

PERUSAL SCRIPT

FAIRYANA

A Radio Play

by

Eric Samuelson

(Episode 8 in the Plan-B Theatre Company RADIO WEST SERIES)



Newport, Maine

© 2013 by Eric Samuelsen
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION:
Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that

FAIRYANA

being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States Of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion Of Canada, and the other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to royalty. Anyone presenting the play without the express written permission of the Copyright owners and/or their authorized agent will be liable to the penalties provided by law.

Script and music copies must be rented from the Publisher and Royalty must be paid to the publisher for each and every performance before an audience whether or not admission is charged. A performance license must first be obtained from the publisher prior to any performance(s).

Federal Copyright Law -- 17 U.S.C. section 504 -- allows for a recovery of a minimum of \$250 and a maximum of \$50,000 *for each infringement*, plus attorney fees.

The professional and amateur rights to the performance of this play along with the lecturing, recitation, and public reading rights, are administered exclusively through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be made. For all other rights, inquiries may be made to the authors through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS. Any adaptation or arrangement of this work without the author's written permission is an infringement of copyright. **Unauthorized duplication by any means is also an infringement.**

FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE RIGHTS YOU MUST APPLY TO THE PUBLISHER OR YOU ARE BREAKING THE LAW!

The possession of this PERUSAL SCRIPT, does not constitute permission to perform the work herein contained, in public or in private, for gain or charity. Proper prior application must be made, license granted and royalty paid before a performance may be given. Copies of this SCRIPT and all other rehearsal materials may be rented from:

LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS
P.O. Box 536 Newport, ME 04953-0536
www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com
Printed in the United States Of America

THIS NOTICE MUST APPEAR IN ALL PROGRAMS, ON ALL POSTERS AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS AND INTERNET ADVERTISING/WEBPAGES FOR THE PLAY:

"Fair yana' is presented through special arrangement with Leicester Bay Theatricals. All authorized materials are also supplied by LBT, www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com"

NOTE: Your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals limits you to making copies of this document for persons directly connected with your production. Do not distribute outside of your cast and crew. Following your performance run you must destroy all photocopies, preferably by shredding them. If we sent you the document in printed format, you must return that document to us. If we provided you with an electronic PDF file, simply trash that on your computer so that it cannot be recovered. The electronic document may only be on ONE computer -- it may NOT be duplicated. This is also a part of your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals.

“Eric Samuelsen’s RADIO HOUR EPISODE 8: FAIRYANA received its world premiere at Plan-B Theatre Company December 3, 2013. The creative team: *Cheryl Ann Cluff* (sound), *David Evanoff* (original music), *Michael Scott Johnson* (live foley), *Jesse Portillo* (lighting), *Randy Rasmussen* (set) and *Eric Robinette* (sound engineer). It was stage managed by *Jennifer Freed* and directed by *Cheryl Ann Cluff*.

Jay Perry as Wilby/ Director/ Stan/ Guido

Teresa Sanderson as Viv/ Princess Amber

Jason Tatom as Silby/ Max/ Announcer.

RADIO HOUR EPISODE 8: FAIRYANA was also broadcast live on KUER FM-90’s RadioWest on December 3, 2013 and rebroadcast on December 4, 2013.

CHARACTERS

VIV: An alcoholic

STAN: A hypochondriac

MAX: Their boss

PLACE: “The Magical Land of Fairyana” – a children’s television show

TIME: Between Halloween and Christmas

FAIRYANA a radio play by Eric Samuelsen RADIO HOUR Episode 8 in the Plan-B Theatre Company RADIO WEST SERIES 2m 1w play 7m 2w. (53 minutes) It's a dark, funny story of three misanthropic, alcoholic writers of a sickeningly sweet children's television show. They're pulling out all the stops for the Christmas special, which means resurrecting Snoogums, a character so villainous, he possesses his creator. What better time to rethink cute and cuddly than the holidays? RADIO HOUR is a co-production between Salt Lake City’s Plan-B Theatre Company and the University of Utah’s Public Radio station KUER. A story for Christmas. **ORDER #3240**

Eric Samuelsen taught at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio before joining the faculty at Brigham Young University in 1992. He became head of the Playwriting program at BYU in 1999. He has also taught as an adjunct faculty member in the Religion department. He retired from BYU in 2012.

As a playwright, Samuelsen has had twenty-seven plays professionally produced in Utah, Indiana, Louisiana, New York, and California. Some of his plays include *Gadianton*, which has seen three professional productions across the country, *A Love Affair with Electrons*, *Family*, *The Plan*, and *The Way We're Wired*. He is resident playwright at Plan-B Theatre Company in Salt Lake City, who designated their 2013-14 season a 'Season of Eric, including productions of six of his plays.

