

Dullsville

A Play for Children Ages 9-12

by

Alan David Perkins

CHARACTERS
(in order of appearance)

QUEEN - Female. The Queen of Dellsville.
TEACHER - Male or Female.
DEBORAH - Female. Princess of Dellsville.
DEIDRE - Female. Princess of Dellsville.
DIANA - Female. Princess of Dellsville.
SIR REX - Male. The Knight of Dellsville.
KING DELBERT - Male. The King of Dellsville.
ADVISOR 1 - Male or Female. King Delbert's advisor.
ADVISOR 2 - Male or Female. King Delbert's advisor.
JESTER - Male or Female. The Jester of Dellsville.
FARMER - Male or Female. A farmer in Dellsville.
CARPENTER - Male or Female. A carpenter in Dellsville.
ACCOUNTANT - Male or Female. Dellsville's Royal
accountant.
TOUR GUIDE - Male or Female.
TOURIST 1 - Male or Female.
TOURIST 2 - Male or Female.
SIR PHIL - Male. The Knight of Jilliansville.
QUEEN JILL - Female. The Queen of Jilliansville.
JILL'S ADVISOR 1 - Male or Female. Queen Jill's advisor.
JILL'S ADVISOR 2 - Male or Female. Queen Jill's advisor.

REQUIREMENTS

Required are three sets: The Throne Room of King Delbert, which should be sparse and plain, containing nothing more than a wooden chair for a throne; the classroom, which should have three desks; and the Princess's bedroom, which does not require any furniture.

QUEEN

Once upon a time, or so it always starts, there was a kingdom ... which should be no surprise to anyone. This kingdom was named Dellsville, after it's founder, King Delbert the First. The people of Dellsville lived happy and prosperous lives. Above all, they valued education.

(The TEACHER enters.)

TEACHER

Students! Break time is over. We must continue our studies.

(DEBORAH and DEIDRE enter, carrying their books.)

DEBORAH

I hope we're not late, teacher.

DEIDRE

We were working on that last math problem you gave us. I think we've got it this time.

TEACHER

And where is Dianna?

QUEEN

Deborah, Deidre and Dianna were the daughters of the King, known as King Delbert the Fifth, or Delbert the Wise. He made his daughters to study as much as possible, for someday one of them would inherit the entire kingdom.

DEBORAH

Dianna!

DEIDRE

Dianna, class is starting!

QUEEN

As lovely as the King's daughters were, there was something about Dianna. She wasn't a bad child. It's just that her mind was always somewhere else.

(DIANNA runs in.)

DIANNA

Sorry I'm late, Teacher.

TEACHER

And where were you, Miss Dianna?

DIANNA

Painting a picture.

TEACHER

Why would you paint a picture?

DEIDRE

Yes. Why would you do that when we had a hard math problem to work out?

DIANNA

But it was recess time and the sun was reflecting off the river at such a perfect angle that I wanted to remember it by painting a picture of it.

DEBORAH

Recess or not, you should have been working on your math.

TEACHER

Yes Dianna, art will not help you with your thinking and solving problems. Let's see how you did with the math problem.

(DIANNA comes to the teacher, who hands her a book. DIANNA looks at the book for a second or two.)

DIANNA

The answer is four and three-eighths.

(DEBORAH and DEIDRE gasp.)

TEACHER

How did you do that so quickly in your head?

DEIDRE

You must have cheated.

DIANNA

I did not! Look ... if you multiply across, and figure four as the value of x, then you can clearly see that the answer is four and three-eighths.

QUEEN

Not to say that Dianna wasn't smart. Oh no, in fact she was quite smart. She just took other things as seriously as her studies, like art and writing poetry and singing. This was not how her teacher thought ... or her father for that matter.

(SIR REX enters.)

SIR REX

Trumpets sound and bells all ring,
Raise your voices high and sing
For he is better than anything
Make way for Delbert, our wonderful king!

(THE KING enters. He waves
in his ADVISORS, who carry in
this throne. His throne is
very plain and boring.)

KING

This way. Bring it this way, please. That's just fine,
now. Thank you.

SIR REX

Everyone step back a bit
And let King Delbert the Wise sit.

KING

What do you want, Sir Rex?

SIR REX

I come to show my affection
While offering my protection.
I hope you don't have any objection.
Please don't give me your rejection.

