

PRINCE CHARMING'S COMPLAINT

Written by

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PRINCE CHARMING'S COMPLAINT

by Bruce Kane

CHARACTERS:

PRINCE CHARMING - Forty, handsome, tightly wound.

SHRINK: Prince Charming's therapist. A no nonsense woman.

RAPUNZEL: Late thirties.

SNOW WHITE: Early thirties

SLEEPING BEAUTY: Late twenties.

YOUNG RAPUNZEL, YOUNG SNOW WHITE, YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY AND YOUNG CINDERELLA are played by the same actress to indicate that Prince Charming is drawn to the same woman over and over again. In each incarnation she wears a different costume and wig indicative of her character.

ACT ONE

AT RISE WE FIND PRINCE CHARMING
PACING AND COMPLAINING TO HIS
SHRINK WHO SITS PATIENTLY TAKING
NOTES. ON THE UPSTAGE RISE SIT
RAPUNZEL, SNOW WHITE AND SLEEPING
BEAUTY.

PRINCE CHARMING

I can't do it anymore, Doc... I just can't do it. You don't know what it's like. The pressure... The expectations.

SHRINK

What are we talking about exactly?

PRINCE

No, no. Not what. Who?

SHRINK

Okay, then. Who?

PRINCE

Who else? Women. I'm Prince Charming. Who else would I be talking about? I don't have to tell you. You deal with them all the time. Right? They're all nuts. Am I right or am I right?

SHRINK

Granted there are some women who have issues. But...

PRINCE

Issues??? Issues??? You want issues? I'll tell you issues. You can't make 'em happy. There's your issues. No matter what you do, it's never enough. And God knows, I've tried. After each one, I thought, okay, maybe it's me.

RAPUNZEL

You got that right, honey.

PRINCE

Maybe we got off to a bad start. Maybe I was gone too much. Maybe I wasn't attentive enough.

SNOW WHITE

Three for three. The man's batting a thousand.

PRINCE

I don't know, maybe I wasn't a good enough lover.

ALL THREE WIVES

Bingo!!!

PRINCE

Actually no. I never thought that.

SHRINK

How many times have you been married?

PRINCE

Three. I've had three wives. You could call me a three time loser.

ALL THREE WIVES

You're a three time loser.

PRINCE

It always starts out great. All rainbows and cotton candy. Oh, you're the one. You're my hero. The man I have waited for all my life. And then... then somewhere, somehow, for some unknown reason, it all turns to...

SHRINK

(cutting him off)

Can you be more specific?

PRINCE

Like what?

SHRINK

Okay, let's try this. Why don't we start at the beginning.
Wife number one. Tell me about her.

PRINCE

That would be Rapunzel.

SHRINK

Rapunzel??? Her name was Rapunzel??

RAPUNZEL

Not you too.

PRINCE

Granted, you don't meet many Rapunzels these days. Mostly
Brittanys and Madisons and, maybe, a few Tiffanys.

SHRINK

Rapunzel is rather unique.

RAPUNZEL

You can say that again, honey.

SHRINK

How did you meet Rapunzel?

PRINCE

I rescued her.

SHRINK

From a fire? An accident?

A tower. I rescued her from a tower.

SHRINK

What was she doing in a tower?

PRINCE

She was a prisoner.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Is that true?

(Rapunzel nods)

SNOW

You poor baby.

SHRINK

Did she do something? Murder someone?

PRINCE

Nothing like that.

SHRINK

Then what was her crime?

PRINCE

Being beautiful.

RAPUNZEL

What can I say? It's a curse.

SHRINK

Since when is being beautiful a crime?

PRINCE

Her stepmother...

RAPUNZEL

Wicked stepmother. Wicked... stepmother.

PRINCE

Her wicked stepmother...

RAPUNZEL

That's better.

PRINCE

Was jealous of her beauty, so she locked her up in a tower.

SHRINK

That's pretty drastic. Sounds like the stepmother...

RAPUNZEL

Wicked stepmother.

SHRINK

...had some issues of her own. So, how did you get involved?

PRINCE

I was out riding one day, minding my own business... and I heard these cries for help.

YOUNG RAPUNZEL (O.S.)

Help. Help.

PRINCE

So I followed the sound. Eventually I came upon this tower. And at the very top I saw this vision.

RAPUNZEL

That would be me.

PRINCE

I called up to her.
 (calls out)
 How can I help you fair maiden?

SHRINK

You called her "fair maiden?"

