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ENCHANTED KINGDOM  
[EXCERPT]

a comedy

by Robert Kerr

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## CHARACTERS

ART, an old man who resembles famed animator and amusement park founder Art Bisbee

CARL SR., a middle-aged man from Georgia (doubles as BOBO and DIPSY-DOODLE)

MELISSA, Carl's teenage daughter (doubles as DAISY)

CARL JR., Carl's young son (doubles as TWINKLETOES)

DAVID, a twenty-year-old man from Nebraska (doubles as HANNIBAL)

ROB, another twenty-year-old man from Nebraska (doubles as BEEBEE)

KRISTEN, an eighteen-year-old woman from Nebraska (doubles as GROUCHY)

TERRY, another eighteen-year-old woman from Nebraska (doubles as CASSIE)

CALVIN, twenties, a waiter at Bisbeeland (doubles as EMANUEL)

The actors double as the following masked cartoon characters:

BOBO, a bear

BEEBEE, another bear

EMANUEL, a mouse

HANNIBAL, a hare

GROUCHY, a dwarf

DAISY, an elephant

DIPSY-DOODLE, a flying hippo

TWINKLETOES, a pixie

CALICO CASSIE, a cat

## SETTING

Bisbeeland, a large amusement park in southern California.

Act One: Morning to evening of a day in late August.

Act Two: Later that night until dawn of the following day.

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## ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

(ART addresses the FAIRIES, who stand at attention.)

ART

Good morning, everyone. Here are today's assignments. First aid: Twinkletoes, Emanuel Mouse, and Beebee the Bear. It's supposed to be a hot one today, so be on the lookout for sunburn and heat exhaustion. Trash detail: Calico Cassie, Dipsy Doodle and Bobo the Bear. You guys have been slacking off lately, so let's put a little more effort into it, okay? Law enforcement: Slouchy, Smiley, Weepy and Wheezy. And Heart's Desire: Hannibal Hare, Daisy the Elephant and Grouchy.

(ART gives HANNIBAL, DAISY and GROUCHY each a small sack.)

It's come to my attention that you've been a bit too liberal with this stuff. If you see someone looking in a shop window or thinking about buying a hot dog, use just a pinch. Unlock their heart's desire just enough so we can make the sale. You've been throwing it around like it's confetti. That's when people start acting screwy and stop buying the merchandise. Besides, this stuff isn't cheap. If costs in your department aren't down twenty percent this month, you'll be scrubbing toilets until Christmas. Got it?

(GROUCHY nods. ART turns away. GROUCHY makes an obscene gesture at ART. The other FAIRIES cover their mouths and bob their heads as if laughing, but make no sound. When ART turns to face them again they suddenly stop laughing.)

One more thing. Over the past few months, an organization known as "Fairies Local 101" has been circulating unauthorized literature.

(ART reads from some pamphlets.)

"Fairies of Bisbeeland unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!" "Hey diddly, hi, hey diddly hey, you deserve an eight-hour day." "End Art Bisbee's reign of terror." Now, as you know, we're all one happy family here in Bisbeeland, so I can only assume this is somebody's idea of a joke. I'd like to ask our little prankster, whoever he or she may be, to step forward.

(None of the FAIRIES come forward.)

If you come forward now, I promise there won't be any hard feelings. We'll all have a good laugh and get on with business.

(Beat.)

All right, if anyone else knows who this joker is, please let us know.

(Beat.)

ART (*continued*)

Fine. If anyone would like to speak with me later, in private, nobody else will have to know who spoiled the joke. In the meantime, I'd like to respond to a publication entitled "Fairies' Bill of Rights" by our Bolshevik friend. Number one: "Minimum wage." Well, you guys already get minimum wage: you work for free. Number two: "Sick leave." You don't get sick. I don't see the problem. Three: "Eight-hour work days." When you work for me, you work twenty-four hours a day. Twenty-eight if necessary. "Permission to leave the park." Permission denied. "The power of speech." Well, as I've always said, if you can't talk, you can't talk *back*.

