCENE 5**

- Basket of strawberries (brought on by Strawberry Seller)
- Basket of meat (brought on by Meat Seller)
- Bottles of booze (brought on by Booze Seller)
- Bottle of wine (brought on by a Minion)

**SCENE 6**

- Whip (brought on by Magician, or could be mimed)
- Bread and water (brought on by Minion/s)

**SCENE 7**

- Broken sunglasses and a broken stick (brought on by Mole)
- White gold and yellow gold (placed by the cast members involved in their hiding places – Example: cave and pool of water)

**SCENE 8**

- Red gold (brought on by the cast members involved in its hiding place, which is a bush)
- Crowns and royal robes (brought on by cast members involved in the transformation of Beggar Woman and Leper)
- “The Star Child” book (brought on by Once, Upon and A Time).  
This could be handmade for the production

**AUTHOR’S NOTE**

This show is best performed with a large cast of physical performers.

***DEDICATION***

*To Briony – brilliant and beautiful in every way imaginable.  
And to Riding Lights and York Minster School, where this  
adaptation first began...*

**SCENE 1**

**AT RISE:** *ONCE, UPON, A TIME and OSCAR are on stage. OSCAR is in a sulk, surrounded by books and completely unaware of the other three, who are watching him nervously. As the audience filters in, OSCAR becomes more agitated at the various books that he picks up to read. ONCE, UPON and A TIME occasionally try to interrupt but never quite find the right moment. When the audience is seated, ONCE begins to read over OSCAR'S shoulder, following him around as he paces the stage.*

**ONCE:** Once upon a time, two poor Woodcutters were making their way home through a great pine forest.

**A TIME:** Not having any of it, is he?

**UPON:** No, not one bit of it.

**A TIME:** Looks like his mind is made up.

**UPON:** Absolutely. Never seen a more made up mind.

**ONCE:** Well you could both help!

*UPON and A TIME join in with the same speech, but the lines should overlap each other, so that it becomes confusing. This should happen quickly, and as it does, OSCAR becomes even more frustrated.*

**ONCE:** Once upon a time, two poor Woodcutters were making their way home through a great pine forest. // It was winter, and a night of bitter cold. The snow lay thick upon the ground, and upon the branches of the trees: the frost kept snapping the little twigs on either side of them, as they passed.

**UPON:** *(Beginning after "...through a great pine forest.")* Once upon a time, two poor Woodcutters were making their way home through a great pine forest. It was winter, and a night of bitter cold. // The snow lay thick upon the ground, and upon the branches of the trees: the frost kept snapping the little twigs on either side of them, as they passed.

**A TIME:** (*Beginning after "...a night of bitter cold."*) Once upon a time, two poor Woodcutters were making their way home through a great pine forest. It was winter, and a night of bitter cold. The snow lay thick upon the ground, and upon the branches of the trees: the frost kept snapping the little twigs on either side of them, as they passed.

**OSCAR:** (*Shouting in frustration.*) Argh! Stupid books!

*ONCE, UPON and A TIME gasp.*

**OSCAR:** Don't want to write or read anyway. (*Calling off stage.*)  
WON'T DO ME ANY GOOD!

*OSCAR picks up a book and throws it on the floor.*

**OSCAR:** I HATE STORIES! I hate them, I hate them, I HATE THEM!

*OSCAR starts to tear pages and kick the books. Each torn page has an effect on ONCE, UPON and A TIME.*

**ONCE:** Somebody stop him!

**OSCAR:** Stupid words, on stupid pages, in STUPID BOOKS!

*There is much panic, and much commotion. ONCE can hardly move, whilst A TIME and UPON are frantically looking for certain words to display (In the original production, they were pegged to a washing line against the back wall throughout the show. They find the words 'bed' and 'time', but there is one more missing.)*

**OSCAR:** I hate this one! I hate that one! I hate them ALL! All books should be banned or burned or, or, or turned into something useful like, like, oh, *anything* but books!