He is a member of the Playwrights' Circle, and the Dramatists Guild. He is three-time winner of the Annual Award in Playwriting offered by the Association for Mormon Letters (AML) and he became president of AML in 2007. In 2013 the organization awarded him the Smith Pettit Award for his lifetime work as a playwright.

He has been a staff writer for the on-line satirical magazine *The Sugarbeet*. He was also featured in the book *Conversations with Mormon Authors*, edited by Chris Bigelow. He is a noted Ibsen translator, and has also published scholarly articles on 19th and 20th century Scandanavian Theatre, and more recently, on LDS drama and film. He blogged at *Mormoniconoclast.com*. Eric died in September of 2019 after a long battle with polymyositis. This has left a huge hole in the Theatre Community within, and outside of, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

FAIRYANA

SCENE ONE: THE WRITER'S ROOM

(SFX: A brook burbling, happy birds chirping, the cheerful croaking of a frog.)

PRINCESS AMBER: My dear friends! Silby! Wilby! It looks like the end of another wonderful adventure!

SILBY: *(A frog.)* Ribbit!

WILBY: *(A bunny.)* I wuv you Princess Amber.

AMBER: I love you too, Wilby!

(SFX: Cheerful, happy, meadow music.)

ANNOUNCER: And as the sun streaks the meadow with gold, as little crickets sing their evening songs and spiders weave their evening webs, we say goodbye to our friends in The Magical World of Fairyana! Until next week, may your every dream be enchanted.

DIRECTOR: And that's a wrap.

(SFX: Backstage bustle.)

MAX: *(Narration.)* Two weeks in, I could tell Fairyana was a nightmare gig.

(SFX: Film noir music which accompanies all Narration throughout.)

I'd come over from Homicide, three years dredging out that cess pool of corruption and pain. Homicide Twins, to be exact, the thirteen year old girl detectives Twinkles and Topsy, solving crimes with the help of their parrot friend, Pierre. Topsy was a pro. I got nothin' bad to say about Topsy, a tough little broad from the mean streets of Compton, twenty six and still playin' a kid, fourteen years of chafed boobs and skin peels. But Twinkles, she was my heart attack, liver disease and stroke. She had a dragon lady Mom and a junky Dad, and she wanted it all, the singing career and the nude scenes and the paparazzi rush. All those scotch on the rocks days, and nights dreaming of violent death; when my transfer came through, I thought it meant salvation.

(SFX: Door knock.)

MAX: *(Narration.)* Instead, it meant the Princess from hell.

(Raising his voice.)

It's open.

(SFX: Door opens.)

PRINCESS AMBER: Malcolm! You hoo, Producer man!

MAX: It's Max. The name's Max.

PRINCESS AMBER: *(Giggling.)* Silly me.

MAX: *(Narration.)* Princess Amber. Fairyana meant Amber. And Amber meant . . . cute.

PRINCESS AMBER: I am so very thrilled to have you on our Fairyana team! Welcome to our new special 'pecial friend!

MAX: Back atcha.

PRINCESS AMBER: 'Cause I just know how important it is, to have someone wonderful working with our dear little writer friends. And maybe you could have a little talk-talk with them.

(Sudden steel.)

And let them know their Princess is not happy. And when Amber isn't happy . . .

MAX: Gotcha.

PRINCESS: Good. Ratings have flat-lined, and Christmas is coming. I want a new story line, leading into it, out of it, with a ratings bump I can taste. I want a special at the Charlie Brown/ Rudolf level. I wanna bump off the Grinch. Got it?

MAX: Got it.

PRINCESS: Long as we're on the same page.

(Cheery laugh)

Good! I'm so glad we had this little wittle chatty-chat. Malcolm. And welcome to Fairyana!

(SFX: Footsteps as she exits.)

MAX: *(Shouting after her.)* It's Max.

(Narration.)

And she was gone. But her message was clear. Children's television is about numbers. Good Nielsen numbers, or they find your body in some Burbank dumpster, two bullet holes and no clues at all. I needed to talk to the writers.

(SFX: Door opens.)

Hey.

VIV: Hey.

MAX: The Fairyana writers' room. All pinks and blues, cartoons of Wilby and Silby and Buzzy the Bee, cheerful, like the bedroom of a nine-year old girl. Stan, associate writer, sat by the door, checking his BP. Maybe forty, maybe sixty, a man who life defeated years ago, hangin' on like a death row inmate waiting for the governor's reprieve. Stan.