PRINCE

Well.... Yeah... I guess. She was fair and I assumed she was a maiden.

(Snow White and Sleeping Beauty
 look to Rapunzel.)

RAPUNZEL

I'm taking the fifth at the one.

SHRINK

And what did she say?

(LIGHT UP ON YOUNG RAPUNZEL)

YOUNG RAPUNZEL

(a little overdone)

"Please handsome stranger free me from this prison and I will be eternally grateful."

SNOW WHITE

(incredulously)

Who talks like that?

(Rapunzel throws up her hands
 indicating "not me.")

SHRINK

And that's when you rescued her.

PRINCE

Not right away. I didn't know why she was there. I needed a little more information. An explanation of some kind. That's when she told me about her stepmother.

RAPUNZEL

Wicked stepmother.

SHRINK

And you bought that.

PRINCE

Well, that... And she let down her hair.

SNOW WHITE

You let your hair down?

RAPUNZEL

Ohhhhh yeah.

SHRINK

That was it. She let down her hair?

PRINCE

You sort of had to be there. Let's get real here, Doc. We're both healthy adults. There is nothing sexier than a woman who, at just the right moment, gives her head a shake and unleashes a cascade of long... flowing... incredible hair. And, in Rapunzel's case, that happened in spades.

RAPUNZEL

You better believe it.

SNOW WHITE

I'll have to remember that one.

PRINCE

It started cascading and it never stopped. At that moment, all I could think about was how that hair was going to look spread out on a pillow.

RAPUNZEL

Works every time.

SHRINK

So you freed her.

PRINCE

Of course. What else could I do? I'm Prince Charming.

SHRINK

Okay... You freed her and then what happened?

PRINCE

I couldn't just leave her there, could I?

(to Young Rapunzel)

I can't just leave you here, all alone.

YOUNG RAPUNZEL

(suspiciously)

What did you have in mind?

PRINCE

Come home with me.

YOUNG RAPUNZEL
(a little overly
dramatic)
Home with you? I don't even know you.

PRINCE
It's alright. You'll be safe in my castle.

YOUNG RAPUNZEL
(suddenly interested)
You have a castle?

PRINCE
A small one... as castles go.

YOUNG RAPUNZEL
Are you a king?

PRINCE
No, I'm a prince.

YOUNG RAPUNZEL
(even more
interested)
A prince. Really?

PRINCE
Yes. Really. A prince. Prince Charming.

YOUNG RAPUNZEL
(excited)
You're Prince Charming???

PRINCE
Afraid so.

YOUNG RAPUNZEL
You're here. You're actually here.

PRINCE
Seems that way.

YOUNG RAPUNZEL
Prince Charming.

PRINCE
Prince Charming.

YOUNG RAPUNZEL
You've come. You've come to save me.

PRINCE

I didn't come here specifically to save you. I was just in the neighborhood.. I heard you calling out. If you don't want to come, I understand.

YOUNG RAPUNZEL

Are you kidding? Of course, I'll come with you my prince.

SNOW WHITE

(to Rapunzel)

That was easy.

RAPUNZEL

After being stuck in that tower for god knows how long, I would have gone off with Rumpelstilskin.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

As long as he had a castle.

RAPUNZEL

That goes without saying.

SHRINK

Please continue.

PRINCE

I took her back home with me. Settled her in a suite of rooms... in a separate wing of the castle. Provided her with servants... A carriage to get around. Bought her clothes... gowns... Some shoes. Actually, lots of shoes. Closets full of shoes.

SHRINK

And how did she react to all this generosity?

PRINCE

She was grateful. Very grateful

SHRINK

And how did she express this gratitude?

PRINCE

In ways you can't even imagine.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Those must have been some shoes.

PRINCE

Not long after that we were married. We pledged to each other that we would live happily ever after. It turns out ever after was about three years. I should have realized it was going down hill when she cut her hair. I loved her hair. She knew I loved her hair. I told her I loved her hair.

SHRINK

Did she tell you why she cut it?

PRINCE

I figured it was to spite me.

RAPUNZEL

Do you know what a pain it is to take care of all that hair?
Washing...conditioning... drying... brushing.

SNOW WHITE

Tinting.

RAPUNZEL

Besides, it got in the way of my backhand.

SHRINK

When did you realize it was over?

PRINCE

When she ran off with her tennis pro.

(LIGHT FADES ON YOUNG RAPUNZEL)

SHRINK

Tell me about wife number two.

PRINCE

Ah yes. The second former Princess Charming. Again I was
out riding...