*A TIME finds the word 'story' and holds it up.*

**A TIME:** 'Story!' Ound fit!

**UPON:** Ound fit?

*A TIME displays the final word, so the display now reads 'Bed Time Story'. ONCE, UPON and A TIME then start slamming some of the books shut. Each slam makes OSCAR more tired, and he soon falls asleep, on top of the paper and books.*

**ONCE:** Dell wone a dime. Dell wone.

**UPON:** Mmm, jood gob.

**A TIME:** Stedtime Bory. Mait a winute...ghat's owing won...? (*Gasp.*)  
Me's hixed us all up!

**ONCE:** The write letch, dow hare he?!

**UPON:** Pon't danic. Pon't danic. Fe'll wix it. Wust dalm cown.

**ONCE:** Pon't danic!? Dalm cown!? I'll dalm cown you min a winute!  
Lasty brittle nat! I'll peg him up by his shoxer-borts and wive him a gedgie!

*ONCE gets ready to pounce on OSCAR, but UPON restrains him. UPON and ONCE then end up in a little scrap of their own.*

**A TIME:** Wop! Stait!

*They stop and watch A TIME, who starts to pick up some of the pages and rearranges them in some sort of correct order.*

**A TIME:** Try that.

**ONCE:** Testing. One, two, my name is Once.

**UPON:** My name is Upon.

**A TIME:** And I'm A Time.

**ONCE, UPON and A TIME:** (*Together.*) We're fixed!

*They all celebrate, but it dies down quickly.*

**A TIME:** Well that's one way to mix things up a bit.

**ONCE:** Stubborn little brat. I should teach him a lesson.

**UPON:** What are you going to do?

**ONCE:** The boy needs to learn.

**UPON:** He doesn't want to. You can't force him.

**ONCE:** I can try.

**A TIME:** No you can't. We can't interfere.

*OSCAR begins to snore quietly. They go over to him.*

**UPON:** He looks quite tolerable when he's asleep. Like he wouldn't hurt a fly.

**ONCE:** Pft.

**A TIME:** Awwwww. He's quite sweet, actually. Look, Once.

*ONCE is reluctant.*

**A TIME:** Come on, look. *(Pause.)* What's the matter? Are you scared? *(UPON snickers.)*

**UPON:** Come on, he won't bite. *(ONCE leans over OSCAR.)* See. *(Short pause.)*

**A TIME:** Bah!

**ONCE:** Argh!

**A TIME:** Ha, ha! Scared you.

**ONCE:** Did not.

**A TIME:** Did too.

**ONCE:** Did not!

**A TIME:** Did too! Scaredy cat, scaredy cat, sitting on the doormat.

**ONCE:** What does that even mean?

**A TIME:** It means I win and you lose. And you peed your pants. Ha-ha!

*OSCAR looks at his trousers.*

**OSCAR:** No I didn't.

**A TIME:** Ah-ha! Made you look!

*A TIME and UPON high-five each other. OSCAR wakes us. ONCE, UPON and A TIME are now facing away from him. ONCE is continuing to defend himself against the taunts of A TIME and UPON.*