STAN: Max.

MAX: And Viv, chain-smokin' alcoholic like everyone in children's television, but Viv, you look at her, you know, she's different, she's tougher, meaner. More talented, and therefore, closer to knowing that the secret to life is death. Viv.

VIV: Max.

MAX: And me. Their boss, officially, which means, first to get fired. Stan. You okay?

(SFX: Blood pressure cuff sounds.)

STAN: Viv, you got any more of that Prilosec? Tums? Bromo?

VIV: Sorry.

MAX: Where are we? Anyplace? At all?

(SFX: Phone rings.)

VIV: Hold that thought. Yeah? Yeah?

(Long coughing fit, then.)

Yeah? Yeah, okay.

(SFX: Phone hang-up.)

I'm gonna have to leave early, make bail

MAX: Again, Carl?

STAN: You should dump that guy.

VIV: Yeah, I dunno. My age, I figure, it's a guy. He's interested. So whaddya gonna do?

MAX: So whatta we got? Viv? You wrote it, you wanna read?

VIV: Sure.

(With no expression whatsoever.)

Princess Amber look! If it isn't my special-pecial bitty widdy bestest bee friend Busby. Busby buzz buzz buzz. Amber What's that you say? Wilby and Silby? Oh no! Busby buzz buzz buzz. Amber But that's terrible. We have to do something! Busby buzz buzz buzz.

STAN: So we're stuck. Buzz buzz buzz.

MAX: So. Busby the bee has told her something. Some terrible thing. . .

STAN: I don't even got a pulse. You wanna drop me off, like to Emergency, Viv? I don't think I should be drivin'. **VIV:** Yeah, okay.

MAX: Guys. Busby the bee. Cliff hanger time. Teaser. Whaddawe got?

VIV: We know it's the cliff hanger.

STAN: Honest we got Busby and not much else.

MAX: Well, not to add to your woes.

(Ad lib moans.)

Not only is it the cliff hanger, it's gotta lead in to Christmas.

(Ad lib more moans.)

That's what we're dealin' with here. I just met with herself. She wants a special. She wants Holiday Spirit. She wants Santy Clause and mangers out the wazoo.

VIV: It's October.

MAX: And our Princess wants a lead-in.

STAN: It ain't possible, Max. We got Busby the bee, someone's in trouble, we can maybe spin it out three weeks. Four tops. That don't even get us to Thanksgiving.

MAX: Step at a time, Stan. Busby the bee, someone in trouble . . .

VIV: Which we gotta write.

MAX: It's a teaser. We just gotta tease.

STAN: And string it out. And get it to December. What day's Christmas this year?

VIV: Stan . . .

VIV: It's the eighteenth this year. They moved it back a week, specially for us.

STAN: Why would they do that?

MAX: It's the twenny fifth! It's always the twenny fifth!

STAN: That late . . .

VIV: Look, we just tease, we can work out details next week.

MAX: And we tease with . . . ? With stayin' power? Pirates?

STAN: We done pirates.

VIV: Eight times we did pirates.

STAN: Before and after eacha them movies.

VIV: How much do I hate Johnny Depp. He was here right now, I'd shoot him in the face.

STAN: We're kinda pirated out.

MAX: Indians?

VIV: Done it. Both kinds Geronimo-type and like Patel. With the curry.

MAX: Evil wizards?

STAN: So many times.

MAX: Witches?

VIV: Over and over and over—

MAX: Space aliens?

STAN: Yeah, I don't know. Not so much in the Fairyana world, you know?

MAX: *(Narration.)* And this is the basic problem with the Fairyana universe. Drama is conflict, and our preferred demographic is four to seven—not completely done with the bedwettin'. Gotta be threatening, can't be too scary. Villains. Our biggest challenge. Our biggest opportunity.

STAN: Prince, turned to a frog. Huh? Huh? How many fairy tales a prince, turned to a frog. Kissed by the princess, a little CGI, little magical fairy dust, you got your happy ending and we can do somethin' with a Christmas frog.

VIV: We already said Wilby and Silby.

MAX: So what's the problem?

VIV: Silby's a frog.

MAX: I know Silby's a frog, what I don't get is how is that a problem.

VIV: We can't change Silby to a frog. Silby's already a frog. And we can't change Wilby to a frog onnacounta then you got two frogs.

STAN: We met our frog quota.

VIV: Met and exceeded.

STAN: So no to the world a amphibians.