SHRINK

And you heard a cry for help.

PRINCE

Actually I got lost. I guess I wasn't paying attention.
While I was trying to find my way out of the woods, I came
across this little cottage. I knocked on the door and
this girl answered. I'd never seen anything like her in my
life. It was like I'd come face to face with an angel.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

(to Snow White)

Is he talking about you?.

PRINCE

You've heard the phrase "drop dead gorgeous?"

SNOW WHITE

Oh yeah. He's definitely talking about me.

PRINCE

For a few moments there, I think my heart actually stopped beating.

SNOW WHITE

It's true. I thought I was going to have to resuscitate him.

RAPUNZEL

Mouth to mouth?

SNOW WHITE

It crossed my mind.

(LIGHT UP ON YOUNG SNOW WHITE)

YOUNG SNOW WHITE

Can I help you handsome stranger?

SNOW WHITE

What is it with this guy and "handsome stranger?"

PRINCE

(to Young Snow White)

Yes fair maiden.

RAPUNZEL

Again with the fair maiden.

PRINCE

I was wondering if you could do me a favor.

SNOW WHITE

(flirtatiously)

That depends on what you had in mind.

PRINCE

I seem to have gotten lost. I was wondering if you could direct me back to my castle.

YOUNG SNOW WHITE

(interested)

Castle? Did you say "castle?"

PRINCE

Yes, my castle.

YOUNG SNOW WHITE

You... uh... you live in a castle?

PRINCE

It's not much, but I call it home.

YOUNG SNOW WHITE
Are you a king or something?

PRINCE
No... Just a prince.

YOUNG SNOW WHITE
I should have known when I saw your...
(suggestively)
... big white charger.

SLEEPING BEAUTY
His big white charger?

SNOW WHITE
His horse... He was riding a white horse.

SLEEPING BEAUTY
For a moment there...

SNOW WHITE
What?

SLEEPING BEAUTY
Nothing. Nothing.

PRINCE
It's nice to meet you Miss...?

YOUNG SNOW WHITE
White.

PRINCE
Miss White.

YOUNG SNOW WHITE
But, please... call me Snow.

PRINCE
Snow... White?

YOUNG SNOW WHITE
Yes... I know... My father was a ski instructor.

PRINCE
You meet a lot of Brittany's and Madisons these days, but
you're my first Snow White.

YOUNG SNOW WHITE
And what should I call you, besides "handsome stranger?"

(The three wives all throw up their
hands after "handsome stranger")

Charming. PRINCE
 I'll say. YOUNG SNOW WHITE
 It's my name. Charming. PRINCE
 You're Prince Charming? YOUNG SNOW WHITE
 (he nods)
 Thee Prince Charming?
 I don't know about that. PRINCE
 The one I read about it in all those books? YOUNG SNOW WHITE
 They do exaggerate. PRINCE
 I can't believe it. You've come for me. YOUNG SNOW WHITE
 Come for you? Oh, no... No... I just came for directions. PRINCE
 I knew you'd come. YOUNG SNOW WHITE
 No. You don't understand. I was just out riding... PRINCE
 I've been waiting for you. YOUNG SNOW WHITE
 But, you didn't even know... PRINCE
 All my life, I've been waiting for you. Or, at least, since my wicked stepmother abandoned me in this forest. YOUNG SNOW WHITE
 Your stepmother abandoned you? PRINCE
Wicked. Wicked stepmother. SNOW WHITE
 Why would your... PRINCE
 (MORE)

PRINCE (cont'd)

(pauses)

... wicked stepmother abandon you?

YOUNG SNOW WHITE

Jealousy. She was jealous of my beauty.

RAPUNZEL

You too?

SNOW WHITE

Can you blame her? I was totally hot.

PRINCE

I don't know why you think I'm the one you've been waiting for...

YOUNG SNOW WHITE

It's called fate. Destiny brought you here.

PRINCE

Actually Excalibur brought me here. That's my horse.

YOUNG SNOW WHITE

You're here... You're actually here. That's all that matters. Just as I knew you would be. Just as I dreamed it. Oh, how I prayed for you to come and take me away from this life of drudgery and servitude. You don't know what's it life to spend every day cooking and cleaning and sewing and mopping and taking care of seven men.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

You took care of seven men?

SNOW WHITE

Seven short men. Seven very short men.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

All by yourself?

(Snow White nods)

RAPUNZEL

No wonder you look exhausted.

YOUNG SNOW WHITE

But now that you're here, I'm free. You have set me free.

