

## The Maze of Manners

Inspired by “The Marvelous Maze” by Maxine Rose Schur (Stemmer House, 1995).

Prince Chevalier

Bob, the Prince’s servant

Princess Vanitas Covetalot : OTT crown, cloak, bling, mirror; catchphrase: “Look at me!”

Princess Dissa Courtesy : crown; catchphrase: “Don’t you know who I am?”

Princess Tardya : off-stage; catchphrase: “I’ll be there in FIVE minutes”

Prince Rosa Mundi : crown of white roses, cloak

Nixies: 2-3; vari-coloured organza strips on ribbon, around shoulders/head

Incidental recorder music

Fountain: blue organza folded into square, front centre stage

Market wallet (for Rosamundi): containing knitting, book, apple or Padrone sweetmeats

Step-ladder behind R wing

Stool side-stage, book : book (The Prince)

Sun and Moon onna stick; frog sounder

Scroll of names

Bob (*entering, to audience*): It is a truth universally acknowledged that a prince in possession of a fine kingdom, must be in want of a princess. Prince Chevalier has had a cunning maze built, and has declared that the first princess to solve the maze will be his bride.

*Enters Prince (L):* Ah, Bob, where are we up to in the list?

*Bob opens up long scroll, keeps opening.*

Bob: That last princess took only two minutes before she demanded to be led out.

Prince: Ah, Princess Ephemera – didn’t think she’d last long.

Bob: Princess Con Cheeta offered me a pouch of gold in exchange for a map.

Prince: Cross her off the list.

Bob: And I’ve already crossed off Princess Lustia after...ahem...a different kind of offer.

*Bob and Prince exchange glances and shake of heads.*

Bob (*consulting list*): Princess Tardya is on her way. She should be here soon.

Tardya (*off-stage*): Co-ming. Just looking at some lovely beads, I’ll be there in FIVE minutes.

VANITAS

Prince: Who's next?

*Vanitas enters from R and strikes a pose centre stage.*

Bob: Her Highness Princess Vanitas CovetaLOT.

Van (*glares at him, responds haughtily*): That's Co-ver-LAY.

Prince (*striking a declamatory pose launches into full Shakesperian thespian mode*):

Here we have a Kingdom for a stage, a prince to act.  
And on this unworthy scaffold we bring forth  
The vasty fields of my maze, Crammed  
Within this half-circle the hedges rise  
To contain gardens bright with sinuous rills  
Think when we talk of hedges that you see them  
Stretching their leafy bowers across the earth  
For tis your thoughts that now must deck this place  
Into the grounds that show us vice and grace.

*Looks over at Vanitas who has pulled a mirror out of her belt and is primping throughout.*

Vanitas: Ooo, look at me!

Prince (*sighing*): Here's the maze; in you go.

*He and Bob exit CL. Van starts to wander around, stopping to primp from time to time.*

Van (*looks in the fountain and admires her reflection*): Ooo, look at me, I'm gorgeous.

*Nixies poke out their tongues as Van continues to admire herself, ignoring them. They try various ways to attract her attention, but she still ignores them, preening.  
Finally, the nixies bring the "water" up over the princess and remove her cloak and crown, sinking back down.*

Van (*woefully, looking down at chemise*): Ooo, look at me.

*Covers herself with both hands and runs off stage R:* Help, get me out of here!

*Bob and the Prince enter CL.*

Bob: Oh well, Princess Tardya said she'd be here very soon, Your Highness.

Tardya (*off-stage*): Co-ming. I just need to finish this delicious cake. I'll be there in FIVE minutes.

Prince: What did Princess Tardya say?

Bob (*encouraging audience*): She said she'd be here in FIVE minutes.

## DISSA COURTESY

*Prince rubs his forehead and hands his crown to Bob. Crosses to R side of stage to ponder. Enter Dissa from CR; she notices Bob with crown and smiles brightly, curtseys, bats eyelids; glances at the Prince, and thrusts out her hand imperiously to him:*

Dissa: You there, take my horse.

Prince (*double-take*): Who me?

Dissa: Yes, hurry up about it, take my horse. Don't you know who I am?

Bob (*looking pointedly at Prince*): Prince Chevalier, may I present Princess Dissa Courtesy.

Dissa: (*double takes, turns to smile brightly at Prince, curtseys*): Ah, Your Highness.

*Prince does an elaborate bow:* Here is my maze, Princess Dissa Courtesy. See if you can solve it.

*He and Bob bow and exit as Dissa starts to wander around maze.*

Dissa: I'm sure it will be no problem, but really I shouldn't even have to do this. I AM the ranking Princess after all.

*Dissa sees the fountain. The nixies jump up and go to hug her.*

Dissa: Go away you nasty little nixies. You're dripping on my gown. Shoo, shoo. Don't you know who I am? I demand due respect.

*Nixies circle Dissa chanting:* Respect is earned. Courtesy is owed. Love is given.

Dissa: How dare you lecture me?! Don't you know who I am?! I demand to be let out of here.

*Dissa exits maze (asks audience for directions?), slams imaginary door behind her, moves L. Wipes herself down in little tantrum. Rosa enters R, carrying market wallet.*

Rosa: Hello there. Did you fare well in the maze?

Dissa: Hah! Why should I tell you? (*pushes past Rosa to flounce off stage R*)

*Prince and Bob enter L ie opposite Rosa. They look up as they hear:*

Tardya (*off-stage*): Co-ming. Just want to try on this gorgeous cotehardie. I'll be there in FIVE minutes.

