

SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

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Hans Christian Andersen's
The Flea and
the Professor

A Musical Adaptation
by Jordan Harrison

Music by Richard Gray

Lyrics by Jordan Harrison
and Richard Gray

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



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HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN’S THE FLEA AND THE PROFESSOR was originally commissioned and produced by Arden Theatre Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on May 4, 2011. The production was directed by Anne Kauffman, with music direction by Dan Kazemi. The Costume Designer was Olivera Gajic and the Lighting Designer was Thom Weaver. Scenic design was by Louisa Thompson, with sound design by Rob Kaplowitz. The Choreographer was Jenn Rose. The Stage Manager was Alec E. Ferrell. The cast was as follows:

THE FLEA Scott Greer
THE PROFESSOR Robert McClure
THE CANNIBAL PRINCESS Alex Keiper
THE CANNIBAL KING /
HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN. Kim Sullivan
THE CANNIBAL QUEEN. Mary Martello
THE SEA CAPTAIN / LOYAL SUBJECT Aaron Cromie
THE STORYTELLER. Annie McNamara

Developed in the 2012 New Visions Festival at the Kennedy Center
Producing Artistic Director: Terrence J. Nolen,
Managing Director: Amy L. Murphy

CHARACTERS

THE FLEA - Played by a big man.

THE PROFESSOR - Played by a little man.

THE CANNIBAL PRINCESS - Played by a woman of any size. Big voice.

THE CANNIBAL KING - Her father. Later he plays **HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN**

THE CANNIBAL QUEEN - Her mother.

THE SEA CAPTAIN - Also plays **THE LOYAL SUBJECT**

THE STORYTELLER - Whose real name is Livia.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

I imagine that the Flea looks a bit unkempt, à la John Belushi, but speaks in sonorous, dignified tones, à la John Barrymore. The Professor has a bit of Buster Keaton in him. Long, sad face, comically serious.

The Storyteller is a sensible, both-feet-on-the-ground type of woman who didn't grow up dreaming of the limelight. (She probably thought she would be a field journalist instead, like Christiane Amanpour.) She isn't much for pixie dust and poetry, but she takes her job seriously and she's good at it.

Very important: The Cannibals should not be depicted as a 19th-century European's idea of natives. I think of them instead as a brash, nouveau-riche suburban California family with all the comforts money can buy. With a few strange twists to suggest that they are from some civilization heretofore out of contact with ours: Maybe they wear their clothes backwards, maybe they drink with their noses.

The actors playing the Cannibals should not all be of the same race. Also, these secondary characters do some double duty, playing **AUDIENCE MEMBERS**, **FRIENDS**, and **SAILORS** as needed.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

<i>"The Little Big Top"</i>	PROFESSOR, STORYTELLER
<i>"The Little Big Top (Reprise)"</i>	PROFESSOR, FLEA
<i>"Up Up Up"</i>	PROFESSOR, FLEA, STORYTELLER, SEA CAPTAIN
<i>"The Recipe Song"</i>	CANNIBAL KING, CANNIBAL QUEEN, PRINCESS, LOYAL SUBJECT
<i>"Just a Guy"</i>	PRINCESS, FLEA
<i>"Gobble"</i>	ALL
<i>"Coronation Song"</i>	CANNIBAL KING, CANNIBAL QUEEN, PRINCESS, LOYAL SUBJECT, FLEA
<i>"Think Thin"</i>	ALL
<i>"The Grand Finale"</i>	ALL

I. IN WHICH THE PROFESSOR BECOMES THE PROFESSOR.

(We are in a theater, of course. This particular theater has the feeling of a circus. A 19th century circus. There are peanut shells on the ground. The air smells like burnt sugar and animals.)

(Before the show starts, the actors push three mysterious trunks onstage. Battered, old-fashioned traveler's trunks. Just about everything needed for the show should come out of these. [One of the trunks should sit over a trap door, so it can carry rather a lot of things.])

(In the dark, someone blows a whistle. A spotlight finds the STORYTELLER, whistle in her mouth.)

STORYTELLER. Ladies and Gentlemen,

Boys and Girls,

Flora and Fauna,

I give you:

The tale of the Flea and the Professor.

(She opens a trunk. We hear music-box music coming from it.)

(A miniature hot-air balloon rises out of the trunk, manipulated by the STORYTELLER. We can see two tiny figures in its basket.)

STORYTELLER. There was once a hot-air balloonist, and things went badly for him.

(A clap of thunder. The balloon swings wildly.)

A storm tossed his balloon this way and that. But instead of crashing, the balloon kept rising higher and higher, until it seemed he would never get back to earth.