MAX: Ixnay on the prince and frog.

(Narration.)

And then everything changed forever. And everything that come after, kidnappings and beatings and gunshots and death, it all came from this one brief moment of clarity.

(Back to them.)

Guys. Think. Back in the history of the show, go back two, three years. And I know stuff happened that maybe wasn't so healthy what with studio fires and fisticuffs in the hallways. The thing with the ice pick. The cross-bow. Still, one of the most popular ever—

VIV: Don't go there, I'm telling you, you do not want to go where I think—

MAX: Most cuddly villain ever.

STAN: I'm in terrible pain here—

MAX: Snoogums.

(Long horrified silence)

Who was once one-a Santa's favorite elves.

(SFX: Mournful sax music.)

Huh? Huh? Bet if we checked with props, they still got the puppet.

VIV: We're not writing Snoogums.

MAX: You got no ideas, it's an idea.

VIV: I got a boyfriend, he's got a gun . . .

MAX: Snoogums could be our salvation here!

VIV: Look at me. Listen.

MAX: *(Narration.)* And Viv looked at me with the intensity that comes from a completely pure place truth.

VIV: It's nearly five o'clock on a Friday. I leave here, I'm bailing Carl out of jail, I'm going home, and I'm going to drink. Stoli and OJ, for the vitamins. Tonight, all day Saturday, all day Sunday, I'm trying to kill off every brain cell that remembers what I do for a living. But. Sunday night, or maybe early Monday morning, I will stop. Because I'm going to walk in the door Monday morning, like I do every Monday morning. And I will write, with your help, Stan, and you know I appreciate it, but still, I will write another week's worth of The Magical Land of Fairyana. Because I am a professional, and that is what a professional does. But I will not, I WILL NOT, write Snoogums. Not after last time I got that much self-respect. I will write Princess Amber, a forty one year old woman who looks fourteen and talks like she's four. And I will write Busby the bee and Baa Baa the lamb and Snooty Hooty the Owl. But I will not write Snoogums. I don't care if he's Santa's elf. I don't care if he solves all our problems. A professional draws a line somewhere, and that's where I draw mine.

MAX: *(Narration.)* And looking at her, the intensity in her eyes, the trembling of her hands, I knew two things. First, she meant it. She was afraid of Snoogums. And second. It was the right thing to do for the show. I was right. Snoogums was perfect.

STAN: The desperation on Viv's face . . .

MAX: *(Narration.)* They knew. I knew they knew, and they knew I knew they knew. Stan folded first, gave in to the inevitable logic of Snoogums. Viv never did agree to it, per se. But you could tell, that little elf, with the one tooth and the tiny scarf and the big brown eyes, he took root, even in her, crowded out all the other possibilities. She finally agreed by not agreeing, but by goin' to bail out her boyfriend. Next morning, I spent with lawyers and with herself, Princess Amber. Leaving Stan and Viv alone in the writer's room.

STAN: So. Hey Viv. How's it goin'? You have a good weekend, huh? Boy, I sure did. Productive, you know?

VIV: Noisy in here.

STAN : You guys do anything in particular? See a movie, or . . . you know. Somethin' fun, ballgame. Concert . . . So my blood pressure 160 over 110, I'm lucky to be alive.

VIV: Couldn't even refill the coffee.

STAN: And they was gonna admit me? For observation? And I wouldn't let 'em, because, you know, I had work to do, I had a whole episode I needed to make a start on. Which I done. 'Cause you know, that's what we do in this business, pick each other up, pick up the slack

VIV: Pick up the slack, now allasudden I'm slack he has to pick up for--.

STAN: I mean, any job there's parts some people don't mind so much and parts some people just can't, you know do. So we help. Each other. Out. Like friends.

VIV: Friends, allasudden we're friends.

STAN: And the whole time, I'm thinkin' Viv and Carl, I bet they're having a real nice weekend together and all. Maybe the beach, or, or maybe they went up to Mammoth, it's real nice up there. 'Cause Viv, I'm thinkin', that Viv, she deserves it. Her and Carl. How is Carl?

VIV: He was gonna kill you this morning.

STAN: *(Chuckling weakly.)* Yeah huh.

VIV: Worked it all out which gun, what kinda ammo.

STAN: Mmm.

VIV: I, I talked him out of it. Me.

STAN: Oh. Well. 'Preciate the uh . . .

VIV: So proolly this afternoon instead.