**OSCAR:** Who are you?

*ONCE, UPON and A TIME shriek. Pause.*

**ONCE:** What did he say?

**A TIME:** (*Whispering.*) Who. Are. You?

**ONCE:** I thought so.

**UPON:** (*Whispering.*) Can he see us?

**A TIME:** Not sure. Stay verrrry still. (*Pause.*)

**OSCAR:** What are you doing?

**A TIME:** (*As best as possible, without moving his lips.*) Who are you talking to? There is nobody here.

**OSCAR:** Yes there is. You.

**A TIME:** You see nothing.

**OSCAR:** I'm not stupid.

**UPON:** (*Covering his eyes.*) He can't see us, if we can't see him.

*Pause. ONCE slaps UPON on the back of the head.*

**ONCE:** Stop being an idiot, he can see us!

**OSCAR:** Who are you?

**ONCE:** Who are we? Who are we, he says!?

**A TIME:** (*Like an adult, warning a small child.*) Once...

**ONCE:** We're the Once Upon a Time you just tried to destroy!

**A TIME:** Once, dalm cown. I mean calm down.

**OSCAR:** The what? No I didn't.

**ONCE:** (*Gasps.*) Yes you did!

*ONCE looks to the others for support.*

**UPON:** Mmmm, he's right, you did.

**A TIME:** Yeah, that wasn't very nice.

**OSCAR:** But I—

**ONCE:** (*Interrupting.*) You did, and don't try to deny it! You said you hated us.

**OSCAR:** What?

**UPON:** You did, you did say that.

**ONCE:** And you tore us all up. A Time had to put us back together.

**UPON:** It's true, he did.

**A TIME:** (*Waving at OSCAR.*) Hello.

**ONCE:** What have you got to say for yourself?

**OSCAR:** Well I...I...

**ONCE:** Huh?

**OSCAR:** I...

*Short pause. OSCAR starts crying.*

**ONCE:** Oh here we go.

**A TIME:** Shh, don't cry mate. It's OK. *(To ONCE.)* Look what you've done.

**ONCE:** Me? You're the one who started slamming books, and saying STEDTIME BORY!

**A TIME:** Well I didn't think this would happen, did I?

**ONCE:** Exactly! You didn't *think*. That's the problem!

**UPON:** Guys, come on. Crying boy here.

**A TIME:** *(To OSCAR, calming him.)* Shh...There, there. It's OK. It's OK. Calm down, please. Please? See. We're nice, aren't we, Once?

**ONCE:** *(Muttering under his breath.)* Speak for yourself.

**A TIME:** Once!

**ONCE:** YES! *(Calming down.)* I mean... yes.

*ONCE, UPON and A TIME sit beside OSCAR. Awkward pause.*

**A TIME:** So, what's your name?

**ONCE:** What's your problem?

**A TIME:** Once.

**ONCE:** Sorry.

**OSCAR:** It's Oscar. And I don't have a problem, actually. I was just getting frustrated. Nothing was making sense.

**A TIME:** I see.

**OSCAR:** It's all mush in my head.

**A TIME:** Well we can help you with that. Can't we?

**OSCAR:** You can?

**ONCE:** *(Sarcastically.)* Course we can.

**UPON:** We're Once Upon A Time.

**A TIME:** Where anything can happen.

**OSCAR:** Anything?

**UPON:** Anything and everything.

**OSCAR:** Wow.

**ONCE:** Or nothing, of course. But that's boring.

**A TIME:** Should we share it with you?

**OSCAR:** Yes, please.

**A TIME:** Once? If you would do the honors.

*ONCE clears his throat. The rest of the cast enters, creating the scene. The forest.*

**ONCE:** Once upon a time, when anything could happen. A silent star fell down from the sky.

**UPON:** The night was black, and the wind was cold.

**A TIME:** Ice cold, yes, and two poor Woodcutters were on their way home.

## SCENE 2

**AT START:** *TWO WOODCUTTERS are carrying large piles of wood. They are struggling, tired and cold. The rest of the cast, where available, create the soundscape and imagery of the forest: Wind through the trees, owls hooting, etc.*

**WOODCUTTER 2:** We're lost, aren't we?

**WOODCUTTER 1:** We are not lost, we're right here.

**WOODCUTTER 2:** Where?

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Right here, see.

*WOODCUTTER 1 points to a sign, which reads, "YOU ARE RIGHT HERE."*

**WOODCUTTER 2:** That doesn't tell me *where* I am.

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Of course it does. It says 'you are right here'. So it's telling you, you are here. Right here.

**WOODCUTTER 2:** How about directions? How about the way out? How about what this place is actually called?

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Well I don't know the name of it, do I? I don't know everything about the woods.

**WOODCUTTER 2:** *(Muttering under breath.)* Or anything about the woods.

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Pardon?

**WOODCUTTER 2:** I knew I shouldn't have come. Should have listened to my wife, should have listened to my kids, but oooh no, I had to come, didn't I? And now we're lost in the middle of nowhere!

**WOODCUTTER 1:** We are not lost, and we are *not* in the middle of nowhere.

**WOODCUTTER 2:** (*Sarcastically.*) Oh, are we not?

**WOODCUTTER 1:** No.

**WOODCUTTER 2:** So where are we then?

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Well it's got to be *somewhere*, hasn't it? It can't be *nowhere*, can it? And who says it's the middle? It could be the edge, it could be off-center, it could be *anywhere*. *Nowhere* can't really exist. But *somewhere*... for us, the **SOME** is the forest, and the **WHERE** is the... er... well the er... right here.

