

The Elixir Of Youth

Excerpt

Book, Lyrics & Music
by
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Setting

Old King Cole's Castle in Rhimeland.

Time

Storybook Time.

ACT I

SCENE 1

I.1.1 "Overture"

I.1.2 "Rhimeland"

Just outside KING COLE's castle, one fine spring morning. The castle gate is on one side of the stage. A covered well is prominent upstage. A few TOWNSPEOPLE are crossing on business. JACK BINIMBLE stands near the well, taking notes in a book as he eyes everyone. MOTHER GOOSE surveys the scene, then strolls downstage to address the audience.

MOTHER GOOSE

The Kingdom of Rhimeland, that's what you've found.
Merry and happy, a beautiful place.
With lovely young people walking around
A lilt in each step, a smile on each face
And chock full of all the most interesting
People. And beasts. And other nice...

A DISH and a SPOON walk by.

MOTHER GOOSE (CONT'D)

things.

Rhimeland

A BEAUTIFUL DAY, SO MERRY AND FREE
HARDLY A CARE ON ANYONE'S MIND
IT'S ALL THE BEST YOU EVER DID SEE
AND EACH OF US IS CLEVER AND FINE
I'M A RHYMER, I'M A POET
A POET, AND BY GOLLY, I KNOW IT!

WHEN YOU MEET SOMEONE ON THE STREET
AND ASK YOURSELF, "NOW WHO
IS THIS PERSON I'M ABOUT TO GREET?"
WHEN THEY SAY, "HI",
THEY'LL JUST AS LIKELY SING TO YOU.

MARY WOOLEY

I'M MARY, HERE'S MY LITTLE LAMB
AND WHITE AS SNOW HER FLEECE
SHE FOLLOWS ME WHERE 'ERE I GO
NOW, BLESS HER HEART, I LOVE HER SO
BUT I WISH SOMETIMES, DON'T YOU KNOW,
SHE'D JUST LEAVE ME IN PEACE.

JACK HORNER

LITTLE JACK HORNER
I LIVE ON THE CORNER
WHY? 'CAUSE THAT'S MY 'HOOD
EAT PIES WITH MY THUMBS
I PULL OUT THE PLUMS-
HEY! I'M GOOD.

BINIMBLE

JACK BINIMBLE, AND YES I'M QUICK
BUT ONE THING YOU MUST LEARN
I DID NOT QUITE CLEAR THAT CANDLESTICK
AND A PART OF ME
THAT'S DEAR TO ME
IN THE END RECEIVED A BURN!

HEYWOOD DIDDLE

HEYWOOD DIDDLE
PLAYS HIS FIDDLE
THE COWS BEGIN TO SWOON
THE DISHES STARE (THE LITTLE DOG HOWLED)
AT THE SILVERWARE (I MEAN HE HOWLED)
AND THEY ALL JUMP OVER THE MOON (AND THE DISH GOT DOWN WITH
THE SPOON)

ALL

RHIMELAND, IT'S A PLACE OF RHYMES

MOTHER GOOSE

AND I'M THE POET LAUREATE

ALL

SHE LOVES TO RHYME TIME AFTER TIME
JUST AS FAR AS SHE CAN CARRY IT.

SHE'S GOT MASCULINE RHYMES
AND RHYMES THAT ARE FEMININE
SHE'S NEVER AT A LOSS FOR SIMILE
A METAPHOR OR A SYNONYM.
BY ANY NAME, A ROSE IS STILL A ROSE

MOTHER GOOSE

BUT DON'T ASK ME TO TELL YOU THAT IN PROSE!

ALL

RHIMELAND, RHIMELAND, HOME SWEET HOME
HOME SWEET HOME TO ME
EACH RHIMELAND SOUL
ACROSS OUR WHOLE
DELIGHTFUL NATIONAL DIAMETER
HAS A RHYME OR VERSE
THAT SHE WROTE FOR US
IN PERFECT IAMBIC PENTAMETER

WE SING IN PERFECT FOUR FOUR TIME
YOU'LL NEVER HAVE A BETTER TIME
THAN YOU WILL HERE IN THE LAND OF RHYME
NO, YOU'LL NEVER HAVE A BETTER TIME
THAN YOU'LL HAVE HERE IN OUR HAPPY LAND OF RHYME!

MOTHER GOOSE

Yes, an absolutely gorgeous day in a gorgeous place, where everybody has absolutely nothing to do but sing and dance and play. What could be more delightful? Ah, but we have a saying here in Rhimeland. "Just because it's a poem doesn't mean it has to rhyme." Things, I have often heard, are often not what they seem. Still, there would seem to be no reason for things, whatever they seem to be, to not go on being that way forever in our happy kingdom. But we have another Rhimeland saying. "When everything's going your way today, it might go some other way some other day." And so it happened that one day, something new *came* our way. Or, rather someone. You see, two young strangers came to town.