STAN: (*Chuckles weakly.*) See, that's the Viv I know, with the jokes and the—

VIV: What I told him kill a guy in the morning, ruins your whole day. You gotta hide the body, worry about the smell, takes you right outa your routine. Do it, five, six in the PM, you'd be getting off work anyway, you dump the body off of the Santa Monica pier, still have time to work on your alibi. Try and fall close to the car. When he shoots. Carl, that back of his, way easier if he can just stick you in the trunk, and be on his way. Best of all, fall in the trunk.

STAN: It's not like you had any ideas! It's not like you had a villain and a storyline and a a a a—!

VIV: We coulda done space aliens! We coulda done Hare Krishnas! What with Wilby bein' a bunny, so Hare-y Krishnas? Right? Coulda maybe done something real fun with that!

STAN: Hare-y Krishnas don't get us to Christmas!

VIV: We coulda done Christmas multi-cultural!

STAN: You didn't say Hare-y Krishnas. You said zombies! Vampires! A happy vampire Christmas, you said, and it sounded like ya meant it! You didn't say one word about—

VIV: REAL noisy in here.

STAN: Evil wizards! Again with the evil wizards!

VIV: And you said yes to Snoogums.

MAX: (*Narration.*) That quiet venom, fierce, like a snakebite. Gotta tell ya, it was hard comin' in the door.

(*SFX: Door opens.*)

Good news. They still got the puppet, we're good to go.

VIV: (*Growls under her breath.*)

MAX: Hope we spent the weekend with our thinkin' caps on.

STAN: (*Very proud.*) I got four pages.

MAX: Four pages, Stan. I'm in awe.

STAN: Worked the whole weekend. Blood pressure like I shoulda had a stroke, but, you know, work don't wait for excuses.

MAX: Truer words . . .

VIV: (*Snarls.*)

STAN: Even printed it off, I know you like to read hard copy, so there you go.

(*SFX: Rustling papers exchange hands.*)

MAX: Well, what can I say, Stan, you're a hero, my granddaughter's first child will bear your name. And sick as a dog to boot.

(*SFX: A fax machine.*)

And here it is, the Snoogums agreement, legal document, we're bound by its provisions. To wit Party of the first part, that's Amber, Amber agrees, per employee contract blah blah blah, skipping, skipping, here.

(*SFX: Paper rustling.*)

Princess Amber agrees to A) interact verbally with puppet character Snoogums, B) she agrees to make physical contact with puppet, with such contact limited to four interactions per episode, each touch no

more than two seconds. C) she will touch it on the top of the head, under the chin, on the bridge of the nose but not the tip. She will not touch the main body of the puppet, the backside, the arms, the hands, the mouth, the tongue, or the groinal area in any way. AND BUT here's the money shot, She will also D), agree, once per episode, to punch the puppet lightly on the shoulder in a jocular manner.

STAN: So we get five touches?

MAX: Four, plus the jocular punch.

STAN: So that's five.

MAX: My reading of this is five. I'll have to clear it with our attorneys, but I think there's a clear suggestion that the jocular punch is in addition to.

STAN: 'Cause I have three touches already.

MAX: In four pages?

STAN: Well, I didn't know! How could I know! We just got this!

MAX: But you could have anticipated! You coulda given some thought to who oh never mind. Stan, come on, we're four minutes in and you've already used up our touches!

VIV: But she'll punch it?

MAX: Lightly. In a jocular manner.

VIV: (*Almost losing it.*) Will she or won't she punch the puppet?

MAX: This is children's television. We cannot, cannot do violence to Snoogums.

VIV: But to the puppet only, right? Other acts of violence, possibly even leading to death or serious injury, other acts of violence—Like maybe like coworkers?

STAN: (*Nervously whinnying.*) There you go, Viv, always kiddin' around.

MAX: Viv, come on. Amber can't beat up Santa's favorite elf.

VIV: (*Snarls.*)

MAX: And yes. So. We got Snoogums.

STAN: So maybe we start off, we look at my four pages.

MAX: Which is definitely the first order of business.

(*SFX: Rustling papers. Pause.*)

STAN: Took me most the weekend.

MAX: And does it show.

STAN: Sittin' in emergency, heart monitor beeping, still there I am, writing away.

MAX: It's got that feel. Sense of urgency.

STAN: I mean, it's maybe a direction.

MAX: Absotively.

STAN: So.

(*SFX: More rustling papers.*)

MAX: Stan, what can I say. Chekhov, Shakespeare, that broad who wrote Barney, couldn'ta none of 'em done better. And over the weekend too, you're a God amidst mere mortals.