**WOODCUTTER 2:** That's great. Really great. Fantastic. What unbelievably **USELESS INFORMATION!** I have never heard such a ridiculous thing in all my life...

*A soft cry can be heard in the distance.*

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Shh. What's that?

**WOODCUTTER 2:** What's what? I don't hear anything.

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Listen! It sounds like... crying.

*WOODCUTTER 1 wanders into the woods, towards the crying.*

**WOODCUTTER 2:** Great, and now you're—yep. Now you're wandering off into the dark. Wonderful. I hope you get lost!

*The wind noises get louder. And more cracks are heard.*

**WOODCUTTER 2:** Argh OK. OK. OK, I'm coming. Wait! WAIT!

*He runs and joins WOODCUTTER 1.*

**WOODCUTTER 2:** I hate you sometimes, you know.

**WOODCUTTER 1:** I know. Shh.

**WOODCUTTER 2:** Don't shush me. My life is at risk.

*They continue through the forest. WOODCUTTER 2 grumbles under his breath. After a while, they come across a sleeping baby, wrapped in a starry blanket. There is also a star necklace around the baby's neck.*

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Could it be?

**WOODCUTTER 2:** What? Could it be what? Careful.

*WOODCUTTER 1 goes for a closer look.*

**WOODCUTTER 1:** It is. A Star Child.

**WOODCUTTER 2:** A what now?

**WOODCUTTER 1:** A Star Child. Poor thing. Look at him.

*WOODCUTTER 1 goes to pick up the baby.*

**WOODCUTTER 2:** What are you doing? Don't touch it. It could be a trick. It could be contaminated.

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Don't be silly. Look at him. *(Picking him up and speaking in baby talk)* Awww. Wuk at the wittle fing. Hello. Hello...

*Pause.*

**WOODCUTTER 2:** *(Not too seriously.)* I hate you right now.

**WOODCUTTER 1:** He's so teeny tiny.

**WOODCUTTER 2:** Put it back, we're going.

**WOODCUTTER 1:** We can't leave him.

**WOODCUTTER 2:** *We can't, but I can.* I've already got an extra mouth to feed.

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Put her on a diet. She'll thank you for it.

**WOODCUTTER 2:** I was talking about the baby.

**WOODCUTTER 1:** I see. I know, I was... joking.

**WOODCUTTER 2:** That's it! I've had it. I've had it up to here with your idiotic, imbecilic ways. You lead me to what may very well have been my death, you insult me and my family, and to be frank, I would rather eat my own face than spend any more time around you! Good night!

*WOODCUTTER 2 storms off, attempting to do so in a dramatic fashion, but the branches and thistles make this increasingly difficult. WOODCUTTER 1 watches him until he's gone. The STAR CHILD cries.*

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Shh. There, there, little one. I'll look after you.

*WOODCUTTER 1 exits with the baby. ONCE, UPON, A TIME and OSCAR enter through the forest.*

**A TIME:** Dear Woodcutter. He has a heart of gold.

**UPON:** Ouch.

**ONCE:** Not literally you idiot.

**OSCAR:** Where's he taking him?

**A TIME:** Back home, to meet his family.

**ONCE:** *(As if remembering.)* Oh yes! We should move.

**OSCAR:** Why?

*A toy car is rolled on from off stage. There is a pause. Suddenly, the cast of the forest becomes a herd of noisy children: LUCINDA, CLAUDIA, MATILDA, GREGORY, TIMOTHY, NATHANIEL, MICHAEL and SIMEON, and one becomes the WOODCUTTER'S WIFE (known throughout the script as "Wife"). ONCE, UPON, A TIME and OSCAR quickly dodge through the commotion and watch from the side. WOODCUTTER'S WIFE enters wearing an apron and carrying a mixing bowl, and various items that belong to the children: Socks, undies, a couple of toys, and a ball. The house and those in it should look poor, any toys or games they are playing are make-shift, and the clothes, hand-me-downs.*