The last time I checked, this was America. In America people get thrown in jail for crap like this. I don't want any more whining about your so-called rights. The only rights you have to worry about are the copyrights I hold on you. The trademarks and the patents. Every last one of you is the intellectual property of Art Bisbee Enterprises.

I don't know how many of you there are, and I don't know what you have in mind, but I do know if anybody makes any trouble they can always be terminated. How many of you have heard of frownium 114?

(The FAIRIES look at one another. None seem to have heard of it.)

As you know, our labs work night and day, distilling hugs and kisses, laughter and smiles, to make this.

(ART reaches into the sack he gave GROUCHY, comes up with a handful of something and throws it into the air. It is glittering dust. Music tinkles as it falls to the ground.)

Have you ever stopped to think about what happens to all those tears and frowns, all those kicks and punches that get filtered out?

(ART puts on a pair of protective gloves, produces a small sack, and pours some black dust into his hand. He handles it as if it were radioactive.)

Here they are. For every ounce of pure love and happiness we make, we also get an ounce of frownium 114. It cancels out every last bit of love and happiness it touches. Eats it up like acid. Every fairy in Bisbeeland is made of love and happiness; you do the math. I don't want to use this, but if I have to I will. Khrushchev would love to get his hands on this place. He knows that if Bisbeeland falls, America will follow. I'm willing to do whatever it takes to stop him. Whatever it takes.

Anyway, you guys don't have it so bad when you stop and think about it. You'll live forever, every one of you. At least the ones who play ball. But me... Even I... The doctors say they won't be able to bring me back a second time. The shock to my heart... I don't know about you, but I'd take eternal life over an employee discount any day.

Enough gloom and doom. The park opens in five minutes. Let's go make some people happy.

(The FAIRIES spring into action. HANNIBAL puts up a sign that reads "ADMISSION \$30 ADULTS. \$20 KIDS 12 AND UNDER.")

(EMANUEL and GROUCHY put a low fence around a grassy area.)

(DAISY puts up a sign: "KODAK PHOTO SPOT.")

(BEEBEE hangs a sign reading "NO TRESPASSIN'!" over a doorway.)

(BOBO and CASSIE sweep up every last bit of trash from the ground.)

(ART wanders among the activity, making sure everything is ship-shape. At last he is satisfied, and a fanfare sounds as he opens the gates.)

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO

(ROB, TERRY, DAVID and KRISTEN enter. ROB has a camera.)

Hold it right there, Dave.

ROB

What?

DAVID

Now lean forward, just a little.

ROB

Why?

DAVID

I've got a perfect shot of your ass.

ROB

Give me that, asshole.

DAVID

Fairy.

ROB

Prick.

DAVID

(DAVID and ROB spar playfully.)

Oh my God! Look! The palace! Let's take a picture! Rob, Terry, you first.

KRISTEN

Where should we stand?

TERRY

Up on that little hill. Dave, get the palace in the background.

KRISTEN

(ROB and TERRY pose for the picture.)

How's this?

TERRY

Good. One, two... Wait. It won't—

DAVID

TERRY

The orange button. On the left.

DAVID

Oh. Okay. Now—

Shit. I took a picture of the ground. Just a sec. Now say cheese.

TERRY

Cheese.

(ROB makes a V with his fingers and sticks his tongue out between them. Snap.)

Don't act all perverted.

KRISTEN

Okay. Our turn. Come on, Dave. Up here.

DAVID

On the grass?

KRISTEN

The picture's ten times better up here.

DAVID

But the sign—

KRISTEN

Screw the sign.

(KRISTEN pulls DAVID over the fence.)

Closer. Here. This picture goes up over your bed so everybody knows you're taken while I'm away.

ROB

Say "ass."

DAVID and KRISTEN

Ass!

(Snap.)

TERRY

Let's get one of all of us together.

(ART enters.)

TERRY

Excuse me, sir. Could you take a picture for us?

ART

Oh, sure. How does this thing work?

TERRY

Just point and shoot.

ART

You know, I remember using pinhole cameras when I was a boy. Things have come a long way since—

(ROB, DAVID, KRISTEN and TERRY are jumping the fence.)

Excuse me—

KRISTEN

Get the castle and trees in the background.

