

RAINLAND
The Musical

by Robert Duncan and Molly Paynter

RAINLAND

(The curtain opens in total darkness. The Storyteller appears with a little girl. The first page of 'the book' is turned. The girl, ready for bed, sings.)

SONG 1 - TELL ME A STORY (Little girl/Storyteller)

STORYTELLER: In a faraway land, an old King lay dying. Unspoken, but exchanging a million memories with every glance, the great ruler and his beloved Queen talked for the last time. Their eyes spoke of the happiness of their interwoven hearts. Of the joy when their firstborn, Prince Edwin, came into being. How this child, with his wilful ways and fledgling tyranny, had torn their lives apart. And how, when all guidance had been sought, and to no avail, Prince Archie had been born - as a sign that life in the Kingdom should go on, and as a divine apology for the travesty that was Prince Edwin.

Their eyes talked again. Secrets of their love. Secrets of their life. And the secret that, throughout the young lives of the two princes, was simply known as Rainland.

(Lights and music build. An old bed, and the Queen, Prince Archie, and the trusted manservant attending to the dying King. Prince Edwin, in the shadows cast by the manservant's single candle, is looking the other way)

SONG 2 - GOLDEN MOMENTS (King/Queen)

MANSERVANT: When I pluck the light from this candle, then the old King will have passed on, his own light plucked out.

QUEEN: Speak once, my dear Crowned Head, my Monarch . . . Er . . . Simon. Does the ancient law of the land still apply? Does the evil Edwin take over the vestiges of sovereignty?

KING: Is it yesterday yet?

QUEEN: Does the evil Edwin take over?

KING: I shall have the good sense to . . .

MANSERVANT: When I pluck the light from this candle, then . . .

QUEEN: Yes, yes. Now Simon dear, we really must know.

ARCHIE: Father.

KING: Edwin?

ARCHIE: No Father. Tis I. Your beloved son Archie.

KING: Edwin?

ARCHIE: No, Archie.

MANSERVANT: When I pluck this candle from this . . .

QUEEN: We know. Now Simon . . . This is your wonderful son Archie.

EDWIN: (from the shadows) Pish.

QUEEN: The law of the land can only be changed by the King. You must change the law - now - to ensure that the evil Edwin is deposed, and my fine boy Archie takes his position as mighty ruler of this fair land.

MANSERVANT: When I pluck . . .

QUEEN: Silence. A decision, Majesty. Who would be King?

EDWIN: (snarls) It's too late, Mother. The old fool has lost his senses. I, as the firstborn, will rule this land.

KING: Archie?

EDWIN: No. It's Edwin.

KING: Archie, my boy?

EDWIN: I rest my case.

(The King coughs, sits up, and lies down again)

EDWIN: He's got five minutes or I'm going. This depresses me.

ARCHIE: (putting his hand to his sword, and checking himself) If you were not my brother, then mercy me, I would run you through.

KING: Edwin?

ARCHIE: No Father. It's Archie.

KING: Edwin?

QUEEN: You must announce it now Simon. A Royal proclamation. (She flings her arms wide, and smacks the King in the face)

MANSERVANT: When I pluck the light from . . .

EDWIN: (growling) . . . Silence.
Father. Quickly now? Am I to be King or am I not? Hurry now. No time to lose.

KING: Archie?

EDWIN: Edwin. A decision, or I will personally . . .

MANSERVANT: . . . pluck the light . . .

EDWIN: . . . precisely.

(The King sits up and points into the distance)

KING: Rainland.

EDWIN: (incredulous) Rainland? You have, by all accounts, and all that is real, a few moments more on this vale of tears, and you mention Rainland? Rainland?

A land you invented for the benefit of my dear brother and myself.

A land that, only barely mentioned, would send your two little princes into a sound and dreamless sleep. Rainland?

That fairyland?

I put it to you, this Monarch is no longer fit to rule, I will take over command.

ARCHIE: Will you tell us one more Rainland story, Daddy?

EDWIN: Silence. Bow to your new King.

MANSERVANT: When I pluck the light . . .

EDWIN: *All* of you. Now.

(The manservant attempts to bow, and keels over on the bed. He rights himself in time to hear the King speak)

KING: Archie.

EDWIN: It's Edwin. Edwin. (He grips the old man's nightshirt and shakes him) Edwin.

KING: Archie?

EDWIN: You are not capable. Where's your crown?

KING: (sits up) One joke before I go . . .

QUEEN: Now now. Do not exert yourself, Majesty.

KING: Just one. Have you heard this one? This land . . .

EDWIN: Yes. Yes.

KING: This land is not my land at all. Not our land. We came here . . .

EDWIN: In the eleventh century. We know. And our family has ruled here ever since. We know.

KING: We came here just before you were born . . . only visiting.

QUEEN: Simon. You said you would never tell.

KING: Only visiting. But the King died, I looked a bit like him, and nobody knew the difference.

EDWIN: Mother. Is this true?

QUEEN: So very true. Very true.

EDWIN: Then we're not Royal?

QUEEN: No more than the next man.

EDWIN: What?

QUEEN: Commoners. In this land.

EDWIN: What do you mean, *this* land?

QUEEN: Maybe your Father will tell you.

EDWIN: (idea) Of course! All this does not matter! We can still . . . I can still . . . rule this land. No one will be any the wiser. Especially when he's dead.

MANSERVANT: When I pluck the light . . .

EDWIN: I will pluck your liver from your body if you say than once more. Now. What can go wrong?
All present must be sworn to secrecy.

KING: It's too late. A proclamation is being carried throught the night to Baron Throbb, who will become the rightful King of this fair land.

EDWIN: What? (grabs the King again, but is stopped - there is more)

KING: Your mother and I are the right Royal Rulers of Rainland.

ARCHIE: Father. Archie here.

KING: Edwin?

ARCHIE: Archie. Now we remember Rainland, from when we were young. But Rainland, with its sun, and pasture land, and fine, dreaming castles, soft milky rivers, and lilting voiced maidens, was all in your imagination. An invention, by a kindly King for his two prince ducklings.

EDWIN: Oh for heaven's sake!

KING: Rainland exists. Your Mother and I own it. One day it will be yours.

EDWIN: Well, I mean . . . what, with all the dreaming castles, and those maidens. Really?

QUEEN: Well, not quite.

EDWIN: All the same, it doesn't sound too bad. And I, as your firstborn, will be King. King of Rainland! Celestial Emperor! Sachem!

QUEEN: Well, it's not exactly . . .

(the King let's out a mighty groan)

KING: I leave Rainland To . . .

EDWIN: Yes?

KING: To . . .

EDWIN: To?

KING: Aaagh . . . (he dies)

ARCHIE: He was going to say Archie.

EDWIN: No he wasn't.

ARCHIE: He was. He started to say Aaah . . .

EDWIN: That was just aaah . . . because he was dying.

ARCHIE: No it wasn't.

EDWIN: It was.

(As the manservant topples forward onto the bed, hence plucking the light from the candle, the scene fades to black.)

STORYTELLER: Her heart broken, the old Queen never uttered another word. Among her Regal effects were found a faded map and a golden key. The key, some said, was the key that unlocked the heart of her King, way back at the tiny spring that was destined to meander gently, and finally become the mighty river of their love. Prince Archie, as a final token of his love for his parents, told his evil brother that he could keep all the gold, all the riches that the palace had to offer . . . as long as the good prince could keep the key, this one symbol of his parents' rapture.

As most children know, to get to Rainland you take a boat from Murkywater, head due north for three and a half days, and turn left at Hailstone Island, being very careful not to go too close to the shore.

If you have chosen the right sort of day, and the wind is blowing your sails just fast enough, you should reach Rainland shortly after lunch.

Or so the map said.

(Lightning flashes, there is a mighty roar of thunder, and Archie becomes visible, swaying to and fro against a wooden railing - which he is, in fact, operating. Archie is dressed in princely robes.)

SONG 3 - ALL AT SEA (Archie)

EDWIN: (staggers on, looking ill, he groans) How much longer? Will this blasted weather never clear?

ARCHIE: (laughs and slaps his brother on the back) Not far now! The captain says we will be heaving to shortly.

EDWIN: How right he is.

ARCHIE: Our Kingdom! Just think . . .

EDWIN: (quietly) My Kingdom.

ARCHIE: Eh?

EDWIN: Nothing.

ARCHIE: Do you remember, when we were children? Father telling us those incredible tales of Rainland? Remember, Edwin? Cuttlefish day, and how everyone had to laugh until the sun went down. How they climbed to the mighty palace at nightfall, and drank Storm Tulip Dew until the Hogbeam was ready. Remember?

EDWIN: No.

ARCHIE: And how the next day everyone visited the Cluckbladder Field to see if the laughing had worked - and it had worked, always - so the King laid a wreath and an egg.
I wonder if it all really happens.

EDWIN: I'll soon snap some sense into them. Father always made out that life was one long carnival day. There will be none of that.

ARCHIE: Nonsense. You must not surely think that you can command respect? You must earn their love. Find their hearts through the open door of your own.

EDWIN: Pish.

ARCHIE: We really must try to make it work, brother. We must forget our differences. I sense a new beginning.

EDWIN: Possibly.

(Mighty clap of thunder. Edwin reels.)

ARCHIE: It's getting worse. Edwin, you don't suppose . . .

EDWIN: (groan) What?

ARCHIE: You don't suppose . . . No, surely not. Father would have said.

EDWIN: What?