**WIFE:** Lucinda? Lucinda? Where is Lucinda?

*LUCINDA comes running up to WIFE.*

**LUCINDA:** Yes?

**WIFE:** Clean socks, darling. Put them on please.

*LUCINDA pulls them on. They've got holes.*

**LUCINDA:** They've got holes.

**CLAUDIA:** Holy socks! Holy socks!

**MATILDA:** All hail Saint Lucinda!

*The GIRLS mock-bow before LUCINDA who enjoys the moment and laughs with them. The girls run off. WIFE steps on the toy car.*

**WIFE:** OUCH! Gregory, Timothy, Nathaniel!

*GREGORY, TIMOTHY and NATHANIEL circle around WIFE like airplanes. They have some toys which they drop as bombs.*

**GREGORY:** Take that!

**WIFE:** Pick up your mess, boys, please.

*The boys make fighter jet noises.*

**TIMOTHY:** Lock on target!

*The boys continue to make fighter jet noises and shoot playfully at each other, around WIFE. SIMEON runs on carrying a spoon puppet he's made.*

**SIMEON:** Mummy, mummy, look!

**WIFE:** (To GREGORY, TIMOTHY AND NATHANIEL.) And tidy up your room. It's a pigsty.

**GREGORY, TIMOTHY and NATHANIEL:** (Together.) We like pigsties, oink oink OINK!

**WIFE:** Boys, I'm warning you!

**GREGORY:** Haha! OINK, OINK!

**SIMEON:** Mummy, mummy!

**WIFE:** Now, please.

**SIMEON:** Mum!

**WIFE:** Yes, darling?

**SIMEON:** (Holding out the spoon puppet.) Look what I made.

**WIFE:** (Not really looking.) Very nice dear.

**NATHAN:** Simeon's a pig too!

**SIMEON:** No I'm not.

**GREGORY, TIMOTHY and NATHANIEL:** (*Together.*) Pig, pig, pig!  
Ha-ha!

**WIFE:** Boys just DO AS YOU'RE TOLD!

**SIMEON:** Mum, they called me a pig.

**WIFE:** (*A quick look.*) Very nice dear. BOYS!

*Fighter jet noises created by the boys. They collect the toys, including the one WIFE was carrying, and they run off.*

**WIFE:** Oh and Nathaniel!

*NATHANIEL comes flying back, and WIFE holds out a pair of underpants.*

**WIFE:** Clean ones on, please.

*NATHANIEL grabs them and runs off stage. As soon as he leaves we hear "Ready, aim... FIRE!" from off stage, and three pairs of dirty undies are thrown at WIFE who puts them in her apron with a sigh. MICHAEL runs past.*

**WIFE:** Michael.

**MICHAEL:** Yes?

**WIFE:** Ball.

**MICHAEL:** Yes!

*MICHAEL takes the ball and runs off with it. SIMEON sits down in a sulk. WIFE notices.*

**WIFE:** Simeon?

*SIMEON slams the spoon onto the floor. Pause.*

**WIFE:** (*Sigh.*) I'm sorry, sweetheart. Let's have a look then.

*WIFE sits beside SIMEON and he hands her the spoon puppet.*

**WIFE:** Well look at that.

**SIMEON:** (*Admiring it.*) It is pretty awesome.

**WIFE:** It's beautiful darling.

**SIMEON:** Beautiful!? ERGH!

*He throws it away and runs off. WOODCUTTER 1 enters, carrying the baby.*

**WIFE:** You're home!

*All the children run up to WOODCUTTER shouting 'Daddy!' They all run on and surround the WOODCUTTER. There is much excitement at the sight of the baby, but the noise soon gets quiet.*

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Shhh... (*To Wife.*) I found him asleep in the forest.

**NATHANIEL:** Ooh like Tarzan!

**GREGORY:** Haha!

*GREGORY does a Tarzan impression.*

**TIMOTHY:** No, like this!

*TIMOTHY does a Tarzan impression.*

**GREGORY:** That was rubbish!

**TIMOTHY:** Was not!

*The boys start arguing and WOODCUTTER shushes them. WIFE looks very concerned.*

**WOODCUTTER 1:** He's a Star Child.

*They gasp in amazement. Some of them whisper: "A Star Child?" "What's a Star Child?" "Oooh, sounds magical," etc.*

**MATILDA:** Can we keep him Mummy, can we?

**GREGORY:** We'll be rich and famous!

**CHILDREN:** Yay!

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Children, please. Go and get ready for bed, I need to talk to your mother.