STAN: Well, I'm glad you, uh—

MAX: If I could just, you know, not even a quibble per se, but more like a question, just 'cause we got us a multi-year history with Snoogums and we wanna make sure we're consistent, but he don't got a secret hideaway. So he can't be hidin' Wilby and Silby there.

STAN: Well, I was thinkin,' and I know it'd mean a new set, but I had some ideas on how—

MAX: New set, yeah, this show's made a money, no problem, just abra cadaver and whoosh, new sets.

STAN: I just—

MAX: Movin' on, and again this ain't so much a criticism as a comment, but Snoogums also can't fly. Or drive a boat. Or jet ski. Alla which you got him doin' in your four pages. And we also gotta cut the kidnapping, the ransom, the gold fairy dust and the wand.

STAN: But that's like the whole—

MAX: But you formatted it proper. Give you credit for some excellent formatting. First rate spelling and grammar. And I can't say enough about your font.

STAN: Well, okay, so maybe there's a few—

MAX: So they're shooting the cliff-hanger even as we speak. We're committed. Busby the bee has spoke Wilby and Silby are in trouble 'cause a Snoogums. Script deadline this Thursday. Whaddawe got?

VIV: Four pages.

MAX: Right. Exactly. Four pages. Formatted proper. Otherwise, and I honor your sacrifice in writing it, but not so much useable.

STAN: I was writing in the hospital. BP so high, the nurses were placin' bets on when I'd blow.

MAX: Posilutely.

STAN: So I don't maybe remember Snoogums so good. The dengue fever, maybe I got him confused.

MAX: Good a explanation as there is.

STAN: So, so so, if he don't kidnap and he don't want ransom, and he's the villain. What does he want?

MAX: Excellent question. What does Snoogums want? What drives him, what motivates his villain-ness.

(Narration.)

And we all turned to Viv. And she knew the answer, and we knew she knew, and she knew we knew she knew, and she hated herself for knowing, and the silence lasted forever.

VIV: Yummy yum yums.

MAX: What was that Viv, I didn't quite catch it?

VIV: Yummy yum yums.

MAX: Once again, if you wouldn't mind, we're talkin' crucial information here and I want to be sure we all

VIV: Yummy. Yum. Yums.

MAX: Yummy yum yums. And what does Snoogums say, what line of dialogue accompanies his desire for

VIV: Snoogie oogums want yummy yum yums.

MAX: Snoogie oogums want yummy yum yums! Or?

VIV: Or . . .

(Long horrible defeated pause.)

Or biddy bye bye Wilby and Silby. Can I go home now?

MAX: We just got started.

VIV: Stan, you got this now?

MAX: It's ten thirty-five in the AM, Viv, we—

VIV: Family emergency, urgent, can't wait. I just, I just, I . . . 'bye.

(SFX: Door opens, feet running.)

MAX: Huh.

STAN: Uh. You know, Max. I'm not feelin' so good myself . . .

SCENE TWO: MOTIVATIN' VIV

MAX: And for three days, we didn't see her. She had sick days saved up, which didn't worry me. What did worry me is The Magical Land of Fairyana that wasn't getting' writ. I kept thinkin' Viv, she was a pro, she'd come through. And hearin' from Amber every other day.

(SFX: Answering machine beep.)

PRINCESS AMBER: Marvin, dear. This is your Princess speaking. We've been hearing these teensy weensy little rumors about your floor. About possibly some writer's maybe having issues about the direction of the show? 'Cause if so, he's an elf. Santa's favorite elf. And, and I need script. I need it soon. And I'm not interested in excuses. Get it done, or you're fired!

(Pause.)

Love 'ya!

(SFX: Answering machine finishing, door opening, footsteps entering.)

MAX: It's Max!!!

STAN: Max?

MAX: She here?

STAN: Haven't seen her.

MAX: No?

STAN: So.

MAX: She's dealing with something personal. Female troubles, I'm maybe thinkin'. All them female mysterious type deals. Menstruation or the like.

STAN: Do we . . . ?

MAX: Is why she didn't wanna say.

STAN: Uhhmm.

MAX: Or she'd be here. One thing you gotta say about ol' Viv, she's a pro.

STAN: Thing is though.

MAX: Spit it out Stan.

STAN: Could be. You know? That she didn't so much wanna work on Snoogums.

MAX: Give me your hand.

STAN: How come?

MAX: Just come on, give me your hand.

(SFX: Slap.)

STAN: Ow!

MAX: You tellin' me you didn't deserve that?

STAN: You hit me!

MAX: You tellin' me that wasn't called for?

STAN: I got very delicate capillaries!