ARCHIE: You don't suppose it rains a lot on Rainland . . . and that's why it's called Rainland?

EDWIN: No. Impossible.

ARCHIE: It was always sunny in the stories. Oh well. Just a thought.

(Another clap of thunder, accompanied by a mighty roar of coarse laughter, as the seedy captain joins his passengers.)

SONG 4 - SEAWATER IN MY HEART (Captain)

CAPTAIN: Ah! Not used to a little sea breeze? You have a face like the frog's spawn.

EDWIN: How dare you.

CAPTAIN: There's some pork below, and a cup of Stinkbile. Come and join us.

EDWIN: How dare you? Do you realise who I am, man?

CAPTAIN: An actor maybe? A man injured about the head in the Great Meany War? Could explain the crown . . .

EDWIN: I, Sir, am King.

CAPTAIN: How do.

EDWIN: Bow. Bow to the King of all Rainland.

CAPTAIN: Ha ha! A merry joke. Do you do a touring act? You should go to Goldendawn Island. They do a good show at the Goldendawn Trinket.

EDWIN: The Goldendawn Trinket? I will have no more of this. Upon our arrival at Rainland I will have you keel hauled. Ah . . . I see that has taken the smile off your face.

Show me enormous respect and I may . . . (the captain grabs him by the neck) Er . . . could you let go?

ARCHIE: Let him go Captain. He means no harm.

CAPTAIN: Make a fool of me would you? With your crazy act . . .

ARCHIE: He speaks the truth Captain. We are bound for Rainland, where we take over as Rulers. We have written . . .

CAPTAIN: (releases his grip) Written? Who to?

ARCHIE: To the er . . . Town Council.

CAPTAIN: Town Council? Or should I say . . . Town?

ARCHIE: My brother and I are next in line to the throne of Rainland. King Simon is dead . . .

EDWIN: Long live King Edwin.

CAPTAIN: But nobody . . . How can I put this kindly . . . Nobody . . . Nobody lives on Rainland.

(Crash of thunder. Lightning illuminates startled faces.)

EDWIN: Absurd fellow. Supping too much Stinkbile. And in charge of one of his Majesty's Fleet. I'll have you heel called.

ARCHIE: Keel hauled.

EDWIN: I know that.

CAPTAIN: (aggressively) Firstly. This ship is mine. It belongs to no 'Majesty'. Secondly, I accepted this commission to take you to Rainland because I thought you were visiting naturalists. Now I think the World will be a safer place with you incarcerated on that rockface from Hell.

(clap of thunder)

EDWIN: (uneasily) Hell?

(Captain shouts explanation over the noise of thunder, rushing wind and creaking sails.)

CAPTAIN: No living being has set foot on Rainland for years. No God has smiled upon that desolate lump of grey rock, by blessing it with one ray of sunshine, since the Great Bleary Seas began. No ship has taken shelter under its gnarled hand of protection since time was created. Rainland is . . . stagnant!

(clap of thunder)

EDWIN: Take me back.

CAPTAIN: No.

EDWIN: Take me back I command it.

CAPTAIN: Command? Command me and I'll split you from gizzard to knee.

EDWIN: Take me back . . . er . . . please. (He grabs the Captain by the shoulders.) Please. I won't even demand a Princely cabin. I'll stay with your rough fellows . . . but please I must go back. I've changed my mind.

CAPTAIN: No. You are destined for Rainland and that is where your passage ends.

EDWIN: Pleeese.

CAPTAIN: Unhand me.

ARCHIE: Edwin. Come on man. This behaviour is not fitting.

CAPTAIN: I'll make ye an offer. You will work along with my men.

EDWIN: W . . . work?

CAPTAIN: And fight along with my men.

EDWIN: F . . . f . . . fight?

CAPTAIN: Yes. Fight. We are on our way to rid the Great Bleary Seas of pirates - and we will not return for a year and day. On a diet of porky bits and stinkbile we will fight, full hearty and long, until the only smell in the Great Bleary Seas is that of dead pirates.

EDWIN: Ooh . . . er.

CAPTAIN: Are you with us?

EDWIN: (composing himself) Archie, my dear brother. I think it's Rainland for us. When will my . . . our land be in view?

CAPTAIN: (points behind him) We're here.

EDWIN: Where?

CAPTAIN: That black and menacing lump, where the rain never stops, and darkness covers the sodden peaks and valleys.

EDWIN: I can't live here.

CAPTAIN: Please yourself. (shouts) Splice the mainbrace! We sail on the tide.

(The lights fade to the stir of seafaring music. This fades as the Storyteller speaks.)

STORYTELLER: The old King had discovered Rainland in the warm blue ocean of his happy heart. He had shared this discovery with his two sons, considering that the truth was too grim, and too fearful, for their happy little souls.

Eventually the cold reality of Rainland was replaced, in his softening mind, by the warm water colour tinted dream.

When the old man passed away, he did so, safe in the knowledge that his two boys, who were both loved equally, in spite of their differences, were taking over the land that had been built, brick by glorious brick, only in his poor old mind.

(FX: 3 chimes of a small bell)

As they walked the rainsodden path, they turned to watch the last lick of white sail disappear into the cold, swirling mist.

(a dusty ghost of the Old Man walks on to a darkened stage. He sings)

SONG 5 - RAINLAND (Old King's ghost)

(As the Old Man shambles off, a single spotlight finds Edwin. He raises his arms and cries out.)

EDWIN: The King is dead! Long live King Edwin! Bow. Bow to your almighty Monarch. Bow to your ruler . . . the majestic emperor of all Rainland!
(He leans forward and loses his footing. Blackout to the sound of a large splash. In total darkness the Storyteller speaks.)

STORYTELLER: Now certain that their Father's muddled mind had been playing elfin tricks on him, the two brothers contemplated their future on what appeared to be a damp rock, protruding from a dark sea, set in a perpetual storm. Their blind stumblings finally lead them to a mighty, rain soaked door.

(FX: Dripping rain and distant thunder. Continued throughout, sometimes exaggerated for dramatic effect, sometimes as a backdrop reminder of the bleakness of Rainland. The two brothers, barely visible in damp darkness.)

EDWIN: A door.

ARCHIE: He just said that.

EDWIN: Is this a nightmare? Will I wake up to find candles burning? Warmth? The murmur of one hundred distinguished guests, anticipating the delights of dining at my table? The smell of roast beef? Walnuts cracking? The strains of pipers and fiddlers playing their merry song?
That sort of thing?

ARCHIE: Probably not. This is it, dear brother. Rainland. And not the Rainland our beloved parents lead us to believe was their Utopia. But this door, this door . . . suggests to me that there could be a building around it. After all, our parents were King and Queen of Rainland so . . . maybe a palace . . . albeit a small one. Turrets maybe. I like turrets.

EDWIN: I don't give a fig for turrets . . . but a warm bed, covered in sheepskin, and a cheering cup of tulip dew. That's for me. The turrets are yours to keep.

ARCHIE: Rather too hopeful I think, brother dear. Prepare yourself, if I'm not very much mistaken for a cold, wet night, followed by a cold wet day . . .

EDWIN: And another . . .

ARCHIE: And another . . .

EDWIN: (shouts) And another. I cannot bear it. I cannot live like this. You must do something.

ARCHIE: Me?

EDWIN: You, Prince Clever Breeches, you can fix something. I command you. Now!

ARCHIE: Silence. I am beyond your ordinance. Your dictum means nothing to me.

EDWIN: (quietly) We'll see.

ARCHIE: So. Shall we enter?

(There is the sound of the door creaking open. A pencil of light crosses the players as they enter. The door slams shut resoundingly. Blackness.)

EDWIN: No fanfare?

ARCHIE: It's very dark and sort of drippy. But wait, I have found a lamp.

EDWIN: Well you would, wouldn't you.

ARCHIE: I fancy I have a lucifer.

EDWIN: Of course.

ARCHIE: Let there be light.

(He lights the lamp, and lights come up to reveal a grey, green, damp, musty hallway. Dripping water FX increases for a few seconds.)

EDWIN: And there was light. I have never, in my entire life, been privy to such a miserable place. I think I am about to crack, brother, . . . crack.

ARCHIE: I cannot recommend that. Let's explore.

EDWIN: (putting on childish voice) Oh yes. Let's!

SONG 6 - LET'S EXPLORE (Archie/Edwin)

ARCHIE: You go that way, I'll go this.

(As they exit, the lights fade to dark green. Soft, hardly visible.)

STORYTELLER: The groans and muted shufflings could be put down to the creaking movement of a thousand ancient rainsoaked beams. And, if occasionally they thought they heard a whisper, well that was just their imagination, wasn't it? After all, Rainland Palace was deserted . . . wasn't it? It was owned and controlled by the black clouds that hovered over its towers, whose only amusement was spitting cold raindrops, forcefully, at the bleak windows. Wasn't it?

(The lights go up, as the brothers meet again.)

ARCHIE: What found you?

EDWIN: 'What found I' was a tower, brother dear . . . and a dungeon. Let me tell you about the dungeon first. It proved to me beyond any doubt that this God forsaken place has been visited by other human beings.

ARCHIE: The fact that it has been built at all gave me the very same notion.

EDWIN: In these dungeons, foul work has been done. Chains. Racks. Gizzard gutters and splut drainers. I could almost hear the cries of a thousand forgotten prisoners, their beards growing tangled over their tortuously thin frames. Curling, creating warm hides for rats.

ARCHIE: Ooh don't.