KING

Isn't there a dragon you should be slaying or something?

SIR REX

My job in life is to help and assist,
But dragons, I fear, do not exist.

KING

Then what do you do around here?

SIR REX

My knightly deeds of you inquire
Are meant to motivate and inspire.
For every child, both tall and wee
Wish to grow up just like me.

ADVISOR 1

Couldn't you do it somewhere else?

ADVISOR 2

I think he's great!

SIR REX

I do not know anything
Other than to protect the king.

KING

Very well, you can stay. Just be quiet. I can't stand
that constant rhyme. It's so ... babyish.

SIR REX

If that is what you require,
Your wish is my command, oh sire.

(KING shoots SIR REX a dirty
look. The ADVISORS stand on
both sides of the throne, and
the KING finally sits.)

ADVISOR 1

Your majesty, it appears that there was another incident in
your daughter's school today.

KING

Another one? This is the fourth one this week!

ADVISOR 1

I know, sire. That daughter is a menace.

ADVISOR 2

I don't think she's a menace at all. I think she's rather
delightful!

ADVISOR 1

She takes nothing seriously.

ADVISOR 2

She's a little girl. She's learning everything she needs
to know. And she's such a joy to be around.

KING

One of my daughters is going to inherit the kingdom. I
can't run it forever. It takes a lot of wisdom to run a
kingdom, and each one of my daughters must be ready. I
won't have any of this nonsense. Joyfulness does not solve
the problems of a Kingdom. Bring them in.

(DEBORAH, DEIDRE and DIANNA
enter, with the TEACHER
behind them.)

DIANNA

(Sing-song) Hello, Papa!

DEBORAH and DEIDRE
(Unison) Hello, Papa.

KING
My children, what have you done now?

DEBORAH
It was Dianna again.

DEIDRE
We tried to warn her, Papa. We really did.

DIANNA
Papa, I swear, I was doing nothing wrong.

TEACHER
The child was wasting valuable time painting a picture.

KING
Why, Dianna? Why?

DIANNA
Because I saw something very pretty and I wanted to make a picture of it.

SIR REX
Part of a Knight's sworn duty
Is to appreciate such things of beauty.

KING
Quiet, you. But does a picture feed you and clothe you?
Can a picture keep you warm at night and protect you from
your enemies? Next you'll be telling me you were throwing
one of those silly round things about. What are they
called ... a bill?

ADVISOR 2
A "ball," your majesty.

KING
I don't know where you get these useless ideas from.

ADVISOR 1
I'll bet it's from that no-good jester.

KING
Yes! Bring me the Jester!

(The ADVISORS exit.)

TEACHER

Your majesty, I don't think Dianna is taking her studies seriously enough.

KING

Deborah ... Deidre ... are you both studying hard?

DEBORAH

Oh yes, Papa.

DEIDRE

Every minute of every day. That's what you've taught us.

TEACHER

How did they do on their last examinations?

DEBORAH

I got a seventy-two.

DEIDRE

I got an eighty-one.

KING

And what about you, Dianna?

DIANNA

(Mumbles something very quietly)

KING

What was that? I couldn't hear you.

DIANNA

Ninety-nine.

KING

You are all equally smart and have received the same education. I see no reason why your grades should be so different. I command you all to go back to class and study harder. Do you understand?

DEBORAH

Yes, Papa.

DEIDRE

I think Dianna cheated.

KING

I think you should study harder. Now, back to school with you all. And Dianna ... no more nonsense, okay?

DIANNA

Okay, father.

(The girls go back to their
"classroom.")

QUEEN

But asking Dianna for no more nonsense was harder than expected, for Dianna had something her sisters did not ... a vivid imagination.

TEACHER

A noun is what, Deborah?

DEBORAH

A person, place thing or idea.

TEACHER

Very good. Deidre, what is a verb?

DEIDRE

It tells action, right?

TEACHER

Yes, it does. Now, and adjective does what, Dianna?

DIANNA

Oh, I LOVE adjectives! Red, blue, big, clever ... they paint beautiful pictures with words!

TEACHER

A simple definition will do.

(From over her book, DIANNA
brings up a sock puppet.)

DIANNA

Oh, all right. (As the puppet) An adjective describes something.

TEACHER

Dianna, put that thing away.