JACK SPRAGINS and JILL NOGGINS enter, dressed in a manner distinctly different from the residents of Rhimeland. They are a bit dusty from travel.

MOTHER GOOSE (CONT'D)

Nice looking young folks.
What possible trouble
Could come from weary travellers?
But with songs and with jokes
We can burst someone's bubble
And watch all their plans come unraveled.
Just wait and see...

MOTHER GOOSE exits. BINIMBLE eyes JACK & JILL. As they talk, he moves closer to eavesdrop.

JILL

Jack, it's Rhimeland. Oh, thank goodness. What a long, strange trip!

JACK

All the way from Pallia to Rhimeland. Three days, Jill! Three days across the desert.

JILL

I thought we'd never make it.

JACK

Oh, we made it, all right. And now, all we have to do is convince King Cole to release some of his precious water to our bone dry country, and we'll save our countrymen. And perhaps *I'll* be made a duke in the kingdom of Pallia, *with* all the honor and glory!

JILL

Yes, that's *all* we have to do. Even though Old King Cole is notoriously stingy about his water.

JACK BINIMBLE comes up behind JILL

BINIMBLE

May I be of assistance?

JILL

(jumping)

Eek!

BINIMBLE

My apologies, madam. Didn't mean to startle you.

JILL

That's alright, I'm not startled. Much.

BINIMBLE

Perhaps you need a drink of water from Rhimeland's famous well. You look like you could use it. Sort of "well-traveled", you might say. Not from around here, are you?

JACK

No, we're not. We're from Pallia.

BINIMBLE

All the way from Pallia. Imagine that. Well, then, you certainly could use some of our water.

They cross to well and he gives them each a draught.

BINIMBLE (CONT'D)

Nothing like the water from this well to refresh the weary traveller. Or lift the downcast spirit. Or brighten a dreary day. Really, it's good for just about everything that ails you.

JILL

Hey! You're right! I feel better already!

BINIMBLE

It's remarkable stuff. Now. What brings you to Rhimeland. Ha-ha. Surely you Pallians didn't come all this way just to get some water. Hahaha.

JILL

Now that you mention it-

JACK

We're here to see Old King Cole. Any idea how to go about doing that?

BINIMBLE

See the king, eh? On a diplomatic mission, are we? Well, well, well. Hmmm. If anyone can get you an audience with Old King Cole, it would be his First Minister, Jack Binimble.

JACK

So where can we find this Binimble fellow?

BINIMBLE

My, my, this *is* your lucky day. As a matter of fact, he is me!

JILL

Really? Well, that *is* good luck. You can get us in to see the king?

BINIMBLE

Better than that, I'll bring the king to see you. He's just about to hold his monthly court in this very courtyard. I'll see what I can do.

JILL

That would be wonderful, Mr. Binimble.

BINIMBLE

Call me Jack. Jack Binimble. Jack B., they call me.

JACK

We're sort of in a hurry, Jack-

BINIMBLE

Jack B.

JACK

Jack B. Do you think we might sort of see the king pretty quickly?

BINIMBLE

(to JILL)

I'm sure he'll be pleased to see you.

(to JACK)

And you, not so much.

(MORE)

BINIMBLE (CONT'D)

I'll do what I can do, as sure as my name is Jack Binimble, I'm also Jack B. Quick. I'll be back in a jumping jack flash.

BINIMBLE exits through gate.

JILL

My, he works fast.

SOUND: trumpet fanfare. BINIMBLE, KING COLE and COURTIERS enter back through the gate.

JILL (CONT'D)

He works *really* fast.

BINIMBLE

Hear ye, hear ye! The court of His Most Merry Majesty, Old King Cole, is now in session. Let all with grievances, petitions, needs for intercession, or relief from depression approach his merry old majesty!

TOWNSPEOPLE begin to line up.

JACK

Old? That guy doesn't look any older than I do.

JILL

But King Cole has been king of Rhimeland since before anybody can remember. At least that's what my mother always told me.

JACK

Strange. I thought he'd be, you know, like a grandfather kind of old guy.

MOTHER HUBBARD and HENRY sidle up behind JACK.

MOTHER HUBBARD

Oh, he's old alright.

JACK

(startled)

Wha-? Excuse me, I-

MOTHER HUBBARD

The man is ancient. One foot in the grave. A fossil.

JACK and JILL look at COLE, then back to HUBBARD.

JILL
Ancient?

JACK
A fossil?

JILL
That's hard to believe. He surely doesn't look old.

I.1.3 "King Cole Is Cool"

HUBBARD
Looks can be so deceiving, especially in Rhimeland.
He may look young, he may act merry. But things are
not always what they seem, my young friends.