EDWIN: In short, the sort of place that you would not expect to find in the fairytale palace of my Father's description.

To prove to you the horrors of my discovery, I have brought this for your perusal. (He reaches off, and produces a bucket with holes in it. Archie examines it thoroughly.)

ARCHIE: It's a bucket.

EDWIN: Yes but I put it to you . . . (he turns it) It has two holes in it!

ARCHIE: No!

EDWIN: Yes!

ARCHIE: Um . . . so what Edwin? Did they torture prisoners by sending them for buckets of water, only to find, on their return from their endeavours, that the water had all leaked out through the holes?

EDWIN: I don't think so. Observe. The holes in this bucket are at about the position that one might expect to find the eyes of a person, if this bucket was placed, upside down, on their head.

ARCHIE: Cunning.

EDWIN: Further note, this bucket has a fixing device on its handle, which could easily connect to this ancient belt . . . (he removes a belt from his waist) . . . that I found at the same time.

ARCHIE: You mean, the tormentors put this bucket on the head of the prisoner, coupled it to the belt, say around the unfortunates chest . . .

EDWIN: Say . . .

ARCHIE: And he was caught, without food or drink, destined to talk in an echoey, tinny voice for the rest of his days?

EDWIN: Precisely. Let me show you how I think they secured the belt.

ARCHIE: I would be most interested.

EDWIN: Under the arms . . . like this. Buckled at the back. Quite securely . . . like this. Round a bit. There, so this mighty ring is at the front, just like so.

ARCHIE: I say.

EDWIN: Anyway. Enough of all that. What did *you* find?

ARCHIE: Well, I trudged the sodden halls and, I can tell you, more than once I put my tanned, hairy hand to my sword, but I discovered that the only occupants of this sad domain are rats, spiders and something that looked like a green jelly . . . but probably wasn't.

EDWIN: I see.

ARCHIE: I stared out of windows at the bleak, tangled towers of the palace - and the bare, silhouetted trees that seem to be their only friends.

EDWIN: Quite. Pray continue.

ARCHIE: My search nearly complete, I mounted the slippery stairs of the final tower, the second highest of the palace.
At the top, a mighty door with bolts, chains and a large key, faced me.
I pushed open the creaking door, kicking the loose shards of stone from my path manfully, and moved the sodden fallen timbers that blocked my way.

EDWIN: Really?

ARCHIE: It's damp. It's lonely. (pauses and changes mood) But it commands a superb view of Rainland, which I can tell you is small, a little bit sad, and very overgrown.
Tomorrow I may do that princely thing of hacking down some of the undergrowth.

EDWIN: Is this room . . . er . . . secure?

ARCHIE: I should say so. The lock looks well, and there is a mighty beam that denies egress.

EDWIN: Eh?

ARCHIE: You couldn't get out.

EDWIN: I see. Brother . . . you should show me this room. Maybe we should make it our headquarters. Especially, as you say, since it commands a fine view of my . . . our . . . domain.

ARCHIE: Now?

EDWIN: What better time?

ARCHIE: Very well. We'll leave right away.

EDWIN: (extravagant flourish) Foward!

(As they leave the stage the lights fade, to a loud rumble of thunder. FX of feet on echoing stone stairs. Players heard but not seen.)

ARCHIE: This way. Not far now.

EDWIN: (out of breath) This must be a very high tower.

ARCHIE: The second highest.

(FX: Footsteps continue and stop)

EDWIN: Is the door open?

ARCHIE: Let me.

(There is a long, drawn out creak as the door opens. A few more footsteps and they are inside.)

ARCHIE: Here it is. What do you think? It's a bit . . .

(There is the inevitable clang as the bucket is slammed on Archie's head)

ARCHIE: (muffled) Hey! What? I say . . . (And a click as the handle is joined to the belt)
There's been some mistake . . . Edwin? Are you there?

EDWIN: No mistake, brother. Welcome to your own, very private dungeon. Here you will live . . . until you die. Ha ha ha!

(Thunder cracks as the mighty door is slammed shut. Footsteps disappear.)

ARCHIE: Edwin? Hello? Edwin? It's me . . . Archie. I say . . .

(All sounds fade away. After a few seconds, a single spot finds Edwin, sitting comfortably on the edge of the stage, spouting his soliliquy.)

EDWIN: So there it is. The brother is out of the way, leaving me the undisputed ruler of . . . what? This dismal, lonely land. This dark silhouette on a remote horizon. This desolate . . . dump. Perhaps it's still a dream. Will I awake to courtiers? Servants? Gentlemen with papers to sign? I doubt it. This land is a dark handkerchief, where sadness comes to cry. I *need* servants. I need lesser mortals to order about. It's not anything to do with getting jobs done. That's a matter of course. Or it was . . . No. It's the need to be nasty to somebody. To show my superiority. My cruelty. Understand?

SONG 7 - EVIL IS . . . (Edwin)

I discovered something else during my tour of the palace. Something that I didn't think was necessary to share with my dear brother.

A room. A rather warm, comfortable room. With a bed, warm towels. Curtains not seeped in mildew. Curious. But who am I to question such things?

Who am I?

The King! The King of all Rainland! Mighty overlord!

Lead me to my chamber!

(He stands. There is a crack of thunder and he walks to a brightly lit bed. Warm, stacked high with covers. Removing his crown and boots, he climbs in. The lights fade. Immediately, daylight fades in - a damp dreary light. The prince sits up and looks around.)

EDWIN: Oh no.

(A tousled head appears from the other end of the bed. Edwin screams. The man speaks.)

OLD MAN: Who are you? What are you doing in my bed?

EDWIN: Your bed? This is my bed, old man. Where did you come from?

OLD MAN: I live here, and you are in my bed.

EDWIN: (reaches for his sword) This is my bed. My room. My palace. (looks for crown) My land. I am King Edwin of Rainland. Get out of my bed.

(The old man jumps out of bed and bows deeply)

OLD MAN: Majesty.

EDWIN: Better.

OLD MAN: Majesty. My apologies. I didn't realise. What can I say?

EDWIN: You can tell me who you are for a start. And what you're doing here.

OLD MAN: I'm an old man . . .

EDWIN: I can see that.

OLD MAN: An old man, whose life's work has brought me to Rainland. Drawn I was, like a pin a magnet. Rainland was my perfect dream. The place where my work could grow . . . and flourish.

EDWIN: What are you? A rain hat maker? A diver? An idiot?

OLD MAN: I write papers on water.

EDWIN: Doesn't the ink run?

OLD MAN: And the weather generally.

When I was a boy on Goldendawn Island I studied the weather all the time. While others made words from B's and W's, I was making weather forecasts. While others added 22 to 6, I was plotting the course of clouds.

SONG 8 - THE WEATHER SONG (Old Man)

EDWIN: Well, you came to the right place.

OLD MAN: Precisely! How wonderful to find someone else to talk to! Have you noticed the mood of the weather today?

EDWIN: It's raining.

OLD MAN: Not just raining! It's a 12ZX precipitator wettie 420 oblique 4.

EDWIN: How do you know?

OLD MAN: I chose Rainland. My Rainland! Er . . . your Rainland because, if I can control the weather here - I can control it anywhere!

EDWIN: Control the weather? Have you been at the turnip green?

OLD MAN: And I'm nearly there! A few more days and my life's work will be complete!
Ask Dewdrop.

EDWIN: Eh?

OLD MAN: Listen. My theory is that all man's miseries, injustices and horrors have been created by the weather. Control the weather, and mankind will enter a new, happy, optimistic era of peace. Imagine! Summer holidays would see no rain at all - clear, warm sunfilled days for everyone. Sometimes, late at night, a shower could fall, to freshen the flowers and soft beaches. Farmers could command rain so their fruits would grow rich, plump and delicious . . . and then . . . a little sun to ripen them up!

EDWIN: Fascinating.

(There is a knock on the door. Edwin jumps. Dewdrop enters. She is beautiful, with her long hair and sky blue gown. The lights fade, and red hearts are projected, flashing on and off, above Edwin's head. He is enchanted. After a few seconds of stillness, he beckons her to his side of the bed.)

EDWIN: And who are you, my proud beauty? Am I dreaming? First of all I meet an old fool who talks about the weather, and now I find myself with Goldilocks. Pinch me someone. Like this. (he pinches Dewdrop)

DEWDROP: Ooh. My name is Dewdrop. The 'old fool' you refer to is my wise, and inspired Father, and who . . . stop stroking my hair . . . are you? Leave my cheek alone.

EDWIN: I'm good King Edwin. Your Father will explain.

DEWDROP: My brilliant Father has built the most enormous burners. Stop doing that. And gigantic wind machines. He is a genius. Ouch. The burners make the clouds rise, and wind machines blow them away.

EDWIN: Really?

OLD MAN: The only trouble is . . .

EDWIN: Yes?

OLD MAN: It hasn't worked yet.

(The prince leaps to his feet and roars with laughter)

EDWIN: Foolish old man. Be gone and cook me some breakfast. Enough for me, and the future Queen of Rainland. You will be my servant. Away with you.

(The old man cowers away. Dewdrop looks aghast.)

DEWDROP: Queen?

EDWIN: (blackens) If you want to enjoy life. If you don't want to see your father suffer, I suggest you concur with my every wish.

(Dewdrop runs to the door, and turns round in a fury.)

DEWDROP: You tyrant. I'm not afraid of you - but I am afraid for my dear old Father. But marry you? I'd rather die first.

