

# VARIATIONS

by Ken Bradbury



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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Jenna, Dustin, Paul, Matt

**JENNA:** Once upon a time!

**DUSTIN:** Now that is original.

**JENNA:** (*a glare, then*) Once upon a time ...

**PAUL:** Oh, geesh.

**JENNA:** What's the matter?

**PAUL:** That's how you're gonna start it?

**JENNA:** You got a better idea?

**DUSTIN:** How about, "The End!"

**JENNA:** Now, that'd be one short play.

**DUSTIN:** At least it'd get it over.

**JENNA:** I am not gonna flunk English just because of you jerks! Mrs. Hayes said we had one period to come up with a fairy tale thing and I need this grade.

**PAUL:** Who cares? My grade's hopeless.

**JENNA:** *You're* hopeless! Now are we gonna do this or not?

**MATT:** (*lays down*) Somebody wake me up when we're done.

**DUSTIN:** Get up. If we flunk, I'm off the ball team.

**MATT:** Good. Maybe we'll win a game.

**JENNA:** (*as Dustin hops on top of Matt and begins to pound him*) Hey! Hey! Matt, do something!

**MATT:** Get him, Dustin!

**JENNA:** No! (*getting in between them herself*) Now, stop it! Look, in every group of idiots ... teachers always put one smart kid, and that's me. Plus, I can whip you both and you know it.

**DUSTIN:** You're just a girl!

**JENNA:** (*grabbing him*) So, that makes me tougher.

**MATT:** Don't mess with her. I've seen her fight.

**DUSTIN:** Okay, whatta we do?

**JENNA:** Just help me come up with a fairy tale.

**PAUL:** I can't memorize lines.

**DUSTIN:** Me neither.

**JENNA:** I know. That's why I'll be the star.

**PAUL:** Figures.

**JENNA:** You got a better idea?

**PAUL:** Nope.

**JENNA:** Then let's go. Once upon a time there was a beautiful queen ... that's me ... who had a very stupid King for a husband. That's you, Dustin.

**DUSTIN:** Who's callin' me stupid?

**JENNA:** (*grabbing him*) The all-powerful Queen!

**PAUL:** (*making fun of Dustin*) Duh!

**DUSTIN:** Oh. Well, why didn't you say so?

**JENNA:** She had a two sons ... Sir Paul the Dopey, and Sir Matthew the Show-off.

**PAUL:** Did she call me Dopey?

**DUSTIN:** Don't ask me. I'm stupid.

**MATT:** Show off?

**JENNA:** Sir Matthew just bragged a lot. He thought he was a real stud.

**MATT:** I can handle that.

**JENNA:** Okay, you ready?

**DUSTIN:** Don't ask me, I'm stupid.

**JENNA:** Here we go. (*becoming the Queen*) My, what a glorious day! Wouldn't you agree, my dear?

**DUSTIN:** (*dully*) I---am---the---King.

**JENNA:** Have you seen our children?

**DUSTIN:** I wasn't looking.

**JENNA:** Oh, Sir Paul! Sir Matthew!

**PAUL:** (*dopey*) I am here mother.

**MATT:** (*jumping in, a macho man*) Yo! What's up!!!!

**JENNA:** Oh, my children! The terrible fire-breathing dragon is about to eat our castle! You must do something!

**MATT:** I shall kill him, Mother!

**DUSTIN:** I'll get the wiener sticks.

**PAUL:** I'll get the buns.

**JENNA:** Oh, whatever shall become of us!

**DUSTIN:** (*stepping out of character*) I don't like it.

**JENNA:** What's the matter?

**DUSTIN:** I don't like bein' an idiot. The King should be powerful!

**JENNA:** Dream on.

**DUSTIN:** You want this grade or not?

**JENNA:** Okay ... okay ... your majesty. Take Two! The Powerful King! (*frightened*) My, what a glorious day! Wouldn't you agree, my dear?

**DUSTIN:** (*leaping to center stage, powerfully!*) I---am---the--- King.

**JENNA:** Have you seen our children?

**DUSTIN:** (*again, shouting with power!*) I wasn't looking!

**JENNA:** (*nearly in tears with fright*) Oh, Sir Paul! Sir Matthew!

**PAUL:** (*dopey*) I am here mother.

**MATT:** Yo! What's up!!!!

**JENNA:** (*trembling*) Oh my children! The terrible fire-breathing dragon is about to eat our castle! You must do something!

**MATT:** I shall kill him, Mother!

**DUSTIN:** (*taking charge*) I'll get the wiener sticks.

**PAUL:** I'll get the buns.

**JENNA:** Oh, whatever shall become of us!

**PAUL:** (*stepping out of character*) No good.

**DUSTIN:** What's wrong?

**PAUL:** I don't like Sir Paul bein' Dopey.

**JENNA:** Why not? You just take after your father.

**PAUL:** I won't do it.

**MATT:** Paul, you gotta do it.

**PAUL:** Not unless I'm brave and handsome and incredibly sexy. (*a long pause as they all look each other, then at Paul*) Now stop that!

**MATT:** Okay, have it your way. After all, it is acting.

**PAUL:** And Sir Matthew has to be a nervous coward.

**MATT:** No way!

**PAUL:** (*mimicking Matt*) "It's just acting," Matt.

**JENNA:** Come on, Matt. It's just for a grade.

**PAUL:** And the Queen is a dingbat with a husband who's ... (*thinking*) ... who's ...



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