PRINCE

I don't know why you'd think that.

YOUNG SNOW WHITE

No more cooking and cleaning and sewing and mopping... ever again! Oh, I am going to make you the happiest man in the world.

(She throws her arms around his neck kisses him long and hard.)

RAPUNZEL

You were good.

SNOW WHITE

Tell me about it.

(The Shrink clears her throat to get Charming's attention. He finally frees himself)

SHRINK

And did she?

PRINCE

(somewhat distracted)

Did she what?

SHRINK

Make you the happiest man in the world.

PRINCE

Let me put it this way. You know the part where said she'd never have to cook and clean and sew and mop ever again? She was true to her word. The woman never lifted a finger again.

SHRINK

And did she run off with her tennis pro?

PRINCE

After we split, she wrote a series of homemaking books. Tips on cooking, baking, sewing. That sort of thing. The last I heard she has her own podcast

(Lights down on Snow White)

SHRINK

Let's talk about Princess Charming number three. How did you meet her? Stranded in a tower? Abandoned to a life of servitude?

PRINCE

Sleeping.

SHRINK

Sleeping?

Sleeping. PRINCE

A coma? SHRINK

Drugged. At least, that's what she told me. PRINCE

And you bought that? SHRINK

If you'd only seen her. There is no way a face... and a body like that... could ever tell a lie. PRINCE

She was beautiful. SHRINK

Beautiful? She made a grown men glad they were grown men. PRINCE

What can I say? SLEEPING BEAUTY

So how did you meet this sleeping beauty? Out riding? Heard a cry to help? Got lost? SHRINK

No... I knew exactly where I was. At an old abandoned castle. I was checking it out. See if it was worth refurbishing. Maybe turn it into condos... or a hotel. Anyway, I was looking around and I opened a door and there in this completely empty room, lying on a bed, sound asleep, was this incredibly beautiful young woman. PRINCE

And..? SHRINK

I tried to wake her up. I spoke to her. Gently, shook her shoulder, but she didn't even stir. She looked so lovely, and so peaceful and so alone. For some reason I can't explain... I leaned over and kissed her. PRINCE

That's really creepy. RAPUNZEL

You kissed a sleeping woman? SHRINK

PRINCE

Only on the forehead. Gently, as you might kiss a child.

SHRINK

(skeptically)

So, you kissed this woman on the forehead as you might a sleeping child. Then what?

PRINCE

She woke up.

SHRINK

Woke up. Just like that?

PRINCE

Just like that. Her eyes popped open, she looked up at me for a moment and said something I will never forget.

(LIGHTS UP ON YOUNG SLEEPING
BEAUTY)

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

Who the hell are you?

SNOW WHITE

Is it me or does she look very familiar?

PRINCE

Are you alright?

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

I don't know. Where the hell am I?

PRINCE

In an old abandoned castle. Do you know how you got here?

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

No. The last thing I remember is my finger being pricked by my...

PRINCE

Don't tell me. Your wicked stepmother.

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

Then you know the bitch.

PRINCE

No, but I'm familiar with the type. Let me take a run at this. Your wicked stepmother drugged you and stashed you away in this old abandoned castle because she was jealous of your beauty.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

I feel like such a cliché.

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

How did you know?

PRINCE

Just a wild guess. How long have you been here?

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

How the hell should I know? I don't even know what year it is. And, by the way, what are you doing here?

PRINCE

I just found you lying here all alone. I tried to wake you but nothing worked until I...

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

Until you what?

PRINCE

(hesitantly)

Kissed you.

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

You kissed me???

PRINCE

Well, yes.

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

Isn't that a little creepy?

PRINCE

It was just on the forehead. Like you would kiss a child.

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

Do I look like a child?

PRINCE

No... No... You definitely don't look like a child.

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

Is this what you do. Hang out in old abandoned castles looking for sleeping women to molest?

PRINCE

No... No... I was checking out the castle. I'm thinking of buying it. Refurbishing it.

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

You're in real estate?

Sort of. PRINCE

Sort of? YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

I happen to live in one. PRINCE

In one what? YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

A castle. PRINCE

Really? Like with a moat and draw bridge? YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY
(suddenly not so
hostile)

A small moat. PRINCE

I've never been in a castle. What's it like to live in one? YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

It doesn't suck. PRINCE

I bet. I thought only kings and queens lived in castles. YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

That would be my parents. PRINCE

Your parents? So that would make you... YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

A prince. PRINCE

A prince. Prince what? YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

Charming... Prince Charming. PRINCE

No shit??? You're Prince Charming? YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

Guilty as charged. PRINCE

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

Wow...This is not quite how I pictured meeting you?