EDWIN: Disobey me? We'll see. (exit Dewdrop) We'll see.

(The lights fade, and come up barely on the captive Archie. Sitting, in his prison, bucket on head, on an old bench. Projected vertical green lines give impression of a prison.)

STORYTELLER: High in the tower, alone and hungry, the good prince thought of times gone by. His beloved Mother and Father. The land they had called their own. The friends he had loved . . . and lost.

He remembered his old and comfortable bed. He thought of greeting every new morning as he threw open the curtains to bid a hearty 'greetings' to the courtiers and their ladies, moving in slow motion, in a watercolour garden, by a misty lake where, on a Spring morn, friends would be waiting in a . . .

Archie checked himself. This meandering thought would not throw open the door of his cell. Warm memories would not lift away the iron mask.

As his thoughts left the soft reflections of his lost home, his mind's eye crossed the courtyard and rested upon the family's heraldic crest, carved with pride over the gracious portico. Under the rampant duck with chevron between a hamster passant to dexter, and an engrailed tiger to sinister, was the blazened legend "Seizo Bon Journo" or "Seize the Good Day."

This memory gave the young prince a great new strength of purpose.

(The attention of light diverts to another small set, where Dewdrop is sitting alone in her room. This is portrayed by a small table with a mirror, and a rain spattered window. She talks to herself as she brushes her hair.)

DEWDROP: So. Living proof that all changes except change itself. How much longer could I expect my poor old Father to work, uninterrupted, in a place that wasn't his? It would be bad enough to be discovered in a cottage that does not belong to you . . . but a whole land! It was only a matter of time. And this heartless creature has appeared among us, and is treating Father as servant . . . and me? As a wife? This needs attending to, one step at a time.

In my darkest thoughts, I have considered the passing of my Father . . . he's so old and frail . . . and what would have become of me?

Whatever fate - growing old and alone, with only my Father's memory for comfort, on a land where the rain falls as regularly as my own breath . . . or escaping to . . . what?

All this, however humble, would be doomed as a bright future compared with marrying . . . that . . .

(There is a tap at the window. She opens it to find a Sunlounger, which we don't see, apart from a thin yellow light.)

A Sunlounger! What are you doing so far from Goldendawn Island?

You should be there.

Little Sunlounger. You love . . .

(As she talks she choruses with the Storyteller, who echoes her words quietly, and builds as she fades, turning the monologue into a narrative piece.)

DEWDROP & STORYTELLER: . . . need, and cherish the sun, and, without it you grow pale. Sometimes nearly white, until with your last remaining breath of strength, you fly to a little place, that no one has yet found, to rest eternally with your Sunlounger forefathers.

Dewdrop knew all this, but, with built-in optimism shared by the young, she decided to care for the little creature . . . Give him some of the love she ached to share . . . and perhaps . . . who knows?

Who knows indeed.

SONG 9 - TOWARDS MY HEART (Dewdrop)

(Dewdrop makes the Sunlounger comfortable in a small box on her table. Wistfully, she leans her head on her arms as the lights fade, leaving only the thin yellow glow. Lights come up to show Edwin, dressed in some very dull finery, hunched in a large, greenish throne.)

EDWIN: If I count the days and nights, which barely seem to differ, and divide by two, I can ascertain with some certainty that I have been here for a season. Whatever that is. What is has proved however, is that I didn't arrive in the rainy season (clap of thunder) it's *always* the rainy season. (There is a knock on the door) Ah! Could this be my trusty servant? Ready to deliver one of the ten trials I have set? Well, God knows, there's nothing else to do in this infernal region. This nether World. (Old Man enters) Ah! Old man! Do we have the ingredients of a trifle yet? Or a river doughnut? Have you been digging for sunflowers?

OLD MAN: Master. None of these things are within my grasp. And I think that Blowfish don't exist in this part of the Universe.

EDWIN: You are running out of time. You are ignoring my physical needs. I need sun - so when is your wonderful machine going to release this hell from its dark shroud? I need a change of diet . . . so where are the filigree pheasants? And I need . . . I need . . . something else - so why have you not commanded your daughter to marry me?

OLD MAN: She sits at your feet daily, my Lord.

EDWIN: I know that. But she does not care for me. I can tell.

OLD MAN: I'm sure you have a very special place in her heart, Majesty.

EDWIN: Do you take me for a fool? Begone. (Knock at the door) Ah! Here she comes now. Good day, my future Queen! Does your sparkling appearance indicate an uplifting change of heart? Have you, like a pretty blonde moth, in a blue dress, fluttered too close to my flame?
Probably not. What shall we do with Daddy today? Shall we give him a few precious hours, and by the look of him they are getting precious . . . shall we give him a few precious hours to work on the sun machine? Or shall we send him out in the rain to locate the fabled Rainland glow-worm mines?

DEWDROP: Be gentle with him today, Majesty, and I will do what you like most.

(Edwin jumps from his throne in obvious joy, and, walking excitedly to the edge of the stage, says to the audience . . .)

EDWIN: She's going to dry my feet!

(He returns to the set, waves away the Old Man, and beckons Dewdrop to sit at his side on the floor. This she does, with an infinitely sad glance at her departing father.)

STORYTELLER: And this is how the evil Prince would occupy his time, for there was nothing else to do . . . on Rainland (soft rumble of thunder, as the lights fade slowly on this static tableau) Apart from one task. Every other day he would wait until his sad courtiers had retired to their damp beds, and he would climb the slimey stone stairs of the second highest tower, where his wretched brother lay incarcerated. Through a small, barred window in the great door he would throw meagre pieces of food. He would hear a shuffling sound, and the rattle of boney knuckles, clattering against the bucket, as his brother attempted to feed himself in spite of this incumbrance.

This sad scene seemed to take longer on every visit.

(Sad music, as the light comes up, Dewdrop's room where she and her Father are studying the glow of light which is the Sunlounge.)

OLD MAN: Well, the little fellow's lasted a lot longer than I thought he would. It must be your loving care.

DEWDROP: He seems to like the stormbarley, and the woolly bits keep him warm. We can only hope.

OLD MAN: I think that applies to our entire life on this black and dismal island. Weeks fade into seasons and still the icy winds blow, and the clouds chase each other, in their dreadful death race.

DEWDROP: Cheer up Father.

OLD MAN: Eh? Oh sorry.

DEWDROP: Your machine will soon change things. You'll see. How did you get on today?

OLD MAN: I think it's nearly ready. Mind you, I thought that last time, didn't I. All it was ready for was backfiring some stinkbile into my face from some of the peepovalves, resulting in a cold depression of precipitation in the coastal region.

DEWDROP: Well there you are.

OLD MAN: Yes, you could say it made a difference, but that's about it. I think the Prince would be cheerful if he could sunbathe.

DEWDROP: Couldn't we capture him and lock him up or something? In the tower, like they do in fairytales.

OLD MAN: How? I am too old and frail, and I don't want you to get hurt. I think he would get you with that sword of his.

DEWDROP: Well, there must be something. I can't bear to see his cruelty to you, and if I have to touch his horny feet one more time . . .

OLD MAN: Something will turn up.

DEWDROP: But what? Ships don't visit here any more. Why should they, since the last of the Wetbacks left? They were a proud, if rather wet race, but the land finally got the better of them. Even King Simon could not persuade them to stay.

OLD MAN: Listen to me my girl. You were a little baby when all that happened. They left, and we arrived. I should never have done it. I should have stayed away. A machine to control the weather indeed. What nonsense.

DEWDROP: Oh Father. (she hugs him) It will work one day, just you wait and . . . what was that?

OLD MAN: What?

(Dewdrop looks towards window)

DEWDROP: Is the Prince out?

OLD MAN: Never. And certainly not at this time of night.

DEWDROP: I'm sure I heard a cry. A tinny cry. A cry that breathed the word 'sadness.'

OLD MAN: The wind.

(Dewdrop crosses to the window and opens it. There is a far off cry.)

DEWDROP: Did you hear?

OLD MAN: I can't hear anything.

(A candlestick comes flying through the window.)

OLD MAN: I heard that.

DEWDROP: Somebody's throwing candlesticks at us. Listen. I heard that thin, tinny cry again.

(Dewdrop looks out of the window, and ducks back in quickly as a tankard flies through the window.)

OLD MAN: I heard that.

DEWDROP: Yes Father. (Dewdrop looks out of the window again. There is a flash of lightning) I saw something! Something in the second highest tower. A monster . . . waving!

OLD MAN: A monster?

DEWDROP: With a mighty steel head. (Another flash of lightning.) I saw it again. Father - I am going to investigate.

(Dewdrop grabs a shawl)

OLD MAN: Are you crazy, child? There's a . . . monster in the tower. It could eat you alive. They do you know.

DEWDROP: I'm not afraid. Besides, he seemed a sad monster. Maybe I can help him.

OLD MAN: Don't go. Let me.

DEWDROP: No. You stay here. I'll be back in a trice.

(Dewdrop hurries off. The Old Man addresses the Sunlounger.)

OLD MAN: She looks after me. She looks after the evil Prince. She looks after you. And now, as if she wasn't spreading herself too thinly already, she wants to look after a steel headed monster. Dear me. She's so like her mother.

(The light fades, and comes up dimly, on a different area of the stage illuminating a heavily locked door, with a small barred window in it. There is the sound of hurried footsteps on stone steps, and Dewdrop appears. She looks inside.)

DEWDROP: Is anybody there. Or anything?