*They run off. WOODCUTTER and WIFE come together.*

**WOODCUTTER 1:** I couldn't leave him.

**WIFE:** Of course not. But can we really...

*WOODCUTTER 1 hands the baby to WIFE. She smiles and cradles it. He puts his arm around his wife.*

**WOODCUTTER 1:** We can do it. We can. We can love him as one of our own.

*They make a make-shift cot and lay the baby in it. The cast gathers round and sings a lullaby, quietly.*

**ONCE:** And they did. All through his childhood, they loved him like one of their own.

**OSCAR:** Then what happened?

*The baby is taken off. Lights fade.*

### SCENE 3

**AT RISE:** *ONCE, UPON and A TIME are on stage with OSCAR and PEASANTS.*

**UPON:** The Star Child grew and the years were kind, for the child became a figure refined.

*There is music and the following speech is spoken over a physical theatre piece, devised by the cast. The lines may be sung to an original composition, spoken in sync, or split between the cast. The starry blanket ends up being a cloak, and once the cloak is put on the STAR CHILD, he becomes a figure of beauty. The PEASANTS and ENTOURAGE surround the STAR CHILD in adoration.*

**ALL CAST:** A melody, tuned to your hair in the breeze,  
 Your lips are red as rose,  
 A voice so strong, and carried with ease,  
 Of your beauty, everyone knows.  
 With eyes a blue as heavenly skies,  
 You are glorious, an idol adored.  
 We look and we seek, with wearying eyes,  
 To make you our prince, our ruler, our lord.

**A TIME:** But from the humble home, in which he was raised, the Star Child sought to escape.

**UPON:** Bewitched by his beauty, and the flattery of others, he grew to resent those that had loved him.

**OSCAR:** Wow! He's... he's... beautiful.

*The STAR CHILD exits with the crowd following. OSCAR is drawn into the crowd, but ONCE, UPON and A TIME pull him back.*

**OSCAR:** Get off me, get off! Let me go with him!

**A TIME:** It's magic, Oscar. Of the cruelest sort.

**UPON:** Beauty bewitches, and leaves many behind.

**OSCAR:** What do you mean?

**A TIME:** He grew proud, and cruel, and selfish.

**ONCE:** Even to the one's that raised him.

*STAR CHILD re-enters with ENTOURAGE 1, ENTOURAGE 2, ENTOURAGE 3, all JESTERS and a small crowd of PEASANTS.*

**STAR CHILD:** Hands off me, peasants. Lucinda!

*LUCINDA runs on with a damp cloth and wipes STAR CHILD'S hands. GREGORY, TIMOTHY and NATHANIEL enter, but they are far less playful than they were before.*

**STAR CHILD:** (About his adoptive siblings.) How was I left with filth like them?

*The ENTOURAGE laughs.*

**STAR CHILD:** Come. Let us go to the water, I wish to gaze upon myself.

*The pond is created by the PEASANTS or other available cast members. STAR CHILD looks in and admires his image. The pond speaks to him with flattering 'ooh's' and 'ahhh's'.*

**ENTOURAGE 1:** You are magnificent, sir.

**ENTOURAGE 2:** Even the water ripples in agreement.

**ENTOURAGE 3:** Majesty at its finest.

*The ENTOURAGE and PEASANTS applaud.*

**STAR CHILD:** Now I must rest. Make me a chair.

*The ENTOURAGE and JESTERS form a chair, in which he sits. STAR CHILD points to the people making the chair.*

**STAR CHILD:** Someone funny tell me a joke. Jester!

*The people making the chair discuss and pull out a jester's hat. JESTER 1 takes it and steps out.*

**JESTER 1:** Er... knock, knock...

**STAR CHILD:** Ergh, I hate knock-knocks. Something else.

*The jester hat is passed on to JESTER 2.*

**JESTER 2:** An Irish man, an English man, and a Scottish man...

**STAR CHILD:** Hate those too. Last one, and it better be good!

*JESTER 3 jumps out and snatches the hat.*

**JESTER 3:** Oh, Oh! A man walks into a bar...

*JESTER 3 pretends to collide with an iron bar.*

**JESTER 3:** OW!

*They all laugh.*

**STAR CHILD:** And now for some music.

*STAR CHILD claps his hands and a choral piece is sung quietly by the the ENTOURAGE and JESTERS and PEASANTS.*