STORYTELLER. (*cont.*) He had just enough time to put his little son in a parachute before he disappeared beyond the clouds forever.

(*Lights out on the balloon and up on a life-sized man in a parachute, hanging in the sky. This is the PROFESSOR.*)

PROFESSOR. (*searching the sky*) Oh father. My poor father. We might have shared the parachute.

STORYTELLER. This is the Professor. He was just a boy with untied shoelaces then. But, since his name is in the title of the play, you can imagine that he will be very fancy someday.

PROFESSOR. I am not the Professor yet, but I will be someday.

STORYTELLER. And since I'm the one telling the story we don't have to wait: Someday is here!

(*She unhooks him from the parachute and he crashes to the ground.*)

PROFESSOR. All I want to do is stare at the sky.

All I want is to get back up to the sky where my father is.

(*The STORYTELLER pulls him up on his feet, dusts him off.*)

STORYTELLER. But he had to start making his own way in the world.

Up until that point, he had always been provided for, so he didn't have many useful skills. But he practiced all the card tricks his father had taught him, and magic tricks, and throwing his voice.

(*The PROFESSOR speaks into his cupped hands.*)

PROFESSOR. Hello in there!

(*He pretends to pitch his voice at one of the trunks. The STORYTELLER opens the trunk and it says...*)

PROFESSOR'S VOICE. Hello out there!

My, aren't you a fine fellow.

STORYTELLER. It was true.

For as soon as the Professor grew a mustache and bought some new clothes...

(TWO ACTORS come out and slap a mustache on the PROFESSOR's face and a top hat on his head.)

...he could have been mistaken for a respectable gentleman. So people took to calling him the Professor.

ACTOR WITH THE HAT. Good day, Professor.

PROFESSOR. Hullo there.

ACTOR WITH MOUSTACHE. Top of the morning, Professor.

STORYTELLER. No one knew his real name, including me –
Which is strange because I was married to him.

(Light shifts. The PROFESSOR kneels and offers the STORYTELLER an enormous diamond ring in a box.)

PROFESSOR. Be mine, sweet Livia.

Sweet Livia, be mine.

STORYTELLER. *(out)* How do you think I know so much about him?

(The PROFESSOR puts the ring on her finger.)

PROFESSOR. We will perform together and I will cut you in half and shoot you from a cannon! Doesn't that sound nice?

STORYTELLER. *(to the PROFESSOR now)* I hear it's a difficult life, acting on the legitimate stage.

PROFESSOR. But this won't be anywhere near legitimate!

Besides, it isn't forever. One day we'll save enough money to get a hot-air balloon and travel the sky.

STORYTELLER. I'm fine here on the ground.

PROFESSOR. But wait 'til you see it up there!

STORYTELLER. Why are you always looking up at the sky?
(Short pause. Then, gently:) He's not coming back – you know that, don't you?

PROFESSOR. I know. It's just that it used to be home.

I thought it could be our home too.

STORYTELLER. (*out again*) For a time, it seemed like a nice idea. Saving up for the sky.

(*The **OTHER ACTORS** sit in the front row, as 19th century audience members. One of them uses opera glasses, even though he's just a few feet from the action. Another unwraps a hard candy, loudly.*)

PROFESSOR. Drum roll, please.

(*A drum roll obliges.*)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I present, the luminous Livia!

(*The **PROFESSOR** tears away her plain suit and the **STORYTELLER** is wearing a spangled magician's-assistant outfit underneath.*)

STORYTELLER. I hate this thing. I feel like a Christmas ornament.

PROFESSOR. Come Livia, it's time for the opening number.

(*He starts to sing...*)

(**SONG: THE LITTLE BIG TOP**)

WE ARE NOT THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

WE ARE NOT, AND WE'LL NEVER, EVER BE

WE ARE NOT UNDER THE BIGGEST BIG TOP

AND HERE ARE ALL THE THINGS YOU WILL NOT SEE:

AN ELEPHANT,

AND A KNIFE THROWER,

A STRONG MAN AND HIS BEARDED WIFE.

NO TUMBLERS A-FLYIN',

NO LION OR A LION TAMER

NO HIGH DIVER RISKING LIMB AND LIFE.

WE HAVE NO CAR OF CLOWNS,

NO STAR (OF COURSE),

NO FANCY LADY STANDING ON A FANCY HORSE;

NO JUGGLING SEAL,

NO DANCING COW

WE GOT ABSOLUTELY NOTHING THAT'LL MAKE YOU SAY
"WOW!"