ART

That's new sod. It's very delicate.

ROB

It's just one picture.

ART

There's a Kodak photo spot just around the corner.

TERRY

This is a great shot right here.

ART

The Kodak people know what they're doing.

KRISTEN

That's the same picture everybody takes.

TERRY

We want something unique.

ART

It's a wonderful shot from there. Believe me. I've worked here for years.

(ROB, DAVID, KRISTEN and TERRY look at one another. They step off the grass and go to the photo spot.)

That's better. Everybody say Limburger!



Cheese!

TERRY

Limburger!

(simultaneously)

KRISTEN

Ass!

(simultaneously)

ROB

Thanks.

TERRY

We're sorry about, you know, the grass.

DAVID

It's all right.

ART

KRISTEN

We just wanted a really special shot, because me and Terry here are going off to college in a couple weeks, but the guys are going back to Nebraska and we won't see each other again until Christmas.

ART

Really, it's forgotten. Just remember, we have these rules to keep everything nice for everyone. If everybody who came here stepped over the fence whenever they felt like it, soon all the grass would be trampled away. Now, nobody wants a world without grass, do they?

(KRISTEN, TERRY and DAVID grunt in grudging agreement.)

Of course not. Well, it was a pleasure meeting you. Enjoy your visit.

(ART exits.)

Who put the stick up his ass?

ROB

That was the last picture.

TERRY

Let's get some more film. Guys, we'll be right back.

KRISTEN

Wait for us, okay?

TERRY

ROB

Okay.

(KRISTEN and TERRY exit.)

ROB

Dave, can I ask you something? It's kind of, well...

DAVID

Go ahead.

ROB

Don't think I'm stupid.

DAVID

Too late.

ROB

Asshole.

DAVID

I'm kidding. What is it?

ROB

How long does, you know, a girl's period last?

DAVID

I'm not sure. Like three days, I think. Maybe four.

ROB

Is that all?

DAVID

Something like that. Why?

ROB

Just curious. So if a girl says she's been having a period for three weeks straight, she's probably lying?

DAVID

Who told you they were having a three-week long period?

ROB

Nobody.

DAVID

Terry?

ROB

I don't want to talk about it.

When you want to, you know, get it on with Kristen, does she ever say it's that time of the month?

DAVID

It's never come up. I mean, we haven't really, you know...

ROB

You're kidding. Still no—

DAVID

Not yet.

ROB

No way. The chick's like totally in heat. Can't you tell?

DAVID

I haven't noticed. So Terry told you that, and you believed her?

ROB

I don't know anything about that stuff. I don't even want to know. All that blood and shit. Keep it away from me.

Four days. Huh. You think that means...

DAVID

What?

ROB

I don't know. You think she doesn't want me anymore? I mean, here she is, going off to school in a couple weeks. It's my last chance to, you know, be with her, so I want her more than ever, but all of a sudden she's so distant. When we're around you guys, everything seems cool, but when we're alone she acts like she's hardly even listening to me. It's like she's already moving on to the next guy.

DAVID

I'm sure she's not—

ROB

That's all I can think it could be. It's driving me crazy. I mean, we've been together like six years now. If she dumped me it would be like losing my left hand. When I crashed my truck last year, she's the one I called. She's the one who waited with me for the tow truck in the rain. She's the only one who's ever seen me cry.

DAVID

You look like you're gonna cry now.

ROB

Fuck you. Why'd I even tell you all this? I'm sick of waiting for them. Let's catch up.

(ROB exits, followed by DAVID.)

(TERRY and KRISTEN enter.)

TERRY

Check him out. He's got a cute butt.

KRISTEN

It looks kind of round.

TERRY

I like something with a little shape to it.

KRISTEN

I like the flat, athletic kind better. We're so bad.

TERRY

No, we're not.

KRISTEN

Yes, we are.

TERRY

We're just looking.

KRISTEN

What about Rob?

TERRY

It's about time I traded him in for a newer model.

KRISTEN

You're not serious.

TERRY

I'm supposed to do the long-distance thing once we're in school?

KRISTEN

You could at least try.