King Cole Is Cool

HUBBARD (CONT'D)
IT MIGHT LOOK A PRETTY FACE
YOU CAN NEVER SAY FOR SURE
WHEN THE LIGHT GETS VERY BRIGHT
THINGS MAY NOT SEEM QUITE AS PURE
THINGS MIGHT GET A BIT DISTORTED
TILL YOU LOOK AT THEM UP CLOSE
I HAVE HEARD IT'S BEEN REPORTED
THAT WAY UP CLOSE SOME THINGS ARE GROSS!

BINIMBLE
GATHER ROUND AND STATE YOUR CASE
BRING YOU FACE BEFORE THE KING
HE IS READY TO EMBRACE
EVERY PROBLEM THAT YOU BRING

ALL
OLD KING COLE
KING COLE IS COOL
OLD KING COLE
HE'S NOBODY'S FOOL
OLD KING COLE
KING COLE IS COOL
OLD KING COLE
LIVES BY THE GOLDEN RULE.

BINIMBLE
HE LIVES BY THE GOLDEN RULE

HUBBARD
(to Jack & Jill)
DO IT TO THEM BEFORE THEY DO IT TO YOU

ALL
OLD KING COLE
KING COLE'S THE MAN

GOT ONE GOAL
TO MAKE US HAPPY AS HE CAN
OLD KING COLE
YOU CAN PLAINLY SEE
HE'S GOT SOUL
MERRY AS CAN BE

BINIMBLE
HE'S MERRY AND HE LOVES HIS FUN

HUBBARD
(to Jack & Jill)
'CAUSE EVERYTHING IS HIS TO RUN

KING COLE
I'M THE KING, I'M COOL, I KNOW
MY NAME IS COLE, I'D LIKE TO SHOW
EVERYONE A REALLY, REAL GOOD TIME
WE'LL ALL BE COOL IN MY LAND OF RHYME
HAPPY, HAPPY, HAPPY IN MY LAND OF RHYME

ALL
OLD KING COLE
KING COLE IS COOL
OLD KING COLE
HE'S NOBODY'S FOOL
OLD KING COLE
KING COLE IS COOL
OLD KING COLE
LIVES BY THE GOLDEN RULE
THE RULE IS EASY
JUST BE HAPPY
AND DON'T YOU EVERY FORGET
THAT KING COLE IS COOL!
YES, KING COLE IS COOL!

BINIMBLE pounds his staff.

BINIMBLE
State your name and your business with the King!

HUMPHREY DUMPTON
Humphrey Dumpton.

BINIMBLE
And your business!

HUMPHREY DUMPTON
(morosely)
My life just isn't what it's cracked up to be. I'm
an empty shell, I go to pieces at the drop of a
hat, my life is all scrambled, and nothing is over
easy for me.

BINIMBLE

Well aren't we a grumpy Humpty! Is that all?

HUMPHREY DUMPTON

I feel bedeviled.

BINIMBLE

Then why don't you-?

HUMPHREY DUMPTON

I don't laugh at yolks anymore.

SIMON PIMON

Why, all this fellow needs is some-

HUMPHREY DUMPTON

Oh. And my brain is totally fried.

PIMON

Are you sure that's all?

HUMPHREY DUMPTON nods.

PIMON (CONT'D)

Then I say, all this poor man needs is a cool, refreshing drink of Cole well water.

KING COLE

(to BINIMBLE)

Bring forth the water!

BINIMBLE

(to PIMON)

Bring forth the water!

PIMON

(to no one)

Bring forth the water! Oh, I'll get it. Come along with me, Humphrey.

**BINIMBLE points to WIDOW SHUE,
next in line.**

BINIMBLE

State your name and your business with the King!

WIDOW SHUE

I'm the poor Widow Shue. And obviously I have all these children.

KING COLE

What do you plan to with them, madam?

WIDOW SHUE

Do? There's so many, I don't know what to do. Too many shoes to tie, too many mouths to feed. I just don't know what to do!

I.1.4 "Shue Bop"

Shue Bop

IT'S ALL MY LITTLE SHUES
THAT MAKE ME SING THE BLUES
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
WITH EACH TEENY, TINY SHUE

THERE'S SUE SHUE, AND BOO SHUE
FOOFOO SHUE AND KOOKOO SHUE
LULU SHUE, AND POOH SHUE,
TUTU SHUE AND ZUZU SHUE
AND LEST WE MIGHT FORGET

SHUE CHILDREN

WE CANNOT FORGET

WIDOW SHUE

OUR DEAREST LITTLE WOOPIE SHUE

SHUE CHILDREN

WHOOPIE-TI-DOO!