WE ARE NOT THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH
WE ARE NOT, AND WE'LL NEVER, EVER BE –

STORYTELLER. Professor?

PROFESSOR.

WE ARE NOT UNDER THE BIGGEST –

STORYTELLER. Professor! Can I talk to you for a moment?

(The STORYTELLER pulls him aside. They face upstage.)

(stage whisper) Stop telling them what they're missing.
Remember how we agreed to emphasize what we *do*
have?

PROFESSOR. Oh yes.

*(The PROFESSOR turns back to us. Then back to
STORYTELLER.)*

This is rather awkward.

*(The STORYTELLER makes a supportive "Carry on"
gesture. The PROFESSOR takes up the song again.)*

WE ARE NOT THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH –

STORYTELLER.

BUT WE'VE GOT A FEW TRICKS UP OUR SLEEVE!

PROFESSOR & STORYTELLER.

WE ARE NOT UNDER THE BIGGEST BIG TOP –
BUT WHEN YOU SEE OUR ACT AT LEAST YOU WILL NOT
LEAVE!

(spoken to audience, desperate:) Right?

PROFESSOR.

WE'LL MAKE YOU LAUGH (OR AT LEAST GIGGLE)
OUR PEANUTS? THEY TASTE AS GOOD AS MOST.
OUR SECRET'S DRY-ROASTING AND TOASTING
AND SOME FRESH BUTTER
MAKES 'EM BETTER
BUT WE DO NOT LIKE TO BOAST.

(The STORYTELLER walks a very low high-wire.)

STORYTELLER.

ON WEEKDAY SHOWS I WALK THE WIRE
 I'M SOMEWHAT PRONE TO NOSEBLEEDS
 SO I CAN'T GET HIGHER.

ON SATURDAY NIGHTS, I GET ON THE TRAPEZE
 (I WOULD DO IT MUCH MORE OFTEN
 BUT IT'S BAD FOR THE KNEES.)

(She falls off the wire, into the PROFESSOR's arms.)

PROFESSOR & STORYTELLER.

WE ARE NOT THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH
(short little dance break)

WE ARE NOT UNDER THE BIGGEST BIG TOP
(wind-up to the Big Finish)

WE ARE NOT THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH
 WE ARE NOT, AND WE'LL NEVER, EVER BE
 WE ARE NOT UNDER THE BIGGEST BIG TOP
 BUT WE DO THINGS ADEQUATELYYY!
(spoken:) We're average!

AUDIENCE MEMBERS. Boo!

STORYTELLER. *(out)* The crowds could be hard to please.

(The AUDIENCE MEMBERS throw tomatoes at them.)

AUDIENCE MEMBERS. Boo! Boo!

STORYTELLER. Why do they throw tomatoes instead of roses?

PROFESSOR. Because roses have thorns. They don't want to prick us.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS. Boo! Boo!

STORYTELLER. Why do they yell, "Boo"?

PROFESSOR. That sounds like, "Woo".

AUDIENCE MEMBERS. Boo!

PROFESSOR. "Woo". They're *wooing* us!

STORYTELLER. My darling, I don't believe you.

PROFESSOR. Just you wait.

We will win them over yet with our greatest illusion, the Disappearing Act!

STORYTELLER. Now because you're such a special audience, I'm going to break the oldest rule in all of magic: (*conspiratorial:*) I'm going to tell you how we did the Disappearing Act.

So everybody lean in close.

Closer.

PROFESSOR. Livia, stop talking to the audience and help me with the act!

STORYTELLER. (*faux innocent*) Coming, Darling.

(*We see the following as she describes it.*)

First, I'd climb into one of the Professor's trunks. It was just big enough for me. And inside there was a fake back...

(*She is out of sight now. We hear her voice amplified.*)

So as far as the audience was concerned, I was invisible.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1. How do they do that?

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2. It's a two-bit trick!

AUDIENCE MEMBER 3. It's smoke and mirrors!

STORYTELLER. (*voice only*) When the Professor opened the suitcase again, I would pop right out.

PROFESSOR. Ta-da!

(*The PROFESSOR realizes that she isn't there.*)

STORYTELLER. (*voice only*) Only one evening, when he opened the trunk, I was still invisible. Even to him.

PROFESSOR. Just a minute, ladies and gentlemen.

Technical difficulties.

(*The PROFESSOR opens and closes the box several times.*

Rising desperation.)

STORYTELLER. (*voice only*) I wasn't inside the trunk, nor was I out. I was not in the whole theater. And I never came back, which really was an impressive trick.

(The PROFESSOR picks up the box and looks under it.)