TERRY

It never works out. Think about everyone else who's tried it. Dwayne and Debbie, Lance and Kaarin, Trish and Chad. They all broke up by Thanksgiving. Every single one. It's better to just spare yourself the heartbreak and get it over with, you know?

KRISTEN

You can't just dump Rob. Think of the rest of us. It's been you and me and Dave and Rob for as long as I can remember. You can't just decide to break that up.

TERRY

I've been miserable ever since junior prom. You know that. He's self-centered, obnoxious. Hair all over his body, even in his ears. And the sex is lousy.

KRISTEN

It is?

TERRY

Kristen, the guy's never heard of foreplay. Whenever I tell him he's going too fast, you know what he says? "Maybe you're going too slow." The jerk.

Now there's a nice athletic butt for you.

KRISTEN

It looks like Dave's butt. It is Dave. And Rob.

TERRY

What is their problem? ROB! DAVE!

(ROB and DAVID enter.)

You were supposed to wait for us.

ROB

I got sick of waiting. You were taking too long.

TERRY

(to KRISTEN)

If I had a dollar for every time I heard that...

(ROB, DAVID, TERRY and KRISTEN exit.)

(CARL SR. enters and sits on a bench. ART enters and sits next to CARL SR. Beat.)

ART

Enjoying yourself?

CARL SR.

Pardon me?

ART

Are you enjoying yourself here?

CARL SR.

Oh, yes, yes. I'm having a wonderful time. Just waiting for the kids to come out of that ride. Are you having a good time?

ART

Splendid.

CARL SR.

This place is exactly as I remember it.

ART

You've been to Bisbeeland before?

CARL SR.

Once, when I was a boy. I've always wanted to come back.

ART

Art Bisbee always said he wanted folks to be able to come back to Bisbeeland fifty years later and feel as if not a single day had passed.

CARL SR.

Well, he succeeded. It hasn't changed a bit. Have you been here before?

ART

Oh, I've been here since the very beginning.

CARL SR.

You come here a lot, then?

ART

You might say I never leave.

CARL SR.

My name's Carl, by the way.

ART

Arthur.

CARL SR.

Arthur. Hm. Has anyone ever told you you're a dead ringer for Art Bisbee?

ART

Oh, please.

CARL SR.

Really, the resemblance is uncanny.

ART

A little gray around the edges, maybe, but—

CARL SR.

I mean it. If I didn't know that Art Bisbee's been dead for thirty years, I might think I was talking to the man himself. It's too bad he's no longer with us. We could use more men like him today.

ART

That's very kind.

CARL SR.

I mean, the man started with nothing but the clothes on his back and a dream. For years he struggled, drawing his cartoons in a garage in Kansas City, pestering every movie house in the state to show his films. He went through some hard times, but you never heard him asking for welfare or food stamps. He just gritted his teeth, rolled up his sleeves, and thirty years later he had built an empire. The biggest animation studio in the business, theme parks in California and Florida, not to mention one of the largest companies in the nation. The man was free enterprise made flesh.

ART

He'd be flattered to hear you say so.

CARL SR.

It's no exaggeration. And the thing that I admire the most about the man is that he accomplished all this while appealing to the best of human nature. I mean, nowadays you turn on the TV or go to the movies, and it's "fornication" this and "homosexual" that. Art Bisbee never once sunk to that level. He spoke to everything good and pure in the hearts of Americans. A hundred years from now, nobody's going to remember who these Michael Jackson and Madonna characters are, but the name of Art Bisbee will live forever.

(ART is moved, on the edge of tears.)

Have I upset you?

ART

No, no. Quite the contrary. How do you know so much about him?

CARL SR.

I read a biography about him on the plane. He was quite a man. A bit eccentric toward the end of his life, though. You know, some people say he never really died.

ART

Who says this?

CARL SR.

Lots of people. The story's been floating around for years.

ART

How much, I mean, what have you heard?

CARL SR.

He started having heart problems, so he had himself cryogenically frozen and stored deep beneath Bisbeeland so he could be revived when science found a cure.

ART

It sounds pretty farfetched, don't you think?