DIANNA

He has a name. His name is Hubert.

DEIDRE

It's a sock.

DIANNA

It's my friend.

TEACHER

How can a sock be a friend?

DIANNA

(As the puppet) I don't know? How can a person by MY friend?

(as DIANNA)

Hubert, that's not nice.

(as the puppet)

I'm sorry. I'll try to behave.

TEACHER

That's it! This time you've gone too far!

QUEEN

And, once again, the Teacher brought poor Dianna to see her father.

DIANNA

I'm sorry I disappointed you, Papa.

KING

Children, come to me. Ruling a kingdom is very hard work.

Many people depend on you to make the wisest and most educated decisions. Therefore, your education is the most important thing in the world. You can't be wasting your time with frivolous pursuits, such as painting or playing with socks.

DIANNA

Hubert is my friend, Papa.

KING

Dianna, please concentrate on your studies.

DIANNA

But I get good grades.

KING

But someday you might not. Now, go to your room and write out your times tables.

DIANNA

But Papa ... !

KING

Ten times. I will check it when you are through.

DIANNA

Yes, Papa.

(The ADVISORS return with the JESTER in shackles.)

ADVISOR 1

We've caught the scoundrel, your majesty.

KING

Bring him to me.

JESTER

I swear, I didn't do it, your king-ship. It was someone else! I was away ... I had a phone call ... I was in the shower ... there was soap in my eyes!

KING

Jester, it appears my daughter has been doing some very bad things. I wonder if you had anything to do with it.

JESTER

(To DIANNA) What are you in for?

DIANNA

Sock puppet.

JESTER

Hubert?

DIANNA

He's my friend.

JESTER

He was my friend first!

KING

You know of the sock?

JESTER

Sure I know of the ... NO! I've never seen the sock before.

ADVISOR 1

He knows of the sock, your majesty. We must punish him.

ADVISOR 2

Not so fast. What was your intention for giving Dianna the sock?

JESTER

She's a good girl, your majesty. She doesn't get to play enough with her sisters.

ADVISOR 1

You were playing with Dianna?

JESTER

Of course! We play all the time!

ADVISOR 1

Why do you play with her?

JESTER

Meaning no disrespect, your majesty, but ... nobody else will.

SIR REX

Much of someone's inspiration
Comes from their imagination.

KING

I'm warning you, Rex. One more time and you'll be cleaning the royal furnace.

ADVISOR 1

I say we throw the jester in the dungeon.

ADVISOR 2

I have a better idea. Let him witness today's petitions. That will make him see the need for more serious pursuits.

KING

A splendid idea. I would like my daughters to see this, as well. If they are to follow me, they should see the work they will need to do and maybe they will realize a smart mind is needed to solve the problems of a Kingdom.

ADVISOR 1

Are you sure that's a good idea?

ADVISOR 2

I think it's a good idea.

KING

Girls, I want to you watch today's petitions.

DEBORAH

Thank you father.

KING

You watch this too, Jester. Watch and learn.

(JESTER moves over to
DIANNA.)

ADVISOR 1

Send in the first petitioner!

(FARMER enters.)

KING

Step forward, sir.

FARMER

Thank you for seeing me, your majesty. I am a lowly farmer, tending the royal crops.

KING

I see. You do an admirable service to the kingdom. What can I do for you?

FARMER

My horse has died. Without my horse I cannot pull the plow to plow my fields.

KING

That is a sad situation.

FARMER

I cannot afford to buy a new horse, but without a horse I cannot plow my fields. If I cannot plow my fields, I will never be able to grow my crops and my family will starve.

DIANNA

(To JESTER) He should use an ox! An ox is stronger than a horse and much cheaper.

JESTER

I'll bet he has an ox on his farm already.

KING

The answer is clear. You are to sell all your crops and purchase a new horse with the profits.

FARMER

But without a horse there will be no crops, and if I sell ALL my crops I will starve.

KING

That is another problem, and I only solve one per day, per person. Next!

(CARPENTER enters.)

CARPENTER

Your majesty, I am a lowly carpenter who has made the finest chairs in the kingdom.

KING

I know. Your family has made fine chairs for three generations. With his own hands, your grandfather made the very throne I sit upon.

CARPENTER

My problem is this, your majesty: Everyone already has a chair. Nobody will buy my chairs any more.