PROFESSOR. Livia? *(truly distressed)* Livia!

AUDIENCE MEMBER 4. *(loudly whispering to Audience Member 2)* I didn't know he was this good.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 3. Shhh!

PROFESSOR. Livia? Livia, my darling!

(The formerly skeptical AUDIENCE applauds heartily.)

STORYTELLER'S VOICE. For once, the audience loved it.

(The AUDIENCE MEMBERS throw roses at the PROFESSOR's feet.)

AUDIENCE MEMBERS. Encore! Encore!

STORYTELLER'S VOICE. ...But there was nothing left to do as an encore.

II. THE PROFESSOR LOSES EVERYTHING BUT A FLEA.

*(The **STORYTELLER** reappears to us in another part of the stage, wearing a plain suit again.)*

STORYTELLER. Why did I leave? I loved my husband, but show business was simply too hard.

It wasn't just the tomatoes. There was also scrubbing the sticky floors after the guests went home and before the roaches came. But mostly it was the tomatoes.

After I left, the Professor was very sad.

*(The **PROFESSOR** blows the whistle, half-heartedly. A spotlight finds him.)*

It seemed like half of him was missing. Half of his act, anyway.

(drum roll)

PROFESSOR. Ladies and Gentlemen,
May I present...nobody.

STORYTELLER. Instead of pulling a rabbit out of his hat, he pulled out half a rabbit.

*(The **PROFESSOR** reaches into his hat and pulls out the top half of a plush bunny.)*

PROFESSOR. Ta-da.

STORYTELLER. He only told half of his jokes...

PROFESSOR. Why did the chicken cross the road? *(pause)*
That's it. You can all go home now.

STORYTELLER. When the Professor's friends saw how sad he was, they tried tickling him, which is how you get people to laugh when they don't feel like laughing.

*(The **FRIENDS** come out and tickle the **PROFESSOR**.)*

They tickled him and

Tickled him and

Tickled him and

Tickled him...

(Short pause. Then even more aggressively:)

STORYTELLER. *(cont.)* And tickled him and

Tickled him and

Tickled him!

But even then, he just couldn't laugh. So his friends gave up.

(The FRIENDS scatter, taking pieces of the act with them.)

People stopped coming to see his act. The Professor had to pawn all his magic tricks, and his clothes became worn and shabby.

(One FRIEND tears one of his sleeves off on the way out.

Another FRIEND rips off his moustache.)

PROFESSOR. Hey!

STORYTELLER. Even the hat on his head.

(While the PROFESSOR is distracted, the third FRIEND punches a hole through his top hat and puts it back on his head. The PROFESSOR is alone now.)

STORYTELLER. Soon the Professor had nothing left in the whole world but a single flea who lived in his waistcoat.

PROFESSOR. Ouch!

VOICE OF THE FLEA. Sorry.

PROFESSOR. *(looking around)* Who's there?

VOICE OF THE FLEA. In here.

(The PROFESSOR reaches into his waistcoat, then peers into his seemingly empty hand.)

STORYTELLER. There was nothing in the Professor's hand but a single red speck, like a piece of paprika.

PROFESSOR. Hello?

(A very robust voice comes from the PROFESSOR's hand.)

VOICE OF THE FLEA. Hi there.

PROFESSOR. Who are you?

VOICE OF THE FLEA. My name's Herman. I'm your flea.

PROFESSOR. Ouch!

VOICE OF THE FLEA. Sorry. Sometimes I can't help myself.

You see, biting is in my nature.

STORYTELLER. It was the Flea's nature to sink his teeth into someone and never let go.

The fancy scientists call this parasitism, but we can just call it biting.

(The STORYTELLER disappears into shadows.)

And since everyone else the Professor had ever known had left him, it was a nice change of pace – someone who would hold on and never let go.

PROFESSOR. *(looking into his palm)* Herman?

VOICE OF THE FLEA. Right here.

PROFESSOR. I've lost my act. I've lost my lovely assistant.

I don't suppose, can *you* do any tricks?

VOICE OF THE FLEA. What are tricks?

PROFESSOR. Like wiggling your ears,

Or rolling your tongue,

Or patting your head and rubbing your tummy at the same time.

VOICE OF THE FLEA. I can jump.

PROFESSOR. Anyone can jump.

VOICE OF THE FLEA. No, I mean, I can *jump*.

(The STORYTELLER reappears in another part of the space.)

STORYTELLER. And with that, the Flea jumped high in the air and turned twenty-two somersaults before landing gently on his feet.