(A groan within)

DEWDROP: Open the door. I'm not afraid. I want to help you.

ARCHIE: Who is that?

DEWDROP: A human voice. Who are you?

ARCHIE: I am a prisoner. Nothing more.

DEWDROP: Come to the window. Let me see your face. Touch your hand.

ARCHIE: I am weak and hungry. Are you in my imagination, sent to break through my sadness?

DEWDROP: I am real. Give me your hand. (A hand comes through the window) This is not the hand of a prisoner. Who are you? Let me see your face. You look a little pale. (She sees the mask and pulls back with a start) You are imprisoned in a mask. Is your face part of your secret? Here. Let me hold your hand. You are cold.

ARCHIE: Can you help me?

DEWDROP: First I must know why you have been imprisoned. And where you came from. And . . . and who you are. Your voice stirs something in my heart, but my mind will fight it back - unless you tell me your story.

ARCHIE: You are the sweetest thing that has happened to me for so long. Are you another trick? Another device created by my . . . br . . .

DEWDROP: By your . . . what?

ARCHIE: My . . . captor.

DEWDROP: You were going to say something else. Were you going to say . . . brother?

ARCHIE: Yes.

DEWDROP: Your brother? Edwin?

ARCHIE: Yes. My brother Edwin. My abductor. My kidnapper. But tell me. Are you real? Or have you been sent as the final insult. The final blow to my spirit?

DEWDROP: I am real.

ARCHIE: Real?

(Dewdrop lets a moment pass, her hand raised to her heart.)

DEWDROP: I shall rescue you.

ARCHIE: But how? I am weak from hunger, and this door is bolted, barred and locked by the only key . . . which hangs on my brother's waist.

DEWDROP: I will rescue you. I shall rescue you . . .

(Dewdrop lapses into silence as the Storyteller speaks)

STORYTELLER: She moved her mouth slightly, as if to speak. But said nothing. Her heart released its imprisoned feelings from a tiny door that may open only once in a lifetime, and only in a thousand lifetimes when another, in touching distance, has another door opening at the same time. A voiceless conversation, that would take a lifetime to finish, was interrupted by necessity.

The lovers, for that is what they were, broke their trance.

ARCHIE: You must go. If you are caught here, he will kill you.

DEWDROP: I'm not afraid of him.

ARCHIE: Our best chance is surprise, if he knows not of our meeting, then he can suspect nothing. If he knows . . . well then he will watch your every move . . . and we are lost.

DEWDROP: Yes. He must not know. I will rescue you. You, my Prince.

(Distant footsteps)

DEWDROP: What's that?

ARCHIE: It is he. You must hide.

DEWDROP: There's nowhere to hide. He will find me. Our plan will be as nothing.

ARCHIE: Go now. There must be a way. I feel so hopeless.

DEWDROP: (releases her grip on his hand) I will rescue you. (The light finds Dewdrop alone. She sings.)

SONG 9 - REPRISE - TOWARDS MY HEART (Dewdrop)

(The footsteps get louder and louder, echoing and becoming more bass and distorted. They stop.)

END OF ACT ONE

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ACT TWO

* * * * *

(Distant grumbling thunder. The Old Man stands outside the tower, created by light and projected images. Enough light only to pick him out, as the audience's eyes get used to the darkness again.)

OLD MAN: (calling off, to the low tread of footsteps) Anything I can do for you, Majesty?

EDWIN: (in the distance) Aaagh. (The footsteps are now obviously descending, he finally appears, holding a plate.) Pardon?

OLD MAN: Anything I can do? I heard you and wondered if I could . . . um . . . help.

EDWIN: (breezily) No, no . . . I . . . er . . . I have . . . um . . . made this . . . um myself a . . . better place to eat it than in the second highest tower.

OLD MAN: It doesn't look very nice. What have you got here? Stale foulweed . . . Reekers . . . big ones at that . . . I didn't know you liked this stuff. I could do that for you every day.

EDWIN: Well, I don't . . . I mean . . .

OLD MAN: Come over here. I'll show you a fine crop of Foulweed.

EDWIN: Oh all right.

(They move over together, as Dewdrop makes her escapes from the tower.)

EDWIN: How interesting. Now begone old fool. Hare dare you question me so?

OLD MAN: I am only here to serve, Majesty. I'll see if I can find some big Reekers for tomorrow.

EDWIN: Forget it. The mood has passed.

OLD MAN: Good night, Majesty.

EDWIN: Silence.

(Edwin stumps off. The Old Man watches him go, as Dewdrop reappears briefly.)

DEWDROP: Thank you Father. You saved my life.

OLD MAN: I thought I would. I saw him creeping across the courtyard.

DEWDROP: Come. You must to bed. You're wet and cold. And I have something to tell you.

OLD MAN: About tin headed monsters?

DEWDROP: Something like that.

(They exit. The lights fade, and come up to find Dewdrop walking into her room.)

DEWDROP: Hello Sunlounger. How are you? I feel wonderful. Stupid to say it . . . but I do. and you, little bird, are you getting paler? Hang on. Don't let go. Something will happen - I can feel it. We'll find a little ray of sunshine to brighten you up. How are those wings?

Can you still move them? A little . . .

SONG 10 - EVERYDAY (Dewdrop)

STORYTELLER: Dewdrop shared secrets with the Sunlounger. She told of cats and Kingdoms. Pearls, peacocks and palaces. She talked of times gone by, and how her Father, with his wonderful machine, would soon be able to control the weather - so the blossom could flourish, the damp stones of Rainland Palace could start their drying out process, and the little Sunlounger, her little Sunlounger, would be given glowing strength in his wings, to fly into the clear blue sky and once more bask in the molten glory of Goldendawn Island.

DEWDROP: Don't let go. Something will happen.

(The lights fade, and come up on a set of the Old Man's Rainmaking machine. It is the size of a small room. The Old Man is studying plans, and tinkering. Edwin enters.)

EDWIN: How goes it, old fool? Shall we be basking today, basking I say?

OLD MAN: Probably not.

EDWIN: I think you have had time enough. I am a kindly and patient ruler - but time is short. My little body requires sunbeams to cheer it. And, if the sun breaks through, on this dreary little nation, maybe exotic plants will grow. Plants grow . . . animals feed . . . we grow . . . we eat animals. A one sided system - but excellent. If there were any animals.

OLD MAN: If the sun shone on Rainland the ships would return, and bring livestock with them. They could roam on our meadowland.

EDWIN: We could eat them.

OLD MAN: . . . Grow up on our pastures.

EDWIN: And then we could eat them. However. First things first. How goes the experiments, I say?

OLD MAN: The Gobblefish gas is at the right pressure. Look. (He presses a button and there is a loud hiss, followed obviously, from the Prince's expression, by a terrible smell.)

EDWIN: Ooof. That's . . . stinkypoo . . .that's absolutely . . . I think I'm going to be . . . ugh.

OLD MAN: And very inflammable. Should do the job.

EDWIN: Well hurry. What's this lever? (he pulls it, and there is a knock at the door) That doesn't sound right. (he pulls the lever again, there is another knock) Better check this you old fool. Don't you know anything?

OLD MAN: I know there's someone at the door. Come in.

(Enter Dewdrop. She is surprised to see Edwin there. He is not pleased with her.)

EDWIN: It's you. I knew that.

DEWDROP: Good day Majesty.

EDWIN: Don't try to be charming. I have had enough of you. I off you the chance to become my wife - an offer that would have any right minded female falling at my feet in delight and thanks . . . and what do you do? Turn me down. Again and again. You obviously cannot abide me.

DEWDROP: You take getting used to.

EDWIN: Getting used to? Begone you foul baggage.

DEWDROP: But . . .

EDWIN: Too late. Out.

DEWDROP: But it was just going to say . . .

EDWIN: Take your leave.

DEWDROP: I was just going to say . . .

EDWIN: You find me unattractive?

DEWDROP: On the contrary. (she looks conspiratorially at Edwin, first checking that her Father is not listening) On the contrary. I have seen in you a rakish, devil-may-care attitude. A disposition that I am beginning to find irresistible. Compelling. Overpowering. And just a little . . .

EDWIN: (very weakly) Yes . . . ?

DEWDROP: Potent.

EDWIN: Aaagh.

DEWDROP: But I can say no more now . . .

EDWIN: Bu . . . ?

DEWDROP: Dinner. Tonight.

EDWIN: About eight of the clock.

(Edwin stands open mouthed, stock still, and stays there for the remainder of the scene.)

DEWDROP: Hello Father.

OLD MAN: Hello dear one. The Gobblefish gas is up to muster and the grunge wheel is travelling freely.

DEWDROP: Excellent. The Bio-Valve cluster?

OLD MAN: 100 over 8.

DEWDROP: Sponge throttle?

OLD MAN: 20 lbs.

DEWDROP: A little low. Oil groin?

OLD MAN: On the red.

DEWDROP: Better put some more cream on it. So the only other problem still applies.

OLD MAN: Yes. Lightning has got to hit the tuba flange at the precise spot, at the right moment.

DEWDROP: That's impossible.

OLD MAN: Unless we get lucky. There is no other way.

DEWDROP: X plus 74?

OLD MAN: Epsilon 3.1.

DEWDROP: 60 degrees Y over 14 recurring?

OLD MAN: Precisely.

(Dewdrop heads for exit, but turns on her way out.)

DEWDROP: Could be the throb resister.

OLD MAN: Possibly. (He looks at the Prince briefly, and continues his tinkering, as the lights fade. A single light falls on Archie, with projected bars to signify his cell.)

