

THE IMAGI-NATION

EXCERPT from an unproduced 80-minute SCRIPT FOR TELEVISION;

written by C.R. TRUTE, in 2010.

THE HALF-CASTLE OF PHAIN - MOONARET TOWER - NIGHT

Dame Denise [*the courtier*] starts as Prince Knox emerges from the MIRROR, with the crystal casket in tow, and the shiver of an image of Merlin behind him.

KNOX

Our salvation! The most wondrous providence is ours and all of Phain's!

DAME DENISE

Tell me!

She moves towards him.

KNOX

I have been to the back of the Imagi-Nation, where all stories are written down and remembered, and even beyond that - I know not how. And here in my hands is a prophecy and the help we have all sought hitherto.

He shows her the casket and its contents.

DENISE

And what are these?

KNOX

To summon the Seven! Tell my people: their prince goes to seek the Living Mystery, and in so doing - he hopes - our enemies shall be defeated. That is what I have been lead to believe.

DENISE

It seems too marvellous to be true, Majesty, but I shall tell them. Do as you must, Knox. We will wait for you.

KNOX

If I fail - tho' I shall not fail - but if I fail, all things are in your hands.

They exchange a show of due affection; afterwards Knox equips himself for his journey.

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DENISE

Fare thee well, my Prince.

KNOX

I shall, Lady. Fear not.

He uses the FLINT from the casket to ignite a FLAME and THE MOTHMAN, violet, hairy, winged, weird and wonderful, appears.

KNOX

Sir, may you carry me over my enemies below?

He shows the Mothman the view out the window.

THE MOTHMAN

Yes, young master.

Together they - as Dame Denise gasps - take off out the window.

EXT. SKIES OF PHAIN - NIGHT

Knox and the Mothman fly over the enemy armies. All is well 'til Mothman, attracted to its light, flies too close to the FULL MOON.

ENCAMPMENT OF THE SEVEN ARMIES (PHAIN) - NIGHT

Enemies of Phain spy the silhouettes of the Mothman and the airborne prince against the moon. Some rush in the direction of their forms and others hurl PROJECTILES.

EXT. SKIES OF PHAIN - NIGHT

The Mothman is hit. He and his charge fall.

HALF-CASTLE OF ESTAI - ROYALGARDEN - DAY

The Princess, who is lying flat on her back - bundle still clutched to her bosom - sits up in the royal gardens of Estai. Realising that she is back in her own yard, so to speak, she unties the bundle given her by la Mere Oye. In the handkerchief on her lap, Aurora spreads out its contents: a GOLDEN SNUFF BOX, a SILVER CANDLESTICK, a WOODEN PAIL, a GOLDEN EGG, a GOLDEN HARP, a BRASS BELL, some KERNELS OF RYE

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and a GREY PLUM. The golden egg, which she picks up, has WORDS IN VERSE inscribed on it. She reads them aloud.

AURORA

*Princess of Estai –
Dawn of a new day
Comes by a journey long;
Tho' not all alone,
To that Living Stone,
Shall you travel, but seven strong:*

*One from a snuff box –
Two from a fire –
Three from a tipped pail –
And four on a lyre –
Five by a bell rung –
Six: feed a rat –
Sev'n, 'tween tooth and tongue –
Then quickly spat.*

How odd... but if it works... Hallo!
Hallo! Is anyone out here?

[ARIEL] Pipkin, [the royal gardener] breathless and somewhat worse for wear, comes running up to her.

PIPKIN

My lady! How have you come here? We lost you in the crypt.

AURORA

Never mind, Pipkin. I think we all may be glad of it soon.

He looks puzzled. More servants run up to them, including the second gardener from before.

AURORA

You: call Master Nicholas to me. You others: I need a flame, some water in this bucket, and a rat. As quick as you can!

Charged with their curious tasks, the servants and other gardener obligingly rush off.

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AURORA
Here, Pipkin.

She hands him the golden egg with the prophecy. He reads it incredulously. Then he watches his mistress take up the golden snuff box as a child takes up a present.

AURORA
Shall I?

Pipkin nods and so she opens it. There is nothing inside. Looking up from it, however, she perceives her gardener turning green.

AURORA
What-ever ...is it? Pipkin?

The gardener has transformed into a figure not unlike himself, but earthier, more magical and much comelier, too.

JACK O' THE GREEN
It's Jack-o'-the-Green, miss. Where am I?

AURORA
...In the kingdom of Estai. I summoned you by aid of a prophecy to help me save my kingdom. It's there in your hands.