PROFESSOR. *(looking up in the rafters, open-mouthed)* Wow.

You are coming back down, aren't you?

VOICE OF THE FLEA. I am back down. I'm sitting on your shoulder.

PROFESSOR. Ah, there you are.

VOICE OF THE FLEA. No, the other shoulder.

PROFESSOR. Ah.

VOICE OF THE FLEA. Now I'm sitting on your wrist.

PROFESSOR. Ah.

VOICE OF THE FLEA. Other wrist.

STORYTELLER. As incredible as this all was, it would be annoying to watch a play about someone you can't see.

(The actors come out with a giant magnifying glass. They hold it in front of the PROFESSOR's hand.)

So I asked around, and we found a very powerful magnifying glass in the basement of the theater. Ladies and Gentlemen, for your viewing pleasure, may I present...

Herman the Flea!

(The FLEA, now played by an actor in a big red flea suit, comes leaping through the magnifying glass. He turns a somersault before coming to a not-so-gentle landing.)

FLEA. Ow, my back.

PROFESSOR. Are you okay?

FLEA. Fine, fine. Did you know the common flea can leap over two hundred times his own body length?

PROFESSOR. I didn't know!

FLEA. And I am no simple common flea:

I have human blood in me, you see.

STORYTELLER. You might be wondering, how did the Flea come to have human blood in him?

PROFESSOR. How did you come to have human blood in you?

FLEA. It's on my mother's side, I think. My mother's mother's only sister's sister's only daughter's only son was human.

PROFESSOR. You mother's mother's only sister's sister's only daughter's only son?

FLEA. Yes.

PROFESSOR. That's you.

FLEA. No.

PROFESSOR. Yes, you fool.

FLEA. Well that's not right at all. But someone somewhere was part human.

PROFESSOR. I don't think so.

FLEA. It's my family tree.

PROFESSOR. You know what I think?

I think you have human blood in you from biting humans and drinking their blood.

(The PROFESSOR looks down and sees the FLEA biting his arm.)

FLEA. *(with mouthful of arm)* It's a theory.

(light shifts)

STORYTELLER. The Professor got it into his head to train the Flea as his new star performer. It took many months for the Flea to get into shape.

(light on the FLEA doing pushups)

Every morning, the Professor gave the Flea a tiny thimbleful of his blood for breakfast. Which for fleas is like spinach for Popeye times a hundred.

(The FLEA starts doing the hard kind of pushups, clapping hands in between each pushup.)

The Professor taught the Flea all kinds of tricks, like getting shot out of a cannon...

(Blackout. Drum roll. Sound of a cannon.)

(When light returns, the FLEA is far across the stage. He has landed on his belly. Canned applause.)

And diving head first into a bucket of water...

(Blackout. Drum roll. Sound of a splash.)

(When light returns, the FLEA is sitting in a bucket of water. Canned applause. When the FLEA stands up, the bucket is still attached to his rump.)

STORYTELLER. Scariest of all, he learned to say the alphabet backwards...

(Drum roll. The FLEA assumes a pose of great concentration.)

FLEA. Z, Y, X, W, V, U, T, S, R, Q, Q...

Shoot.

(blackout)

STORYTELLER. Until finally, it was the big day of his debut.

PROFESSOR. Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls,

He's smaller than a centimeter,

He's mightier than a millipede,

Tonight for the first time, I present...

the Phenomenal Flea!

(The FLEA and the PROFESSOR sing a triumphant little reprise of the "Little Big Top" song...)

(SONG: THE LITTLE BIG TOP (REPRISE))

FLEA & PROFESSOR.

WE ARE NOT THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

BUT WHAT WE'VE GOT IS THE NOTION OF SURPRISE.

(The FLEA hides behind the PROFESSOR.)

PROFESSOR.

"THERE'S NOTHING THERE," YOU MAY SAY. LOOK CLOSER...

(The FLEA pops out again.)

FLEA & PROFESSOR.

TO SEE THE BIG RED TALENT RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYES!

WE ARE NOT THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

WE ARE NOT, BUT SOMEDAY WE HOPE TO BE

WE ARE NOT UNDER THE BIGGEST BIG TOP

BUT WE'RE THE ONLY CIRCUS WITH A FLEA!

(big finish:)

A FLEA!!!

III. IN WHICH THEY TRAVEL FAR AND ALSO WIDE.

STORYTELLER. And so the very first flea circus was born.

The Professor was proud of the Flea, and the Flea was proud of himself.

Wherever they went they were welcomed as heroes.