CARL SR.

It kind of makes sense if you think about it. After all, if anybody would have had the money and the technology to pull off that kind of scheme, it would have been Art Bisbee. His company's almost as big as the federal government and a heck of a lot better organized. This book said Bisbee was looking into the possibility just before he died, and he had a fear of death that bordered on pathological.

ART

Pathological is an awfully strong word.

CARL SR.

But you have to admit, it takes a pretty big ego to defy the Lord when he calls you home. Even the notion of having yourself frozen like a pork chop is kind of perverse.

ART

Perverse? Imagine yourself in his place. Imagine that you've lived sixty-five years without a single serious complaint when, without warning, your body starts breaking down, piece by piece. Today your kidneys are giving you trouble, tomorrow it's your liver, the day after that you realize you're going deaf in one ear. Then one day you feel a tingling in your left arm and a clutching in your chest. The next thing you know, you're waking up in the hospital, with all your loved ones telling you how lucky you are this time. This time. But what about the next?

So what do you do? If a ride in your amusement park breaks down, you just send in a mechanic and some new parts. Why is a man's body any different?

CARL SR.

I never really looked at it in that way. You have to wonder, though. What if Art Bisbee were still with us? What would he think of Bisbeeland today?

ART

He'd probably find a lot had changed. Not all of it for the better.

CARL SR.

I wonder what he would have had to say about the fairies trying to take over.

ART

You heard?



CARL SR.

It was all over the news. Six months ago they were practically running the place. I mean, not only did they have fairies working here, they were even starting to give benefits to their quote-unquote "partners." But when they started doing those quote-unquote "weddings," that really took the cake.

ART

Oh, you're talking about the homosexuals.

CARL SR.

Of course.

ART

I thought you meant... You see, at Bisbeeland "fairies" are what they call the cartoon characters you see around the park. I thought you were talking about *those* fairies.

CARL SR.

Heavens, no. I've got nothing against them. I love them.

ART

Well, you can rest assured that Art Bisbee would lay down his life before he let fairies of any kind run his enchanted kingdom.

CARL SR.

That's a relief.

Hm. I need more sunscreen.

(CARL SR. rummages through his bag, taking things out and setting them on the bench beside him.)

ART

Excuse me, what's this?

CARL SR.

Mini cassette recorder. Neat little thing. Don't you think?

ART

What is it you record?

CARL SR.

Oh, you know, the, um, just the songs they play on the rides, things like that.

ART

You do realize all the music is available on cassette and compact disc in the stores.

CARL SR.

I thought I'd just save a few dollars, you know.

ART

Believe me, it's not worth it. You miss all the fun trying to get these things to work, and the sound quality is always really terrible. It's also a violation of copyright law.

CARL SR.

I'm sorry, do you work here?

ART

I help keep an eye on things.

CARL SR.

Oh, I see. You're sort of an undercover security type.

ART

No, really, I'm just the fellow who makes sure everybody's happy. Let me just show you a storage locker where you can—

CARL SR.

Please, let me keep this.

ART

Don't worry, you're not in trouble. Just follow me, and—

CARL SR.

Please, I... I lied. I'm not recording your music, I swear. I'm... I could lose my children.

ART

I don't understand.

CARL SR.

You see, I got divorced not too long ago and the custody hearings are coming up. Sir, I love my kids. If I want to keep them, I'll have to prove that I'm a good father. It won't be easy. There are problems. Such as the drinking. Which I am recovering from, incidentally, but still... I'll need things like father's day cards, photographs of myself and the children happy together. And, just to be safe, candid statements on tape.

I must sound like Richard Nixon.

ART

I know Dick Nixon. He's a wonderful man.

CARL SR.

I mean, Watergate and all.

ART

Watergate?

CARL SR.

You know, when he wiretapped people, recorded conversations...

ART

When was this?

CARL SR.

1972. When he was running for re-election.

ART

For vice-president?

CARL SR.

No. President.

ART

You don't say. I must have slept right through that one. Well, as long as you promise not to record any copyrighted material, I could look the other way, just this once.

CARL SR.

Cross my heart. Thank you so much.