STORYTELLER: Losing hope by the moment. Fearful that his fevered brain had been playing tricks on him, the good and handsome Prince tried to reconstruct the meeting he was sure he had had. With a soft voiced, soft handed girl . . . who had promised to rescue him.

Could this be true?

Reality had become an infrequent visitor. Why, this very afternoon had he not welcomed some old and trusted friends to his cell? Had he not said, "Good to see you, chaps! Make yourself at home!" And then he had realised. No one was there. And to make anyone at home would have been virtually impossible. Empty plates and bones littered the floor. Green slime hung in mocking cascades from windowsills. Rotten chairs and tables sulked in corners, safe in the knowledge that they were too wet to be burned. And yet . . . yet . . . there had been a girl. He remembered how warm she felt. How alive.

If only he could wrestle the bucket from his tortured head. But it was impossible. The device had snapped shut, and the key would have fallen by the wayside, and been consumed by rust, until it washed away in brown rivulets, years ago . . .

(Archie sighs deeply. As his scene fades away, the lights come up on Edwin, sitting at the head of a small table that is being laid up by the Old Man.)

OLD MAN: And a big jug of turnip green as you requested Majesty.

EDWIN: Good. Now go. (He jumps to his feet and ushers the old man out. As he leaves, Dewdrop enters.)

EDWIN: Er . . . der . . . ger . . . Good evening . . . um.

DEWDROP: Good evening you powerful potentate you.

EDWIN: One tries.

DEWDROP: Ah! We are to eat.

EDWIN: And drink.

DEWDROP: I forget myself with drink, so I will have to . . .

EDWIN: Drink a lot.

DEWDROP: Be careful. Shall we sit down?

(Edwin takes his place at the top of the table and grins enormously. The little red hearts are projected briefly over his head.)

DEWDROP: Wine?

EDWIN: Aaaaagh. I'm sorry. Thank you. I have decided, I shall . . . um . . . make you my Queen after all. How's that?

DEWDROP: Oh my liege. (she falls to her knees beside him) I am not worthy.

EDWIN: But you will do very nicely. Shall we have a simple wedding? After all, the only guest will be your Father, so a large, grand affair seems a little pretentious. Agreed?

DEWDROP: Whatever you decree, oh great one.

EDWIN: By all that's fair and fine, my girl, you are filled with a mighty love in your . . . um . . .

DEWDROP: Bosom?

EDWIN: There . . . er . . .

DEWDROP: I am Sir. Love fills the air. I want to dance, and sway, in happy happy way. Sing and croon, 'til I make my lover swoon.

EDWIN: I enjoy that sort of thing. Do you know the one that goes pompy . . . pom pompom . . . pom. I think it's a traditional Bovrilian love song.

DEWDROP: I'm not sure. Sing it again. Your voice thrills my very being. How could such a perfect frame be graced with such a vocal range?

EDWIN: Divine intervention I always thought.
Pom . . . pompom . . . pomtity pom . . . come here . . . kiss me, my proud beauty.

(Dewdrop pulls away)

EDWIN: Do you refuse me? You turn down this superb offer?

DEWDROP: This must not be rushed. We must . . . dally.

EDWIN: Very well. (short silence) Have we dallied long enough?

DEWDROP: Er . . . have some wine.

EDWIN: It would taste sour compared to the sweetness of your kisses.

DEWDROP: All in good time. We must talk. Talk and talk . . .

EDWIN: Talk?

DEWDROP: Yes. Tell me your life story. Did your parents care for you?

EDWIN: No.

DEWDROP: Why did you come to Rainland?

EDWIN: God alone knows. But I thought . . . a small principality. A little castle with a few toy soldiers. A bit of pomp. Plenty of wealth . . . that sort of thing.

DEWDROP: Wealth cannot buy happiness.

EDWIN: No. But at least you can be miserable in comfort.

DEWDROP: True.

EDWIN: Now if your potty Father had built a boat instead of his infernal machine, we could have left here together - to start life anew. You and I. Edwin and Dewdrop. King Edwin and Queen Dewdrop. That sounds wonderful.

DEWDROP: Exquisite.

EDWIN: Can we kiss now? Or are you afraid that you will melt away in these manly arms?

DEWDROP: A dance first. Come here.

SONG 11 - THE LA LA LA SONG (Dewdrop/Edwin)

(They dance together, Dewdrop singing gently, the Prince clearly in raptures. As they turn, the audience sees a key being removed from his belt. She throws it off-stage. They dance on, slower and slower, as the scene fades to half light. They slowly part, holding hands at arms length, and exit. They remain still as footsteps are heard, climbing stone stairs. The Old Man reaches the top, and appears at the door to Archie's cell. He fiddles, fumbles and finally manages to open it. Archie, thinking he has been rescued by Dewdrop, leaps into the Old Man's arms.)

ARCHIE: Thank you, thank you my pretty one.

OLD MAN: Unhand me sir.

ARCHIE: Aagh. Who are you? So it was a dream. The beautiful girl. The soft hand. It was all a wonderful dream. How can fate play such a trick on a good man? Tell me that. Who are you?

OLD MAN: I am an old man.

ARCHIE: I see. Do you come here often?

OLD MAN: Lack of food and healthy exercise has made you lose your senses.

ARCHIE: Are you my evil brother in disguise? Is this another dastardly trick? Help me out of this mask, and by thunder I will remove your . . . um . . . you . . . I will remove you. That's it.

OLD MAN: Calm down sir. The beautiful girl of which you speak is my fair daughter Dewdrop.

ARCHIE: Soft to the touch? Loving yet very sensible?

OLD MAN: That's the one.

ARCHIE: Fine to behold? Fine to be held as well, I shouldn't wonder.

OLD MAN: Well, I wouldn't know about that. Pull up man . . . pull up. Time is short. At this very moment my daughter is dallying with your captor.

ARCHIE: The brother?

OLD MAN: The brother. She is dallying, a lot, so I should have the time to mount the stairs, and rescue you.

ARCHIE: How can I ever thank you?

OLD MAN: Time enough for all that.

ARCHIE: And to think that brave, yet very pretty girl has done this for me. And she does not know the aspect of my countenance. She doesn't even know what I look like. Anyway, come in. Take a seat.

OLD MAN: We must go. Pull up man. Pull up.

(Archie breathes heavily)

ARCHIE: You're right. I feel better now. I am coming to my senses . . . and realising the gravity of the situation. (he becomes urgent) We cannot stand around chattering. Together we must beat the brother. Together we must make might right.

OLD MAN: Quite.

ARCHIE: But first we must remove this burden, this encumbrance. This bucket.

(The Old Man examines the fixing)

OLD MAN: It's no good. I could never remove this without a key. I would hurt you too much.

ARCHIE: But there is no key. My vile brother found this gadget from hell in the dungeons. The key would have been lost in the very eons of time. (he hears an echoing voice - it is the spirit of his Mother)

VOICE: Archie.

ARCHIE: Mother?

OLD MAN: Pardon?

ARCHIE: I heard the voice of my Mother. But it is impossible. What wraith plays such tricks upon this evil hour?

VOICE: Archie.

ARCHIE: Again - what voice is this, if not transporting from eternity?

OLD MAN: I did not hear anything.

ARCHIE: It's my Mother. My lamented Mother. Aged parent. Tis I. The one with the bucket.

OLD MAN: I cannot hear anything.

VOICE: Archie.

ARCHIE: Again. By all that is sublime, speak to me, paid-up member of the spirit world.

OLD MAN: I cannot hear anything.

VOICE: Archie.

ARCHIE: Lo. She speaks. Another dream.

VOICE: Archie . . . the key.

ARCHIE: Key?

OLD MAN: What key?

VOICE: (fades away) Seizo bon journo.
Seize the good day. Seize the day . . . seize . . .

ARCHIE: What key?

OLD MAN: I did not hear anything. Have you a fever young man? Here, let me help you down to the courtyard.

ARCHIE: I heard my Mother's voice, I tell you. She mentioned a key. What key? (he thinks) A key! Could it be the key I kept from my Mother's possessions, as the one keepsake of her memory?

OLD MAN: You have the key?

ARCHIE: Here. In this pocket. I say, wouldn't it be good if it fitted, and I could remove this cursed mask. Could this be possible I ask myself?

(The Old Man finds the key)

ARCHIE: Does it fit?

OLD MAN: It fits!

ARCHIE: Good Heavens!

OLD MAN: What an extraordinary bit of good luck, your dead departed Mother turning up like that.

ARCHIE: Yes. I think this could be my lucky day!

(The lock clicks open, and the Old Man carefully removes the bucket. Archie's hair and beard have grown into the shape of the bucket.)

OLD MAN: Oh dear. Follow me. I think you need a shave.

ARCHIE: Lead the way. Well done, Old Man, well done.

(The lights fade to the sound of disappearing footsteps. The action recommences at Edwin's table.)

EDWIN: Tell me my precious. What is it like to be as beautiful as a Summer day?

(Dewdrop is glancing out of the window)

DEWDROP: Eh? Oh . . . um . . . good. Very good.

EDWIN: I thought as much. And do you not want to know what it is like being as handsome as an oak tree? Tall as a sailing galleon?

DEWDROP: Sure . . . er . . . (she looks out of the window again)
Of course . . . it must be nice.

EDWIN: Nice?