*(The **STORYTELLER** opens a little door in the side of one of the trunks. She pushes a miniature train out of it, laying track piece by piece. Light rises on the **FLEA** and the **PROFESSOR** sleeping on the other trunks.)*

They always traveled in the fourth-class cabin, which took them there just as quickly as first-class. First they conquered Paris...

PROFESSOR. *Bonjour, Mes Enfants!*

STORYTELLER. Then Venice...

PROFESSOR. *Buon Giorno, Ragazzi!*

STORYTELLER. Then farthest India...

PROFESSOR. *Namaste bu-chaan.*

STORYTELLER. Whatever city they were in, it made no difference – the Flea conquered them all. Peasants and presidents saw him and gave him high praise. He was now a famous Flea, and everywhere they went, he demanded a velvet robe and green M&M's in his dressing room.

*(The actors help the **FLEA** into a velvet robe.)*

FLEA. This is the life.

PROFESSOR. Just be careful you don't get decadent.

FLEA. *(as one of the actors feeds him a green M&M's)* What's decadent?

PROFESSOR. Decadent is like...a big chocolate cake.

FLEA. So, don't be like a big chocolate cake.

PROFESSOR. Just remember that once we had nothing but each other, and we could just as easily have that again.

FLEA. That wasn't so bad.

PROFESSOR. It wasn't?

FLEA. When all we had was each other, that was still plenty.

PROFESSOR. You know you're very sweet for a flea.

Ouch!

FLEA. *(with a mouthful of elbow)* Sorry. In my nature.

STORYTELLER. Before long, they had traveled all of the countries in the world together.

(The STORYTELLER opens a trunk. A miniature tallship rises out, with all its sails unfurled. The STORYTELLER manipulates it. Another actor might hold a portable fan to suggest the ocean breeze.)

All the countries, that is, except one.

SEA CAPTAIN. All aboard for the Cannibal Islands!

FLEA. Where'd he say we're going?

PROFESSOR. It doesn't really matter, as long as there's an audience there.

(A SEA CAPTAIN with a peg leg holds a steering wheel, attached to nothing. The PROFESSOR looks at the sky through a telescope.)

STORYTELLER. They had become quite a pair, the Flea and the Professor. And together, nothing could defeat them.

(The FLEA leans over the edge, seasick.)

Well, almost nothing.

PROFESSOR. You okay?

FLEA. *(re: his stomach)* This is my first time on a ship. And my last.

PROFESSOR. Someday it'll be different...

FLEA. Someday?

PROFESSOR. Someday we'll have a great balloon to fly in.

FLEA. Why a balloon?

PROFESSOR. You know how it feels when you jump way up in the sky?

FLEA. It's the best. It feels like home.

PROFESSOR. Well, I used to feel like that too.

(Music. Together they sing...)

(SONG: UP UP UP)

FLEA & PROFESSOR.

UP, UP, UP IN THE SKY
THAT'S THE ONE PLACE, THE ONE PLACE TO BE
I CAN'T GET THERE MYSELF
BUT PERHAPS WITH A FLEA?

FLEA. I assume you mean me.

PROFESSOR. Uh-huh.

UP, UP, UP IN THE SKY
THAT'S THE ONE PLACE

FLEA.

THAT'S THE ONE PLACE TO BE

PROFESSOR.

THE ONE PLACE TO BE
IN THE CLOUDS, LOOKING DOWN
EVERYONE SMALL AS –

FLEA. A flea?

PROFESSOR.

I WAS GOING TO SAY ANT.

FLEA.

THERE'S NO REASON YOU CAN'T
BUT A FLEA IS MUCH MORE POETICAL
NOT TO MENTION COPACETICAL.

PROFESSOR.

BUT, IF YOU'RE TALKING ALPHABETICAL, THEN
(trailing off) ant would come before flea...

FLEA.

PROFESSOR.

UP, UP, UP
UP IN THE SKY
THAT'S THE ONE PLACE...

UP IN THE SKY

THAT'S THE ONE PLACE
FOR ME.

THE ONE PLACE FOR ME
I'VE BEEN STUCK IN A VEST

FOR A YEAR OR TWO OR
THREE.

FLEA/PROFESSOR.

UP, UP, UP IN THE SKY
THAT'S THE ONE PLACE

TO BE
THERE'S A WHOLE LOT OF
WORLD

WAITING OUT THERE TO
SEE.
UP IN THE AIR...

FLEA & PROFESSOR.

NEVER A CARE

PROFESSOR.

NO FOURTH-CLASS SEATS, NO BUMPY STREETS,
NO SMOKE IN YOUR EYES –

FLEA & PROFESSOR.