MAX: All the better to teach you, am I right?

STAN: I gotta type with that hand! It's Thursday morning, and all we got is four pages and I gotta type with the hand you just hit!

MAX: We don't got four pages. We got zero pages. We got "Snoogie oogums want yummy yum yums." That's all we got.

STAN: Well, yeah, but we could also maybe use some a the stuff I—

MAX: We got bupkus. We got you and your injured hand, and four pages you copied from some comic book. We got zippity doo dah, and Viv off bein' female.

STAN: We don't know that she's—

MAX: You don't understand maybe the magnitude of the emergency we're facin' here.

STAN: Slap me in the hand . . .

MAX: Princess Amber called.

STAN: Rob me of my dignity—

MAX: Amber. All marshmallow fluff, and then out come the teeth.

STAN: So that's bad.

MAX: Saw it once with Twinkles. The forgot lines. The pauses. The studio audience of six year olds she was fillin' up with sugar.

STAN: So it's bad.

MAX: Which is why the story is, the official story we're tellin', the only story that ever ever ever gets told, is Viv is sick. Right? Nothin' about maybe certain writers not likin' certain puppets. Amber don't gotta know that, capiche?

STAN: So. Whadda we do?

MAX: The only thing we can do. Make a phone call.

STAN: You called Guido.

MAX: We got an emergency, I got a brother-in-law with connections.

STAN: Max, I'm not sure that—

MAX: I call Guido, he called Vinnie and Gus, they call whoever other goombas, we got four black limosines heading to her apartment.

(SFX: Car brakes screeching.)

STAN: Oh, man. Some kinda disturbance type deal.

MAX: Viv?

STAN: No, a guy.

(SFX: A guy getting beaten up, thuds, groans.)

MAX: Carl.

STAN: Oh, man, that's gotta hurt, brass knuckles, ooo, a taser. Boy, he's sure not goin' down though. Ooo, gosh, you hate to see that.

(SFX: Door flung open, woman enters.)

MAX: Viv, how you doin'?

VIV: Call 'em off! Call 'em off!

MAX: You know how to make it stop. Don't you Viv? Don't you?

VIV: You . . . you.

MAX: Very simple equation. Viv loves Carl. We have Carl. So you, you write Snoogums.

VIV: I can't can't uh need need need uh uh uh uh

(SFX: Unscrewing a bottle.)

MAX: Viv?

VIV: I'm here, I'm workin'.

(SFX: Shaky hands pouring a liquid into a glass.)

STAN: Viv, um, maybe you shouldn't . . .

MAX: If she needs it, I don't see nothing and neither do you.

STAN: But, Max. Come on. She's not in no shape to—

MAX: She's fine.

VIV: Where . . .

(Swallows hard.)

Where they takin' Carl

MAX: He's fine, Viv, he'll stay fine, long as we get pages. This is just a gentle reminder slash suggestion type deal.

VIV: They they they they . . .

MAX: Can't make an omelet without breaking eggs.

VIV: They told me, Guido and those guys, they said they'd shoot him right in front of me . . .

MAX: Viv. Amber needs script.

VIV: Plus our dog. Plus our neighbor's dog.

MAX: We need it wrote today.

VIV: They said . . . they said . . .

MAX: We need you to write Snoogums. We need it now.

STAN: Max. Look at her!

MAX: Viv.

(SFX: Fingers snapping.)

Listen to me. You listenin'? You ever want to see Carl again, ever again in this life, we need you to do this. We need you to do this now.

STAN: Max . . .

VIV: Stan. Real sweet a you. But I know the score.

MAX: You know the score, but can you suit up and play?

VIV: I can do this.

MAX: *(Narration.)* And then we watched her. Sittin' up, eyes rolled back in her head. Like Linda Blair in that exercise movie. Possessed, like.

VIV: *(As SNOOGUMS.)* Snoogums Snoogie oogums want yummy yum yums. Amber But Snoogums, where are my friendly friend friends. I miss Wilby. I miss Silby.

MAX: Stan! Get this down.

(SFX: Typing.)

VIV: Snoogums Snoogie oogums need yummy yum yums. Snoogie oogums ask Wilby and Silby, they no have yummy yum yums for Snoogie oogums. Snoogums sad. Amber I was afraid of that. Snoogums, dear. When you get sad, sometimes bad things can happen. Snoogums Snoogie oogums sad.

(SFX: Swigging whiskey.)

Snoogie oogums sorry. Amber did they go with you somewhere? Snoogums they go with Snoogie oogums. Amber The rainy wainy forest?