Prince: What did Princess Tardya say?

Bob (*encouraging audience*): She said she'd be here in FIVE minutes.

## ROSA MUNDI

Bob: Your Highness, may I present Princess Rosa Mundi; she's the last on your list.

*Prince waves Rosa towards the maze and retires to side stage R to read a book (The Prince); Bob exits to climb up the step ladder. Rosa begins to wander around the maze, inspecting the roses. The nixies are napping in the fountain.*

*Quiet music in background.*

Prince (*up to Ben*): What's she doing?

Bob (*peering*): Inspecting the eglantine.

Prince: What?

Bob: Smelling the roses, Your Highness.

*Rosa pulls her cloak off, spread it about her next to the fountain, brings her knitting out of the market wallet. The Prince reads the book, then inspects his nails, twiddles his thumbs etc.*

Prince: What now?

Bob: I do believe she's knitting, Sire.

Prince: *non-vocal reaction of Huh?*

*The nixies wake up and nudge each other as they spot Rosa.*

*Prince throws up hands and exits L; Bob ducks out of sight.*

*Rose puts down her knitting; plays patty cake with the nixies. She shares her sweetmeats with them. Music continues. They all start yawning and settle down to sleep. Music continues. Moon and Sun cycle above the wing (Bob). During Moon, frog sounds (Prince uses croaker and gribbits); as Sun rises, music changes to Grieg's Morning.*

*Rosa wakes up and starts reading a book. Bob appears above the wing again. Prince enters stage L.*

Prince (*looking up at Bob*): Has she given up yet?

Bob: No Sire, still there.

Prince: It's been three days now. What's she waiting for? Go fetch her, Bob.

*Bob takes the maze route to reach Rosa. Speaks sotto voce to her. Looks taken aback, double-checks, she nods; he hurries back to Prince.*

Bob: Er, Her Highness says she prefers to wait.

Prince: Wait for what?

Bob: For you, Sire. She's waiting for you to escort her out.

Prince: What?! What gall! I am a prince. I do not wait on others.

Doesn't she know who I am?!

*(claps hand over mouth in horror as he realises what he's said)*

Bob: Well she certainly has patience, Sire.

Prince: True.

Bob: And she clearly likes your maze.

Prince: Also true.

Bob: And she has been kind to the nixies.

Prince: True too. Perhaps I'll go and speak to her myself.

*Prince exits by crossing to stage R. Bob shakes head, says to audience:*

Bob: And she's been clever enough to get the Prince to answer her call.

*Bob exits L as Prince takes maze route from R, storming around stage following paths, getting more and more lost and turned around.*

Prince: This is MY maze – I cannot get lost in it. *Looks back and forth.* But where do I go now?

Rosa sings: Come follow, follow, follow, follow, follow, follow me

Prince *(listens, then is amused)* sings: Wither shall I follow, follow, follow, whither shall I follow, follow thee?

Rosa sings: Through the hedgerows, past the willows, by the roses you'll find me.

*Sing in unison as he follows the directions:*

Rosa sings: Through the hedgerows, past the willows, by the roses you'll find me.

Prince sings: Through the hedgerows, past the willows, by the roses I'll find thee.

*Prince follows the directions, arrives and helps Rosa to her feet.*

*She links arms with him, and they walk companionably along.*

Rosa: I do love your maze, but I think I'm ready to go back to the castle now.

Prince *(looking around)*: Er I'm not actually sure of the way back.

Rosa: That's all right. I know the way out – I've walked all around this maze and now I know it well.

A bed of violets in the centre,  
and to the right, a pond  
Then one more right, past toad's home  
And keep to the left beyond.  
When hollyhocks come into view  
Turn left at meadowsweet  
Past columbine, past twisting yew  
Past strawberries too green to eat.  
The castle towers loom ahead.  
Keep left and you'll soon find  
Where a lilac bower hides the door  
To leave the maze behind.

Bob (*from above the wing as the P&P exit slowly, making various turns and pointing things out to each other*): The Prince and Princess made their way slowly through the shadowy paths of the maze towards the lights of the castle. First she guiding him, then he guiding her. On and on they went together. He guiding her, she guiding him, patiently, courteously, graciously. She guiding him, he guiding her. Through the maze and then for ever after.

*Applause and Bows.*

Princess Anne

Princess Beatrice

Princess Janet

Princess Grace

Princess Daisy

Princess Margaret

Princess Elizabeth

Princess Verbila

Princess Alice

Princess Euphemia

Princess Bloodweyd

Princess Dierdre

Princess Ariadne

Princess Botulina

Princess Scarlett

Princess Erstwhile

Princess Scarlett

Princess Ephemera

Princess Duxie

Princess Ephemera

Princess Rozanne

Princess Eurgdice

Princess Rozanne

Princess Rowena

Princess Charlotte

Princess Rowena

Princess Daphne

Princess Anastasia

Princess Deborah

Princess Anna

Princess Angela

Princess Delilah

Princess Dissa

Princess Bridgit

Princess Panitas

Princess Tardya

Princess Katherine

Princess Jane

Princess Justine

Princess Pebbles

Princess Catherine

Princess Josanthe

*Princess Cressida*

*Princess Regan*

*Princess Rosamundi*