The servants, staggered, arrive - firstly, the one with the WATER, secondly, the one with the RAT, and thirdly, the one with FIRE. Aurora takes up the silver candlestick, holding it out to the fellow with the flame. As soon as the wick catches, the flame is extinguished by the wind of a fellow sailing over their heads. He lands by tumbling gracefully and recovering to the upright position.

JACK B. NIMBLE
By all that's majestic! I'm not where I was. That's what comes of leaping before you look.

AURORA
I've summoned you, sir, to help me to win back my land. What may I call you?

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JACK NIMBLE

Jack B. Nimble. At your service.

AURORA

Another Jack... May you help me up?

Her request is directed to the Jack that was Pipkin; he does it.

AURORA

The pail of water.

It is handed to her. She dumps out the water promptly. Suddenly there - with wet shoes - is JACK-O'-THE-HILL; his head is wrapped up in brown paper. He groans. Behind him Master Nick arrives at last.

AURORA

And are you a Jack, too?

JACK O' THE HILL

Jack-o'-the-Hill.

AURORA

I see.

JACK HILL

Do you have any spirits at this event?

NICHOLAS

Fetch him something to drink.

The servant that had brought the fire acquiesces.

JACK HILL

Something strong.

Aurora takes up the harp. She plucks at it and a STRING SNAPS. As it does, another chap fades into view. He bears a POUCH and an AXE.

JACK "THE GIANT-KILLER" ENGLISH

Hallo!

AURORA

Good day to you, Jack.

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JACK ENGLISH
What's all this?

JACK GREEN
Wait and see.

Aurora, next, sounds the brass bell. Another chap, this one dressed in a monk's robes, (FRERE JACQUES) resonates into view. He yawns then looks about wildly at the others and the place. Someone motions for him to wait before he speaks.

The princess motions for the servant with the rat to let it down by the kernels of rye. As the creature gobbles them up, it changes several shapes - a CAT, a DOG, a COW, a MAID, a MAN, a PRIEST, a ROOSTER - then BOOM! A muscular chap (JACK HENRY, "THE HOUSE-BUILDER") materializes. All are equally astonished.

Aurora picks up the plum, lastly, and bites into it, but stops short for lo! there is a wee THUMB in it. Attached to that fine thumb is a wee boy.

LITTLE JACK HORNER
Oh! That was close.

He laughs, irresistibly so.

AURORA
Thank Goodness you are the last one.

She is relieved. The Jacks all crack a smile or chuckle.

JACK HORNER
The last what?

AURORA
Jack. You're all 'Jacks,' aren't you?

They nod, each in their own way.

JACK HORNER
And who are you?

NICHOLAS
Her Majesty, Princess Aurora of Estai.

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AURORA

Master Nicholas, this, is our army:
seven against seven. Somehow, Jacks,
you must help me to get safely to the
limits of my kingdom, past the enemies
at the gate, to a statue on an island,
in a wood where there is no sun. There
I shall - it is presumed - find my
kingdom's salvation.

The servant sent for liquor comes back with a STONE JUG. He hands it to Jack Hill. The bandaged Jack takes a swig from it gratefully.

JACK NIMBLE

That sounds straightforward.

NICHOLAS

What can they do?

AURORA

We shall see.

Together, the group goes over to the CASTLE WALL and, having climbed it, peers over it. They scrutinize the enemy encampment on the other side.

AURORA

Jacks, we must needs leave the castle.
How will it be done?

JACK ENGLISH

You lucky little thing, you... What have
I got here?

He reaches into his pouch and retrieves a handful of BEANS, which he holds out to the Princess. She is not sure what to make of them.

JACK ENGLISH

Magic beans, that's what.

JACK HORNER

Magic beans!

Aurora smiles.

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JACK ENGLISH

That's right. Back all of you.

The group moves back while Jack English buries his miraculous legumes in a flower bed next to the wall. For a moment, once he's done, nothing comes of it. Then they all hear a CRACK OF THUNDER, are shadowed by a DARK CLOUD, drenched by a sudden DOWNPOUR, and shaken by a TREMOR in the earth. Suddenly, GIANT BEANSTALKS begin to grow where the beans were planted. As they shoot upwards and over the castle wall, MISTS rise and roll with them.

JACK "THE HOUSE-BUILDER" HENRY

Not bad.

FRERE JACQUES

Sacré!

JACK ENGLISH

Well, what do you say to that, eh?

Come on, who's first?