IT'S THE ONLY KIND OF TRAVEL
FOR TWO FAMOUS GUYS!

STORYTELLER & SEA CAPTAIN.

UP IN THE AIR...

FLEA.

NO TOSS-AND-TURNING, STOMACH-CHURNING
ALL THE ABOVE –

ALL.

IT'S THE ONLY KIND OF TRAVEL –
THE ONLY KIND OF TRAVEL

FLEA & SEA CAPTAIN.

THAT'S FIT FOR A DOVE.

ALL.

UP, UP, UP IN THE SKY

PROFESSOR.

NO HEARTBREAK, NO HEARTACHE,
NO FEELING SO BLUE –
IT'S THE ONE PLACE
WHERE NO ONE CAN WALK OUT ON YOU.

STORYTELLER/SEA CAPTAIN.

THAT'S THE ONE PLACE
TO BE

WAITING OUT THERE TO
SEE.
UP IN THE AIR

STORYTELLER. At that point, the Flea and the Professor made a pledge to remain bachelors forever.

PROFESSOR. Pinky swear?

FLEA. Pinky swear.

STORYTELLER. And that one day they would travel the sky together, happy and free.

FLEA. Pinky swear?

Professor?

PROFESSOR. *(lost in thought)* Oh yes.

Pinky swear.

STORYTELLER. Just as the Professor vowed never to marry again, he secretly wondered if he could forget Livia that easily. Sometimes he imagined he saw her...

PROFESSOR. *(looking straight at her)* Livia?

(The STORYTELLER ducks into a shadow.)

FLEA. Come on, forget about her.

(singing again:)

UP, UP, UP IN THE SKY
THAT'S THE ONE PLACE
THE ONE PLACE TO GO
ALL THE TROUBLES OF MAN
SO FAR DOWN BELOW

STORYTELLER & SEA CAPTAIN.

UP, UP, UP IN THE SKY

PROFESSOR & FLEA.

UP, UP, UP IN THE SKY
SOMEDAY
WE'LL GO UP, UP, UP, UP, UP, UP, UP
AND AWAY!

PROFESSOR. Where are we, Captain?

SEA CAPTAIN. I'm not sure. I lost the compass. And the sextant. And the GPS.

PROFESSOR. Oh no.

SEA CAPTAIN. But we must be nearing land.

PROFESSOR. How do you know?

(The SEA CAPTAIN holds a plastic seagull aloft.)

SEA CAPTAIN. See that seagull?

PROFESSOR. Yes.

SEA CAPTAIN. You don't see a gull like that out in the middle of nowhere. He must have come from dry land, or else he's headed there...

FLEA. *(looking in telescope)* Land ahoy!

(The STORYTELLER opens the magic trunk. A full-sized palm tree rises out of it.)

PROFESSOR. Thank heaven.

STORYTELLER. And so at last they had reached a land where the sand was white-hot

(The FLEA touches his foot to imaginary sand.)

FLEA. *(hopping on one leg)* Ouch!

STORYTELLER. And the water was blue-cool.

(The FLEA douses his foot in imaginary water, with a "splash" sound.)

FLEA. Aaaah.

PROFESSOR. Say, have you seen the Captain?

FLEA. That's strange.

PROFESSOR. Oh Captain!

FLEA. My Captain!

(The PROFESSOR spies a stick lying in the sand.)

PROFESSOR. Hold on. Isn't that his peg leg?

FLEA. Now where would he be going without that?

PROFESSOR. Look – tracks in the sand, heading off this way!

(The FLEA and the PROFESSOR head off, following the tracks.)

(continuous into...)

IV. WHAT STRANGE NEW LAND IS THIS.

STORYTELLER. What they didn't know yet, but I know because I'm the Storyteller,
was that this island was the domain of...

(The LOYAL SUBJECT appears and plays a trumpet flourish.)

CANNIBAL KING. The Cannibal King!

(a more elaborate trumpet flourish)

CANNIBAL QUEEN. And the Cannibal Queen!

STORYTELLER. But the true leader of the land turned out to be...

(a still more elaborate flourish)

PRINCESS. The Cannibal Princess!

(The trumpet finishes with a little riff.)

PRINCESS. This is just the spot for our Cannibal picnic.

CANNIBAL QUEEN. But the sand is even softer over here, my treasure.

PRINCESS. I said I want the picnic *here!*

STORYTELLER. The Princess was only twelve years old, but she ruled this strange land just the same.