**STAR CHILD:** Ahhh. Now I am happy. Drink!

*WOODCUTTER 1 enters with a bad back, and drink in hand. Gives drink to STAR CHILD.*

**STAR CHILD:** Grapes!

*WIFE enters with a bunch of grapes for him to eat.*

**OSCAR:** But wait, isn't that his family? His mum and dad?

*ONCE, UPON and A TIME nod solemnly.*

**OSCAR:** Well, that boy is horrid! They ought to do something. They ought to tell him.

**ONCE:** They tried to.

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Son, why can't you love as we have loved you?

**WIFE:** Were we ever so harsh and so cruel?

**STAR CHILD:** You brought me up in a barn, fit for nothing but pigs! I belong in a castle, fit for a king!

*WIFE and WOODCUTTER 1 exit. PRIEST enters with a Bible.*

**STAR CHILD:** Ah, Vicar! What thrilling sermon have you for me today? Is it of forgiveness or kindness? They are so overdone, don't you think?

**PRIEST:** It is the latter, my boy.

**STAR CHILD:** How riveting. Very well, speak.

**PRIEST:** *(Clearing his throat, he opens the Bible.)* Do unto others as you would have done unto yourself.

*STAR CHILD yawns. A member of the cast within the chair makes a buzzing sound to give the impression of a fly. STAR CHILD starts swatting.*

**PRIEST:** The fly is your brother. Do it no harm.

*STAR CHILD kills the fly with a clap. He laughs.*

**PRIEST:** Love the living things of the earth. Snare not the birds for your pleasure, for God made the blind-worm and the mole, and each has its place.

*STAR CHILD becomes uncomfortable. It's something in the chair. He slaps one member of the ensemble.*

**STAR CHILD:** SIT STILL!

**PRIEST:** Who are you to bring pain into God's world?

**STAR CHILD:** I said SIT STILL!

*The STAR CHILD smacks someone else on the head, and turns to the PRIEST who does not look impressed.*

**STAR CHILD:** What? It was annoying me. Now, if you wouldn't mind.

**PRIEST:** But I haven't finished.

**STAR CHILD:** Well then you can prepare for next time. Off you go.

*STAR CHILD waves the PRIEST to leave, then stretches as he gets up.*

**STAR CHILD:** Who's up for a game?

*The cast gets excited.*

**STAR CHILD:** The greatest compliment wins!

*Some flock to the STAR CHILD, but others step back.*

**STAR CHILD:** Go.

*The cast smothers him with a series of compliments. STAR CHILD enjoys it.*

**STAR CHILD:** *(Pointing at some of those who came to him.)* You, you, you, you, you and you... join me in mocking everything we see. *(Pointing at his adoptive brothers and sisters.)* Starting with them.

*Using the paper from the beginning of the show, the torn pages of books, etc., the STAR CHILD and his ENTOURAGE scrunch bits up and hurl them as stones at the others.*

**OSCAR:** But they were his family. How could he do that?

**UPON:** Family or not, to him they were, well, beneath him.

*WOODCUTTER 1 and WIFE are heard shouting offstage.*

**ONCE:** And it gets worse.

*WOODCUTTER 1 and WIFE run on stage with a blind BEGGAR WOMAN.*

**OSCAR:** Who's that?

**A TIME:** Shh. Watch.

**BEGGAR:** Where is he? Where is he, where is my son?

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Wait here, we'll fetch him.

*The BEGGAR waits as WIFE and WOODCUTTER 1 fetch the STAR CHILD.*

**WOODCUTTER 1:** Son. You'll never believe it.

**STAR CHILD:** What do you want?

**WOODCUTTER 1 and WIFE:** We have found your mother!

*Pause. Everybody stops what they're doing.*

**STAR CHILD:** What?

**WOODCUTTER 1:** You're mother. She lost you when you fell from the stars.

**WIFE:** She's been looking for you all this time!

*STAR CHILD expresses excitement and pushes through the crowd. He sees the BEGGAR.*

**STAR CHILD:** Where is she?

**BEGGAR:** Son.

*Pause.*

**STAR CHILD:** Is this some kind of joke?

**BEGGAR:** It is no joke, my boy. My precious boy. I have found you at last!

*She reaches for the STAR CHILD who flings her to the floor.*

**WIFE:** Son, please no!

*WIFE runs to comfort the BEGGAR.*

**STAR CHILD:** You bring this filthy beggar here, and you dare to call me her son? Look at me, and look at her! Has the whole world gone mad? (To *ENTOURAGE*.) This dog, is meant to be my mother? Away dogs!