MAX: Rain forest set! Stat!

VIV: Snoogums Snoogie oogums no like rainy wainy forest. Amber I don't like it either. Snoogums Snoogie oogums like North Pole. Snoogie Oogums miss . . . Santa. Snoogie oogums want to go ho ho home.

STAN: That with two ho's or three?

MAX: Write!

VIV: Amber But maybe we could go find them together. Wilby and Silby and Santa Clause too! Maybe we could make it a fairyland adventure! Snoogums You a friend to Snoogie oogums? And Amber gives Snoogums a jocular light punch on the arm.

MAX: *(Narrator.)* And that's how it went, day after day. Viv's writing sharp as a switchblade. Our audience at Fairyana ain't maybe the most sophisticated, but a five year old with a laptop can chat on a fansite. Long as we had Carl, we was in clover city. And Carl wasn't goin' nowhere.

(On phone.)

No kiddin'? Almost made it out the window, huh? But you had it covered, right, Guido? In the knees? And the ankles? AND Achilles tendons?

(Listens, laughs.)

Oh, Guido, you do my heart good!

(Chuckles.)

Yeah, anyway, busy day here too, talk to ya later.

(SFX: Phone hanging up.)

Good times.

STAN: Sure.

MAX: There's God in his heaven and all's right in the world. And divine justice smitin' the wicked.

STAN: You think?

MAX: I know. Good over evil, Stan. That's what this town is built on. Good over evil.

STAN: 93.2.? That can't be my temperature.

MAX: Thursday morning, Stanley. And we don't got a script yet. And we shoot tomorrow. And Amber makin' threats. And yet, you see me. You see me, my feet on the table, not a worry in the world. How do you explain it, Stan?

STAN: The way they pump up the AC in here . . .

MAX: A mystery? A conundrum? A perplexity?

STAN: Corpses in the morgue got a higher temp than this—.

MAX: Or a man. With a plan.

STAN: Can't even move my arm,

MAX: A proven plan. A successful plan.

STAN: Rigor mortis—? Is that a thing you can get?

MAX: A bonus-clause-in-the-producer's-contract-just-kicked-in sort of plan. A Republican in the White House sort of plan.

(SFX: Phone beep.)

You hear that? Text message from Guido. Viv comin' in the south entrance . Carl secured. Amber, waitin' in her trailer, her beady eyes affixed to her clock. Set crew on standby. What's that line? 'I just love it when a plan comes together.'

(Narration.)

And it was true. Deadlines didn't matter no more. We'd learned that just turn her on and the show'd get writ. 'Course, she didn't look so much like Viv no more, what with the trembly hands and delirium tremens. The little scarf, and the one tooth stickin' out. And lickin' that candy cane twenny-four seven.

Didn't matter. More she looked like Snoogums, better she could write him.

STAN: Viv. Hey.

VIV: Hello Stanley.

MAX: Viv, right on time. So glad you could make it this fine AM.

VIV: Yeah.

MAX: Once again, our apologies to Carl. What it's worth, he's alive, he's healthy, he misses you, the bleedin's stopped and he didn't need all them toes after all.

STAN: I I I I was thinkin' how we just about played this one out, this storyline.

MAX: Or not.

STAN: No. Right. But we've never really done this before. Five whole weeks on a single villain.

MAX: I think it's still got some juice. All the way to Yuletide?

VIV: I can't hold out much longer, I don't think.

MAX: You say that, Viv. You say that, but I dunno. Intestinal fortitude's basically your middle name, been my experience witchoo.

VIV: I don't know. I not feel so very goody woody.

STAN: Viv?

VIV: I about to barfy warfy.

STAN: She's not well, Max.

MAX: Seems fine to me.

STAN: Max!

MAX: So okay, we finish out this week and we see where we are.

VIV: Ah. So I uh uh uh uh uh think they'll want us to continue um um um the current story thread. Upstairs. Till till till till . . . Christmas . . .

MAX: Hey, buncha suits never set foot in a television studio, trust me, I can deal with anything them goombas . . .

VIV: Because I I I I think that maybe that's a problem. Because, uh, if the ratings have improved, and it's um attributed to um um um our current direction. They'd want more of them. And I can't. I I I I can't. I I I I . . .

STAN: Viv, if you want, I can take over for awhile. Be the main writer. Long as you want.

VIV: Oh, Stan. That's so sweet of you. So very very sweet. Sweetie weetie weetie weetie. But I just don't, I I I I just don't think . . .

STAN: Max, come on. Look at her.

10 more pages of script to the end