DIANNA

(To the JESTER) Maybe if he made his chairs in different colors, people would buy them.

JESTER

Or maybe if he carved a nice design into the back?

KING

The answer is clear. You are to wait for your chairs to break. Then people will have to buy new ones.

CARPENTER

But my chairs are built to last. How will they break? And what will I do in the mean time?

KING

That is another problem, and I only solve one per day, per person. Next!

(The ACCOUNTANT enters.)

ACCOUNTANT

Your majesty, I have a problem ... or better yet, YOU have a problem.

KING

What is it, Accountant?

ACCOUNTANT

Your kingdom is dangerously close to running out of money.

ADVISOR 1

How did this happen?

ACCOUNTANT

No new income has been coming in. People are not spending money.

ADVISOR 2

What should we do?

ACCOUNTANT

I do not know. All I know is what is in black and white, especially if they are numbers. How we get out of the problem and what we need to do is your problem, not mine.

JESTER

(To DIANNA) Well? What should we do now?

DIANNA

I don't know ... write a show and charge people to see it? We can sing and juggle!

KING

Black and white facts never lie, Accountant. You've done a good job. Let me know when the facts show otherwise.

ACCOUNTANT

Yes, your Highness. But ...

KING

You are my Accountant. Go ... account.

(ACCOUNTANT exits.)

ADVISOR 1

Excellent work, your majesty.

SIR REX

Your knowledge is sharp and vast,
But your kingdom is crumbling fast.

KING

Just because you are out of my sight doesn't mean I can't hear you.

DIANNA

Who, me?

KING

You and your Jester friend. It is foolishness like yours that will cause this kingdom to crumble.

DIANNA

I'm sorry, Papa. We were just having fun.

KING

Running a kingdom is not fun. It's work. Hard work. From now on, there will be no more frivolity in the kingdom. We all work far too hard to be distracted by such falderal as painting and carving, music and dancing, poems and songs, juggling and puppets, and unnecessary use of the imagination. From now on, all of these pursuits will be illegal and punishable by imprisonment. The only thing allowable now will be academic pursuits. Do you understand me, Jester?

JESTER

Perfectly. But what am I to do?

KING

What have you done up to now?

JESTER

Not much. You won't let me dance or juggle or tell jokes. I have to practice every day in the basement just to keep in shape.

ADVISOR 1

That, as they say, is your problem, not mine.

DIANNA

But Papa, his father and his father's father were jesters for the kingdom.

KING

I have no need for a jester. I have a need for a gardener. Will you take the position?

JESTER

It beats unemployment.

DIANNA

And this way I'll still get to play with you!

KING

Absolutely not! You can never play with Jester again, do you hear me! Now as for you, Sir Rex ...

SIR REX

Your wish is my desire, it's true,
But you don't realize the things you do ...

KING

To the royal furnace with you, Rex. And take off that silly helmet.

SIR REX

I'll shovel coal until I ache,
But Your Highness is making a big mistake.

(ALL exit except for the
KING.)

QUEEN

And so it was decreed, and so it was done. I feared this
day would come.

KING

Who are you speaking to?

QUEEN

I'm speaking to the audience of the play. I'm telling our
story.

KING

Stories are banished. You know that. What kind of kingdom
would we have if the Queen openly broke the law?

QUEEN

I'm sorry, Delbert. (To the Audience) Fast forward a few
years.

KING

Stop that!

QUEEN

Sorry.

(Lights down on this scene
and up on DEBORAH, DEIDRE and
DIANNA in their room. DIANNA
looks out her window.)

DEIDRE

Five times six is thirty.

DEBORAH

Five times seven is thirty-five.

DIANNA

I wish I could fly.

DEBORAH

You're supposed to do five times eight.

DIANNA

I wish I could fly right out of this room.

DEIDRE

You can't fly.

DIANNA

I know. I wish I could.

DEIDRE

But you can't. Wishing for it is pointless.

(A knock is heard on the door. JESTER enters.)

JESTER

Hello, princesses.

DIANNA

Jester!

DEBORAH

You shouldn't come around here. The King will punish you.

JESTER

The King has punished me already. What are you doing?

DEIDRE

Convincing Dianna that she can't fly.

JESTER

Sure she can!

DEIDRE

No, she can't. It's physically impossible.