Each SHUE CHILD says his/her own name on, well, on cue.

SUE SHUE, BOO SHUE
FOOFOO SHUE, KOOKOO SHUE
LULU SHUE, POOH SHUE,
TUTU SHUE, ZUZU SHUE

WOOPIE

AND YOU KNOW WHO!

SHUE CHILDREN

WHOOPIE-TI-DOO!

This time they sing it in a round.

SUE SHUE, BOO SHUE
FOOFOO SHUE, KOOKOO SHUE
LULU SHUE, POOH SHUE,
TUTU SHUE, ZUZU SHUE

WOOPIE

AND YOU KNOW WHO!

SHUE CHILDREN

WHOOPIE-TI-DOO!

ALL

THERE'S SUE SHUE, AND BOO SHUE
FOOFOO SHUE AND KOOKOO SHUE
LULU SHUE, AND POOH SHUE,
TUTU SHUE AND ZUZU SHUE
AND DEAREST, SWEETEST, CUTEST, NEATEST
TEENY, SMALLEST, BEST OF ALL-EST
BESTEST LITTLE SHUE-BE-DO-BE-DOO
WHOOPI-TI-DOODLE-TOODLES, WOOPIE SHUE!

WOOPIE

THAT'S ME!

KING COLE

This whole family needs water from my well! Make it
happen, Binimble.

BINIMBLE

Yes, your merriness. Heywood! Oh, Squire Diddle!

**HEYWOOD DIDDLE, wearing dark
shades and carrying a fiddle,
approaches.**

HEYWOOD DIDDLE

(plays a quick arpeggio on his fiddle)

You summoned, your quickness?

BINIMBLE

Please show the Shues to our sure-fire refreshment
for all shattered souls in shambles.

DIDDLE

Right on, your nimble dude-ness.

DUMPTON dances back to BINIMBLE.

HUMPHREY DUMPTON

Oh, what a wonderful day this is, don't you think?
I am so glad to be alive and be me!

DIDDLE

Man, you sure changed your tune. From the blues to
be-bop. Now, walk this way, little Shue-boppers.

**DIDDLE sashays to the well, and
SHUE FAMILY follows him.**

JACK

(to JILL)

Did you notice how different that guy Dumpton was
acting?

JILL

Yes, he was all grumpy, then, Bam! Happy Humpty!

BINIMBLE

Hear ye, hear ye! That concludes today's court!

JILL

But Mister Jack B! What about us? You said-

KING COLE

Oh my, oh me, what have we here ye? Binimble, is there some other business before the court?

BINIMBLE

Oh, yes. The ambassadors from... where were you from again?

KING COLE

From a land of beauty and delight, no doubt. Hello, my dear.

(kisses JILL's hand)

Delighted, I'm sure.

JACK

We're from Pallia, Your Majesty, here on a vital mission to-

KING COLE

(ignoring him)

Of course you are. And what's your name, milady?

JILL

Jill. Jill-

JACK

Spragins. My sister, Jill Spragins.

JILL glares at him for interrupting.

JACK (CONT'D)

My only sister. My name is Jack Spragins. And she's Jill Spragins. We have the same name, you know, since she's my, uh, sister.

BINIMBLE

How refreshing that you Pallians have the same last name, when you're in the same family and all.

PIMON

Imagine that.

KING COLE

So you are Jill, eh? Lovely name. Almost as lovely as you. I'm the King, King Cole they call me. But you can call me by my first name. King Nat.

KING COLE puts his arm around JILL and leads her away. She looks back at JACK, who gives her a gleeful "OK" sign. JILL glares at him.

KING COLE (CONT'D)

I'd like to personally welcome you to my kingdom, Jill. It's not often we're blessed with such a beautiful visitation. Let me extend the full hospitality of Rhimeland to you... and, ah,
(dismissively)
your brother, of course.

JILL

Yes, by all means, to my *brother*.

JACK

Why, thank you! You know, King Nat-

BINIMBLE glares at JACK.

JACK (CONT'D)

I mean, your majesty! We've come a long way on a matter of the *utmost* urgency, and I was hoping-

KING COLE

(sniffing JACK in disdain)

Yes, it's obvious you've been on the road. Not many bathtubs between here and Pallia, are there? Why not use the facilities of my palace and freshen up a bit? Then you can present your petitions.

JILL

Why, thank you, your majesty-

KING COLE

King Nat.

JILL

King Nat. Thank you very much! That would be lovely!

KING COLE

Binimble, see to it. My dear.

COLE again kisses her hand.

BINIMBLE

Heywood!

DIDDLE

Your nimbletude?

BINIMBLE

You heard the King. Off, off, off, quickly,
quickly, quickly!

DIDDLE

You got it, Lord Quickster. Let's go, dudes.