*Again, they kick and throw paper as stones. Barking and laughing as they do. WOODCUTTER 1, WIFE and BEGGAR exit.*

**STAR CHILD:** Come, let us rest in the shade. I don't want to burn.

*Lights fade.*

**SCENE 4**

**AT RISE:** *Lights up. The STAR CHILD and ENTOURAGE are resting. There is music and the following speech is spoken over a physical piece, during which the STAR CHILD becomes grotesque. This is achieved by placing a disfigured mask on him, brought on by ONCE, UPON and A TIME.*

**ONCE:** The Star Child, and his heart grew cold, for he'd failed to grasp the magic of old.

**UPON:** That beauty and cruelty, when heavily set, mar the appearance with lasting effect...

**A TIME:** This, the child, had come to forget.

*Through physical theatre, the STAR CHILD is lifted and manipulated by the ENTOURAGE and PEASANTS (or other available cast members). One of them is handed the mask.*

**OSCAR:** What's happening?

**ONCE:** His face was distorted. His features contorted.

**A TIME:** The boy had lost his crown. Unable to see, what he'd come to be.

**UPON:** From up, he soon came down.

*STAR CHILD is placed back on the ground, and slowly begins to awake, along with his entourage. The ENTOURAGE lines can be split up or spoken in sync, but should be done so with a certain rhythm.*

**STAR CHILD:** *(Waking up and stretching.)* Ah, now I am rested.

*ENTOURAGE shriek.*

**ENTOURAGE 1:** What happened, who are you?

**STAR CHILD:** What do you mean?

**ENTOURAGE 1:** Disgusting!

**ENTOURAGE 2:** Revolting!

**ENTOURAGE 3:** Completely obscene.

**STAR CHILD:** My friends, it's me. I don't understand.

**ENTOURAGE 1, ENTOURAGE 2 and ENTOURAGE 3:** Never has so foul a thing, been granted life on land!

**ENTOURAGE 1:** His breath, it smells of rotten eggs.

**ENTOURAGE 2:** And his face is the skin of a fish. He's covered in scales!

**ENTOURAGE 1:** His hair looks like tails!

**ENTOURAGE 3:** He stinks.

**ENTOURAGE 2:** He reeks!

**ENTOURAGE 3:** It's making me sick!

*ENTOURAGE 3 turns and vomits. Some of the cast remakes the pond as before, but this time when STAR CHILD looks in it, the faces are grotesque and growling, or shrieking in horror. PRIEST enters and STAR CHILD backs into him.*

**PRIEST:** Watch where you're going, son.

*STAR CHILD turns to face him.*

**PRIEST:** *(Holding up his cross.)* Argh! Away! Out, I say.

**STAR CHILD:** No, you don't understand, it's me.

**PRIEST:** You have no business here. Get out. Be gone!

**ALL:** THROW HIM OUT! THROW HIM OUT!

*They run towards STAR CHILD who tries to fight his way through the crowd. Eventually they lift him, shouting as he protests, and they carry him out of the city. He is left alone.*

**STAR CHILD:** My wickedness has changed me. The evils I committed have ruined me. I drove away my mother, and this is what I've become.

*MATILDA enters.*

**MATILDA:** Brother.

*Short pause. She goes to comfort him.*

**MATILDA:** It's OK.

**STAR CHILD:** I have to go.

**MATILDA:** No, please. Stay with us. I won't mock you. I won't hate you. None of us will.

**STAR CHILD:** But I mocked and hated you all. I have to find my mother. I have to make it right.

*STAR CHILD leaves as MATILDA watches.*

**MATILDA:** God go with you. Stay safe.

*Lights fade.*

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