JESTER

Dianna, do you want fly?

DIANNA

I sure do!

JESTER

Then let's fly!

(JESTER pretends to fly around the room like a bird. Soon DIANNA joins in.)

DIANNA

Look! I'm flying!

DEBORAH

You're just running around the room like a silly person.

DIANNA

Watch out for the trees!

JESTER

I'm watching! Look - there's the castle tower!

DEIDRE

Stop this now or I'm telling father.

JESTER

You wouldn't.

DEIDRE

You wait and see.

DIANNA

(Stops "flying") Deidre, please, don't tell on me. I was just playing.

DEIDRE

Playing is against the law.

JESTER

She's right. We'd better stop.

DEIDRE

It's for the best.

DIANNA

We can play later?

JESTER

(Pulls her aside) Sure. Meet me behind the moat in a half-hour.

(JESTER exits.)

DEBORAH

Don't think that we don't know what you're doing.

DEIDRE

We saw those drawings under your bed.

DEBORAH

And what was that thing you were doing the other day?

DIANNA

Whistling?

DEBORAH

Look - we're not going to tell father because you're our sister and we love you. But can't you see that by doing these things you're denying yourself valuable study time? Don't you want to take over the kingdom some day?

DIANNA

Sure I do. We all do.

DEBORAH

Then listen to us. These things you do will only cause problems. Stick with your studies. Please.

DEIDRE

We don't want you to get into trouble.

DIANNA

But ... I can't help it! It's like a burning in my heart. I can't help but sing and dance and draw and play.

DEBORAH

We have the same feelings. But we can fight it, and so can you.

DEIDRE

Please, Dianna.

DIANNA

I'll try. I promise.

(Lights down on the girls and
up on the KING. ACCOUNTANT
rushes in.)

ACCOUNT

Your majesty! Your majesty! I have terrible news!

KING

Royal Accountant! What is it?

ACCOUNTANT

Things have gotten worse. It appears that the kingdom is on the verge of running out of money.

KING

But that's impossible! Advisors! Come in here quickly!

(ADVISOR 1 and ADVISOR 2
enter.)

ADVISOR 2

Your majesty, what is it?

ADVISOR 1

What has the Accountant done this time?

ACCOUNTANT

I have done nothing but my job, thank you very much.

KING

The Accountant says we're almost out of money. Can this be true?

ADVISOR 1

It's a lie.

ADVISOR 2

Uh ... maybe not.

ADVISOR 1

(S)He lies, too.

KING

Now, you say "almost." What does that mean?

ACCOUNTANT

There is still one business in town that is making some money.

KING

And what is that?

ACCOUNTANT

Here they come now.

(A TOUR GUIDE enters with two TOURISTS, taking pictures.)

TOUR GUIDE

And we're walking ... and we're walking ... and we're stopping.

TOURIST 1

Good. My feet are tired.

TOUR GUIDE

Behold the throne room of King Delbert the Wise. On the walls you will see no tapestries or paintings. His throne is plain and boring.

TOURIST 2

Amazing. Just like in the brochure.

TOURIST 1

Look at this place! What ... dullness!

TOURIST 2

Dull! Dull as can be! No beauty at all. They should call this town Dullsville.

TOUR GUIDE

Now, if you come with me we'll move on to the dungeon.

ADVISOR 1

You! You there!

TOURIST 1

Who, me?

ADVISOR 1

Tell me ... why have you come to our town?

TOURIST 1

Everybody wants to see Dullsville. There is no more boring town in the world.

TOURIST 2

No art, no music, no imagination. It's amazing!

(JESTER enters.)

JESTER

Your majesty, I've just watered the royal roses.

TOURIST 2

Is that a jester?

TOURIST 1

Hey! There can't be any jesters in this town! That would be fun. I thought this town had no fun! We've been gypped!

JESTER

You haven't been gypped.

TOURIST 2

Why?

JESTER

My bells have been clipped. I can't juggle, tell jokes or sing. I tend the garden now.

TOURIST 1

Amazing! What kind of idiot would make their jester into a gardener?

KING

That would be me. I'm the King of Dellsville.

TOURIST 1

Well, you've done an amazing job ... of ruining an entire town!

ACCOUNTANT

Thank you for coming! Spend lots of money!

TOURIST 2

I haven't seen a gift shop yet!