Now, it is quite unusual for children in fairy tales to have two parents. Parents seem to die an awful lot in fairy tales, you may have noticed. There was Snow White's mother, and Bambi's mother, and of course, the Professor's poor father (and we can only assume his mother, unless he just never introduced me to her). Long story short, being a character in a fairy tale, the Princess was very lucky that both her parents were around.

PRINCESS. *(not feeling lucky)* I am so lucky.

STORYTELLER. She was very lucky to have two parents to tell her:

CANNIBAL QUEEN. Don't pout too much or you'll give yourself a mouth-ache.

(The PRINCESS scrunches up her nose.)

STORYTELLER. And to tell her:

CANNIBAL KING. Don't scrunch up your nose or you'll give yourself a nose-ache.

STORYTELLER. All in all, she was a very lucky Princess.

PRINCESS. I am so lucky.

STORYTELLER. But although she had never been cold or hungry in her life, something had gone quite wrong with her manners. For you see, the Princess was just as beautiful as she was rude.

PRINCESS. *(addressing the palm tree)* What're you looking at, palm tree!

STORYTELLER. ...Which is to say, she was very beautiful indeed.

PRINCESS. Get out of my toes, sand!

I'm tired of you! I'm tired of everything on this stupid island!

STORYTELLER. In the land of the Cannibals, everyone wore a single bone on the top of their head. Why did they do this?

CANNIBAL QUEEN. Because it would be immodest to wear *two* bones.

STORYTELLER. But only the Princess was allowed to carry a pretty pink flamingo feather fan.

(The PRINCESS opens her fan and fans herself with it. It fairly shimmers.)

LOYAL SUBJECT. Your pretty pink flamingo feather fan is most becoming, Your Highness.

PRINCESS. Say that ten times fast, for my amusement!

LOYAL SUBJECT. Pretty pink flamingo feather fan

Pretty pink flamingo feather fan

Pretty pink flamingo feather fan

Pretty pink flamingo –

PRINCESS. That's enough. I'm already bored.

STORYTELLER. Because of the way she acted, it was easy to forget that the Princess was beautiful.

(The PRINCESS blows her nose with the STORYTELLER's shirt.)

STORYTELLER. *(cont.)* Yes, um, thank you for that.

Now let me see – there was one more thing I was supposed to tell you about the Cannibals.

(Unseen by the STORYTELLER, the CANNIBAL KING and CANNIBAL QUEEN push on an enormous cauldron.)

One very important thing...

What could it be...

(she sees it now) Ah yes. The Cannibals liked to eat people.

(The CANNIBALS gather round the cauldron and sing...)

(SONG: THE RECIPE SONG)

CANNIBALS.

THIS IS A RECIPE
AN ANCIENT FAMILY RECIPE,
FOR SLOW COOKED FANCY HUMAN -
A PRETTY TASTY STEW, MAN.
SERVED HOT OR COLD, IT'S OUT OF SIGHT

CANNIBAL QUEEN.

IT'S HEAVEN IF YOU MAKE IT RIGHT

CANNIBALS.

A RECIPE
AN ANCIENT FAMILY RECIPE
FOR SLOW COOKED

LOYAL SUBJECT. Free Range!

CANNIBALS.

HUMAN
OUR FAVORITE THING TO CHEW, MAN.
NO NEED FOR SIDES OR SPECIAL SAUCE

CANNIBAL KING. (*in a basso voice*)

JUST DON'T FORGET THE DENTAL FLOSS.

CANNIBALS.

THIS IS A RECIPE

A MOST DELICIOUS RECIPE

NO MATTER HOW YOU SKIN IT.

HERE IS WHAT IS IN IT:

CANNIBAL QUEEN.

ONE BIG CAULDRON

PRINCESS.

WATER FROM THE CREEK-A

LOYAL SUBJECT.

A PINCH OF PEPPER

CANNIBAL KING.

A PINCH OF SALT

CANNIBAL QUEEN.

A PINCH OF PAPRIKA

PRINCESS. (*with sinister glee*) One human.

CANNIBALS.

EUREKA!

YOU BOIL IT ALL FOR TWENTY HOURS

AND THEN FOUR MORE

TO SAVOR ALL THE FLAVOR THAT'LL

COME TO THE FORE

THAT'S IT

THAT'S ALL YOU NEED

TO MAKE SLOW-COOKED FANCY HUMAN!

(*touching the bones on their heads*)

BONE...APPETIT!

(*They tuck the edge of a checkered tablecloth into their shirts, like a bib.*)

STORYTELLER. The song was so catchy that they sang it before every meal. But in fact, the Cannibals didn't cook human every day.

CANNIBAL QUEEN. That would be just decadent.

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