PRINCE

You pictured meeting me?

YOUNG SLEEPING BEAUTY

All the time. Only I thought it would be at some fancy ball. I'd arrive in a carriage pulled by six white horses. I'd be wearing a designer ball gown with a neckline that made grown men glad they were grown men. You'd see me across the room and make a beeline in my direction. You'd take me in your arms and we'd dance all night long. Well, maybe not just dance. We'd fall madly in love. At least, you would. We'd get married and live happily ever after. At least, I would.

(LIGHT DIMS ON YOUNG SLEEPING
BEAUTY)

SNOW WHITE

You have got some imagination, girl.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

I read a lot.

SHRINK

I think I get the picture. You took her home.

PRINCE

I couldn't very well leave her there in that old abandoned castle.

SHRINK

You settled her in a suite of rooms. Provided her with servants... A carriage to get around. Bought her some clothes... Some gowns... and closets full of shoes. And she expressed her gratitude in ways I couldn't believe.

PRINCE

Up to a point.

SHRINK

What happened?

PRINCE

She woke up.

SHRINK

I thought you said, she'd already woken up.

PRINCE

I mean woken up to the disappointment that fantasy and reality are two different things. Happily ever after isn't a given.

SHRINK

And she ran off with her tennis pro.

PRINCE

No. She hated tennis. It was too much like work.

SHRINK

Then what happened to her?

PRINCE

She took her divorce settlement and became a sleep therapist.

SHRINK

Have I heard of her?

PRINCE

She goes by Doctor Charming now. Madison Charming.

SHRINK

Okay... Now let's get down to business. Why do you think your marriages failed?

PRINCE

I have no idea. I don't know what they wanted. What they expected. They had everything. Clothes. A place to live. Servants... A horse drawn carriage and more shoes than any woman could want in a lifetime.

RAPUNZEL

Oh, honey, honey, honey. There is no such thing.

PRINCE

I married them. Made them princesses. It never seemed to be enough.

RAPUNZEL

You were supposed to be my knight in shining armor.

SNOW WHITE

My hero on a white horse.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

My Galahad.

PRINCE

I guess I just couldn't fulfill their expectations. But, how could I? In spite of all the trappings, I'm still a man. Just a man.

RAPUNZEL

That was the problem, honey,

SNOW WHITE

Oh, yeah.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

That was definitely the problem.

(Lights down on the three wives)

SHRINK

This is the first time I've ever seen the two sides of this particular syndrome collide. It's usual one or the other.

PRINCE

What syndrome?

SHRINK

For lack of a better expression... the knight in shining armor syndrome.

PRINCE

I don't get it. What are you talking about?

SHRINK

It manifests itself in women who are convinced that if they wait long enough, there is a knight in shining armor, out there somewhere, who is going to come along, sweep them up his arms and change their lives forever. Make everything perfect. They'll live happily ever after and they won't have to do a thing.

PRINCE

I think you got something there, Doc.

SHRINK

The flip side of that is the man who looks for women in trouble. Vulnerable women. Women he can rescue. Women who will be grateful. Women for whom he can be that knight in shining armor.

PRINCE

And you're saying that's me? I only look for vulnerable women I can rescue? Why would I do that?

SHRINK

For some reason you seem to be attracted to women who you think will be grateful to you. Dependent. Women you can mold to serve whatever neurotic need drives you.

PRINCE

Well, that's the biggest load of crap I have ever heard. I'm Prince Charming. I don't have to go out looking for vulnerable women to rescue. If you want to know the truth Doc, women come looking for me.

SHRINK

That may be so. But why do you choose the women you do? I'd think about that, long and hard. If you ever want to break the cycle.

(Somewhere in the distance a clock begins to bong loudly)

SHRINK

It looks like our time is up. We'll talk about this more next time.

(The Shrink leaves. The clock bongs continue.)

PRINCE

(mockingly)

I've got a white knight syndrome. Rescuing women to fulfill some inner neurotic need. What a crock.

(The clock reaches the twelfth bong and stops. Suddenly, a frightened YOUNG CINDERELLA comes running through.)

PRINCE

Miss... Miss... Is there something wrong? Are you alright? Can I help you?

(She runs off, leaving a shoe behind. Charming picks it up)

Miss... Miss... Your shoe. You lost your shoe... Wait.. Wait.

(He runs off after her)

CURTAIN