TOUR GUIDE

This way, please.

(The TOURISTS and the TOUR GUIDE exit.)

KING

This town isn't dull, is it?

ADVISOR 1

Absolutely not, sire!

(SIR PHIL enters.)

SIR PHIL

Stand aside and make a path
Or you will surely feel my wrath.

KING

Oh, no. Another knight.

ACCOUNTANT

How do you know?

KING

He speaks in rhyme.

ADVISOR 2

Who are you, good knight? Get it? Good knight?

SIR PHIL

I am the Knight they call Sir Phil
I fight with quite amazing skill
To protect our Queen, the great Queen Jill
Who is the Queen of Jilliansville.

KING

Jilliansville. Jilliansville. Anyone ever heard of
Jilliansville?

ADVISOR 1

No, can't say as I have.

ADVISOR 2

Never heard of it.

KING

Fetch Sir Rex. He should know.

(ADVISOR 1 and ADVISOR 2
exit.)

SIR PHIL

Coming just around the hill
Will be the greatest Queen, Queen Jill.

(ADVISORS return with SIR
REX.)

SIR REX

Phil old pal! What a pleasant surprise!
You are truly a sight for my sore eyes!

ADVISOR 1

So you know him?

SIR REX

Phil and I are birds of a feather!
We even went to Knight school together!

ADVISOR 2

Knight school! That's funny!

ADVISOR 1

No humor, please.

SIR PHIL

It is true that I know him,
Though my visit here today is grim.

KING

Grim? What is this all about?

SIR PHIL

King Delbert, to you I plea
Surrender your Kingdom to me.

(All gasp "WHAT?!")

SIR REX

Saying such a thing takes guts,
But have you gone completely nuts?

KING

I demand to now what this is about!

(QUEEN JILL arrives with her
TWO ADVISORS.)

QUEEN JILL

I'll tell you what this is about. I'm Queen Jill from Jilliansville. We're taking you over, Delbert. Your kingdom is about to crumble. Your money is gone, your people are poor, your Knight is working in the furnace room. You're town is so dull that it's not even worth attacking. So just surrender to us now so we can redecorate already.

KING

Oh no. I have a REALLY big problem now.

ADVISOR 1

You think you have only one? Look - the petitioners are back with more problems.

(FARMER and CARPENTER enter.)

FARMER

All of my crops are dead and my family is broke. Are you happy now?

CARPENTER

I can't sell anything any more. Everyone has all the chairs they need. I've made my chairs too sturdy.

FARMER

You got us into this, King. You get us out of it.

CARPENTER

And fast. I'm thinking of moving to Jilliansville.

FARMER

So am I.

KING

This can't be possible.

ADVISOR 2

I'm afraid it is, sire.

ADVISOR 1

Our money is gone and the people are unmotivated and uninterested.

KING

Quiet! Quiet! I need to think.

QUEEN JILL

Time is running out, Delbert. There's no reason need to think it over.

(DEBORAH, DEIDRE and DIANNA enter.)

GIRLS

Papa, Papa, what's going on?

JILL'S ADVISOR 1

Your highness, tell the King about what your plan is for him.

QUEEN JILL

I will, thank you. I will show you mercy, Delbert. Once we take over, I will have a position available for you in my castle ... as my new Jester.

ADVISOR 2

And what about us?

JILL'S ADVISOR 2

We considered just adding you to the Advisor's staff. But since you did such a bad job on THIS kingdom, there's always unemployment.

KING

I just give up. I don't have the answers. There is no plain answer to this problem.

DEBORAH

What's the problem?

QUEEN JILL

I'm taking over your father's kingdom.

DEIDRE

You can't take over the kingdom!

JILL'S ADVISOR 1

Certainly we can. You have no defense, you have no money and your people have no life.

JILL'S ADVISOR 2

Taking over this kingdom will be the easiest thing we've ever done!

JILL'S ADVISOR 1

All you have now are dying crops, failing businesses, bored people and a handful of tourists.

DIANNA

But you didn't see our dragon.

SIR PHIL

While everyone was proud and braggin'
No one ever mentioned a dragon!

DEBORAH

(Whisper) We have no dragon, Dianna.

DIANNA

Sure we do. Don't we, Jester?

JESTER

Of course we do! I think I hear him now!