DEWDROP: I'm sorry. Of course I do not have to ask. You stand there like the mighty oak for all to see. Me . . . I am just a little bird, sheltering under your outstretched branches.

EDWIN: Well, come to me now. Do a little sheltering.

DEWDROP: Maybe later. (Dewdrop obviously spots her Father crossing the courtyard, and does a thumbs up.) Must go.

EDWIN: Eh?

DEWDROP: Tired. Must go.

EDWIN: But my darling . . .

DEWDROP: What time is it? Why don't the sundials work in this stupid place?

EDWIN: A change of mood. Feed me further sea grapes, my little bird.

DEWDROP: Get them yourself. They're not good for you anyway. Give you burpy wobbles. Cheers. See you soon.

EDWIN: But my petal . . . (he tries to hold her but she pulls away)

DEWDROP: Is going.

EDWIN: (realisation) Wait! (he stands with back to the door) You have been playing with my affections. For what reason? What a fool I have been. You have been performing a masquerade to . . . to . . . to . . . I know . . . to save your ridiculous old Father from any more work. That's it. You know his crazy old machine will never bring one ray of sunshine to this waterlogged hell, so you have tried to seduce me. But I have seen through your cunning ruse. Prepare to be incarcerated! (roar of thunder) Prepare to be interned - until your beauty has faded to a ridiculous caricature of its former glory! (another roar of thunder) Prepare to tell your tale of deceit to the rats! When you walk upon this sodden terrain once more, you will be a hag!

(Enormous crash of thunder, as Archie walks into the room.)

EDWIN: Aaagh.

ARCHIE: You . . . No key can hold me. No bolt can dampen my spirit. The tables turn. Prepare to fight.

DEWDROP: Be careful my loved one.

EDWIN: Why, thank you.

DEWDROP: I was talking to Archie, you fool. Not you, you . . . you . . . hideosity.

EDWIN: Eh?

DEWDROP: Look it up.

EDWIN: Silence harridan.

Weak from your incarceration, brother? Lost that leading edge? You fell for my trickery last time. This time you will fall . . . for my sword.
(Edwin draws his sword as thunder crashes, and lightning illuminates the dull room. They fight. Finally Edwin is overpowered. Archie has his foot on the chest of the reclining Edwin, and is about to run him through.)

ARCHIE: Prepare to die, pestilence.

EDWIN: No, no please please, brother dear. Archie, remember our childhood together. Remember our happy times. Our parents. Would you snuff that out with one bold stroke?

ARCHIE: By the very powers, I'll . . .

EDWIN: I will admit I have been a little . . . unfair . . . but do I deserve to die? (he sobs) Please Archie, my dear brother.

ARCHIE: You have been sentenced, fiend.

EDWIN: No. No! I will live in your shadow for ever more. For the memory of our parents.

ARCHIE: (wilts) It's no good. I can't do it.

EDWIN: You will not be sorry, my beloved brother. I will walk in awe of you for ever and a day.

ARCHIE: Are you sure?

DEWDROP: Do not trust him, my leige.

ARCHIE: He is bowing to the wishes of the victor. Rise, and account for yourself.

(Edwin gets up, shoves Archie and makes for the door.)

ARCHIE: (to the audience) I've been tricked.

DEWDROP: You must capture him. Incarcerate him . . . or we will never find that slender thread which goes by the name of happiness.

ARCHIE: He cannot go far. Now let me see you. Fair beauty, and a strong fair will to go with it. And now you see my face. Can our hands reach out and touch eternity?

DEWDROP: Eternity.

ARCHIE: Eternity. (they burst into song)

SONG 12 - EVERYDAY - REPRISE (Archie/Dewdrop)

(They embrace as the lights fade.)

STORYTELLER: As the lovers set the stage for a romantic play that they would perform for the rest of their lives, the evil Edwin became the fox, the hunter hunted. Cowering behind sated pillars, cringing beneath saturnine arches, he became part of the night.

But his reign of terror had not ended. Oh no.

(Edwin creeps on to stage, furtively looking from side to side.)

EDWIN: Oh no. I have not taken so much, bent with every evil wind through my boughs, meandered through every valley of sadness, to be humiliated so.

The brother must die. The girl must learn that sibling rivalry can be brutal.

Yet attractive . . .

She will be won. Won over.

But for this moment, stealth is called for.

Through here. Seems a good place in which to be stealthy.

(The lights come up to reveal a return to the machine room. Alone, he looks around, examines dials, tweaks knobs. The Old Man enters and is shocked to find Edwin.)

OLD MAN: I thought you'd been . . . I mean . . .

EDWIN: Beaten? Killed? Of course not, foolish old person. But the others . . .

OLD MAN: No.

EDWIN: Sadly. Superior strength. Strategy.

OLD MAN: But my daughter . . . and that nice young man . . .

EDWIN: The hunter hunted. Sad. Especially as you gave the brother his freedom. You backed the wrong horse.

THE OLD MAN: My daughter . . .

EDWIN: Forget her. Help me escape from this tortured vale of tears, and I will make you a Knight of the Table.

OLD MAN: Which table is that?

EDWIN: Um . . . that one. (points vaguely) Now hurry. How do we escape? Do you have a boat?

OLD MAN: Of course not.

EDWIN: So we must attract the attention of a passing galleon. We'll build a fire. Get some sticks.

OLD MAN: I will have no part of it. My dearest daughter . . .

(Archie rushes in, followed by Dewdrop.)

DEWDROP: Is right here Father. This craven coward from way back, ran for his life.

ARCHIE: But you are safe now. (draws his sword) Be a man, Edwin.

(Edwin pulls the Old Man in front of him)

EDWIN: Aha! Now what? Run him through, and you could get me. Come on.

(Edwin leans on a lever)

OLD MAN: What was that?

DEWDROP: The Gobblefish gas groin.

EDWIN: (panic) Well, what's wrong with that?

OLD MAN: It could blow up the castle.

EDWIN: Well that's all ri . . . what? Blow up the castle? Turn it off you old fool, and hurry.

ARCHIE: Anything I can do?

OLD MAN: There's nothing anyone can do. The only way to stop it is to light it, otherwise it will filter through every room in the castle until it finds a flame.

EDWIN: But it won't.

OLD MAN: Or is struck by lightning.

EDWIN: Well that could happen soon . . . couldn't it?

OLD MAN: Lightning isn't that dependable. It needs to strike here. And now.

(There is a rumbling and hissing)

EDWIN: We're going to die! Condemned. Ill-omened.

ARCHIE: Silence you cowardly swine.

EDWIN: That's not cowardice. It's common sense. There is no escape. Can't we start a fire? Quicky?

OLD MAN: How? We need a mighty electric current. Like lightning.

EDWIN: But we won't *get* lightning. It's too unlikely.

DEWDROP: I shall comb my hair.

EDWIN: Comb your hair? The castle is about to be blown apart - which could upset the neatest coiffure. A tip from me. Do not worry about your *hair*. We are going to *die!*

(Dewdrop produces a comb and begins to run it through her hair)

ARCHIE: I must say you are relaxed about this my beloved.

OLD MAN: I see. I see.

EDWIN: What now? Are you going to do some sewing? Clean your teeth?

OLD MAN: The more she combs her hair . . . (sparks projected around Dewdrop's head) . . . the more electricity she creates. As she combs it . . . faster and faster . . . sparks appear! Sparks than can light the gas . . . and avert the danger! Comb! Comb! (as Dewdrop combs more vigorously, sparks flash around her) Yes! The moment has come! Now . . . touch the comb to the point! Go!

(There is a rushing, gushing sound and an incredibly bright flash, maybe from a light in the machine pointing straight at the auditorium. Immediate blackout. Silence. Seconds pass.)

STORYTELLER: Immediate danger was averted. But the one beautiful castle of Rainland had become a time bomb. The heat that had been designed, on hundreds of fading plans and formulae, to dissipate at high altitude was, at that very moment, building its strength. And where, I here you ask, good reader, was the location of this worrying laboratory? Why, at the

bottom of the tallest tower. The very bottom room of the tallest tower of Rainland Castle.

(In a dark scene, Archie, Dewdrop and the Old Man hurry on)

OLD MAN: Wait. I cannot run any further.

ARCHIE: (over his shoulder) Come on Edwin. There is no time to lose.

DEWDROP: Our only hope is to reach the beach. It will be cold and damp, but comparatively safe. When the castle goes . . .

ARCHIE: Pardon? I thought you'd saved the day with the comb. (over his shoulder) Come on Edwin.

DEWDROP: Saved the day? No, I saved the moment. The day will not be saved.

OLD MAN: The castle is finished. Rainland is finished. The blast, when it comes, could be strong enough to cleave the island in two.

ARCHIE: But I don't understand.

DEWDROP: The force your brother unleashed was designed to be ignited three leagues in the air, beyond the clouds.

ARCHIE: So why didn't it demolish this rain sodden land when you generated the electricity?

OLD MAN: Because lighting it held it back . . .

DEWDROP: Temporarily.

ARCHIE: I don't understand.

OLD MAN: Believe us. I will explain it all later. For now, our only chance is to get to the shore.

ARCHIE: Edwin? Where's he got to? He was following, wasn't he?

DEWDROP: I thought so. Although he doesn't deserve help. We must go without him.

ARCHIE: I cannot.

DEWDROP: You must, we will all perish if the gas . . . the gas? I have not seen Edwin since he set off the gas.

ARCHIE: I thought you said he was following.

DEWDROP: I presumed he was. I must go. It is madness to stay. Quickly. Can you go on Father?

ARCHIE: You help him. I shall return for my brother.

DEWDROP: Please. No.

ARCHIE: I must. I would betray all I hold good if I was not to venture forth so.

OLD MAN: He's a fine boy you know.

DEWDROP: I would rather be in the arms of a live recreant than a dead hero.

ARCHIE: It must be done. Now hurry. Sing for me when you reach your destination, and I will employ your sweet notes as stepping stones to carry me . . . to . . .

DEWDROP: You must hurry. Time is short.

ARCHIE: Farewell.

(Archie dashes off)

OLD MAN: He's a fine boy you know.

DEWDROP: God give me a lifetime to discover that.

OLD MAN: He will. You'll see. Up to now, all you had to share your heart with was . . .

DEWDROP: The Sunlounger! By all that is holy. The Sunlounger! I must rescue him . . . I forgot. I must return.

OLD MAN: Don't. Don't go. I implore you. You are all I have in this cruel World. Stay with me.

DEWDROP: Walk on sweet Father. I will return directly.

(Dewdrop runs off)

OLD MAN: And now what?

(The lights fade. In virtual darkness, Archie finds Edwin. The implication is that he hanging from a window by his belt. This could be achieved by standing on a black painted box. Archie, below him, speaks.)

ARCHIE: So there you are, brother. Another escape bid? Another break for freedom?

EDWIN: My belt's caught. Get me down.

ARCHIE: I should leave you there. You have not impressed me as a brother . . . but me, with an inborn sense of what is right and fair, cannot stoop to your base level. I shall follow my instincts and disengage you. And then, follow me. The island is about to blow up!

(Archie cuts Edwin down)

EDWIN: Thank you my dear brother.

ARCHIE: My duty, in memory of . . .

EDWIN: I came from up there. Look.

(Archie turns away and Edwin makes a run for it)

ARCHIE: Hold up. Wait one.

(Archie exits, in pursuit. There is a great flash, and a scorching rumble. More flashes and a gigantic explosion that rocks the theatre. Another mighty flash of light and then darkness. Low rumbling.)

STORYTELLER: The tallest tower lifted, lifted into the rain soaked mist above Rainland. Cutting through the low cloud. Momentarily parting the swirling billow as is made its relentless journey to the outermost reaches of the atmosphere. For one moment . . . (he slows down) For one brief moment a tiny shaft, a ray, a beam of warm sunlight shone through this breach in the dark cloud.

(Lights show a little. Dewdrop is holding a soft yellow light in her hand.)

A beam that fell to earth. A beam that found a straight path (a shaft of bright yellow light hits Dewdrop. She mimes the take off and departure of the Sunlounger) to the heart of one of the sun's own children. The Sunlounger.

(Dewdrop watches as the bird flies away)

The little bird, with new strength from its brief encounter with the sun, had headed home . . . to Goldendawn Island.

(As Dewdrop fades away, Archie runs on stage)

ARCHIE: Old Man? Dewdrop? They should be near here. I cannot hear her sing. Hello?

OLD MAN: (off) Over here.

ARCHIE: Thank Goodness. (Old Man enters) But where is your daughter, the fair Dewdrop?

OLD MAN: She returned to the castle, shortly after you. Didn't you know?

ARCHIE: But the castle has exploded. The tower gone. Oh no. I cannot bear to carry on without her. If we cannot find her . . . (he gets down on one knee) Do I have permission to marry her memory?

OLD MAN: That will not be necessary. Here she comes now.

ARCHIE: (leaps to his feet) My adored one. You're safe!

DEWDROP: My Prince. (they embrace)

OLD MAN: (patiently) And what of the Sunlounger?

DEWDROP: Gone.

OLD MAN: I'm sorry.

DEWDROP: No. Gone. Flown away. Last seen heading for Goldendawn Island.

OLD MAN: (to audience as light fades) I'll have to find out how that happened later. (exits)

(The little girl walks to the book and, as she turns the page, the stage is flooded with yellow light as she reveals the Goldendawn Island page)

SONG 13 (Little girl)

STORYTELLER: Ten. Forty four. One hundred and eighty seven - multiplied by two . . .

On Goldendawn Island, one very old Sunlounger had been predicting the future. He had, in his more sensible moments, suggested the place to fish for storm kippers or recommended a shaded place to settle, long before that place had become shaded. But no one knew why he would, occasionally, talk in numbers.

In fact, they would all say, "Why?"

But when their friend returned it all became clear. Their friend who had been carried, on a mystery wind, to a sad place, where a prince and a beautiful girl were trapped, unable to escape.

And at the very moment that they heard this upsetting part of the story, a thin voice came from the cage that contained the old bird.

"Five thousand, eight hundred and forty two."

The legend became clear. That was exactly how many Sunloungees were needed to rescue the kind people on Rainland.

(Yellow lights twinkle, to the sound of thousands of flapping wings)

Five thousand, eight hundred and forty two volunteers flew into the clear blue sky, circled the beach twice, and headed towards the dark, storm laden horizon.

(Light, and wing flapping fade away. Dim lights illuminate the ship's Captain, swaying steadily at the rails)

CAPTAIN: Ha ha! I have captured enough pirates in the Great Bleary Seas to keep me in reward money for the rest of me natural. I'm going home, instead of splicing the mainbrace constantly.

Think I'll sing a hearty sea shanty. Me wife won't let me do it at home.

SONG 14 - SEAWATER - REPRISE (Captain)

(Flashing yellow lights, and the flapping of thousands of wings)

Shiver me timbers. What? Who?

(Flashing yellow lights, and the flapping of thousands of wings)

Shiver me timber what? Who?

(Call off "Sunloungers")

Sunloungers? There's one. And another. Ten there. One hundred and fifty. Their wings are affecting the trim. We'll go below. To a watery grave . . . we're going about!

The little perishers. The wind from their wings is altering me course. Four hundred and eight. (wipes eye) Another one. Nine seventy two. If I'm not mistaken there are five thousand, eight hundred and forty two of 'em.

That's a lot. We're tacking hard now.

We're on an even keel for . . . for . . . that evil, orange glowing lump protruding from the horizon.

Oh no! It's Rainland!

(Rush of wings flapping and wind gusting. Cut to Archie, Dewdrop and the Old Man.)

DEWDROP: A ship! Look!

(They wave. Captain's voice in the distance.)

CAPTAIN: Land ahoy! Prepare to drop anchor! (loud clang) Aaaagh.

DEWDROP: We're saved. Archie - we can leave this terrible land forever. Daddy - you can have the life of a very old man at last! You deserve it. (she hugs Archie) This is too wonderful Look at all those Sunloungers! What are they doing?

ARCHIE: I think your little friend must have alerted them. See, they create gusts of wind to guide the good ship safely to shore. And . . . and what do they do now? They are flying in formation. They're making a giant circle in the sky. Not a circle . . . a great yellow necklace! Not a necklace . . . (warmly) a heart.

ALL THREE: Aaah.

(voice of Captain off)

CAPTAIN: The Island's on fire. You must escape now, for your lives. There's no time to lose.

DEWDROP: He's right, Archie. Father. We must leave now.

(Edwin bounds on, sword at the ready)

EDWIN: Not so fast. I am leaving. You miserable threesome are staying forever! Ha ha!

ARCHIE: Not this time, brother. You have tricked and connived once too often. This is . . . (draws sword) goodbye.

(Edwin runs off, shouts)

EDWIN: The cannon! If I'm not going, no one is. You will die! The ship will perish! For I have found a cannon!

(Dewdrop and the Old Man hug Archie)

DEWDROP: What can we do? We don't know where he's gone, and we are defenceless against a . . . a . . . cannon.

(Roar of laughter off - from Edwin)

ARCHIE: For two pins I'd split him from guggle to knee but, after all, he is my brother. We cannot leave without him.

DEWDROP: But the island is on fire. We must leave now. Would you give your life for that foul piece of humanity?

ARCHIE: I have no choice.

DEWDROP: You do. We must leave. Now. Before he can aim the . . . cannon.

OLD MAN: Not . . .

DEWDROP: Yes. The cannon.

(Scream of laughter off, from Edwin. An enormous explosion, and a cannon ball rolls onto the stage.)

ARCHIE: (calls) We're leaving. Now. Edwin. Edwin . . . Edwin? It's no good. We'll have to leave him. (looks round mournfully) Leave him to the horrors, sadness and misery . . . of Rainland.

(The lights fade. Blackness. Silence. And the sound of seagulls, leading in to stirring marine music. The lights come up, fresh yellow, bright, strong. The three heroes are together, smiling into the breeze as they hang on to the ship's railing.)

OLD MAN: I love it! Why did I try to change things? It all makes sense in the end, and who am I to control it? Weather. Light. Darkness. The sea. The land. True love. These things make up for the mystery of it all! World. Stay just as you are!

SONG 15 - SAIL INTO THE ARMS OF LOVE (Dewdrop/Archie/Old man)

(The lights fade as music builds.)

STORYTELLER: The evil Prince remained on Rainland for a good many years. Cold. Damp. Alone in the charred remains, until one day he happened upon a fat old frog, under a rainsoaked leaf.

Now, as you know, in all good fairy stories, a frog who is treated well, turns into a beautiful princess. She falls in love with the prince, and they live happily ever after. Unfortunately, in spite of Edwin's care and attention, this one stayed a frog for all of its life.

(The Storyteller waits as the little girl closes the book. They walk off together as the lights fade.)

THE END

