



A Game of Panto Thrones

**A rhyming 1-act pantomime
by Cheryl Barrett**

A GAME OF PANTO THRONES

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CAST

Narrator Tells the story and tries to keep control

Old King Cole A merry old soul whose crown is coveted by many

Fiddlers Three King Cole's three fiddlers have their fiddles and longbows at the ready

Nursie Knickerbocker Old King Cole's childhood nursemaid

Abanazar The king of pantomime baddies

King John A king who put the evil into medieval

King Beauregard A follower of fashion

King Rat Strives for rat power

King Arthur His motto is 'have sword will conquer'

Emperor Chan An oriental ruler with occidental ambitions

Demon King An immortal panto baddie who personifies evil

King Richard the Lionheart Not such a nice guy after all

King Richard III Determined to prove a villain

King Henry VIII Head and shoulders above the rest

Elvis King of rock 'n' roll

Crone/Carabosse Once a queen always a queen

Setting—the throne room of the Kingdom of Happily

Time—long ago

MUSICAL NUMBERS

These are suggested songs that suit the storyline

Song 1 "Happy" (*Pharrell Williams*): Old King Cole

Song 2 "Bad" (*Michael Jackson*): The nine usurpers

Song 3 "The Great Pretender" (*Ram*): Elvis and Fiddlers Three

Song 4 "Another One Bites The Dust" (*Queen*): Carabosse and Old King Cole

Song 5 "Simply The Best" (*Tina Turner*): Carabosse

Song 6 Reprise song 2: cast

Note: **Song 3**

Change: 'I' or 'I'm' to 'they're' or 'they', i.e.; 'They're the great pretenders'

N.B. This list of songs is only the author's recommendation.

All songs are at the discretion of the Musical Director.

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The scene is set in the Kingdom of Happily. [L/X cue 1] as the curtain opens. The Narrator is standing at a lectern stage right. There is a throne centre stage. Old King Cole is seated on the throne. The Narrator reads from a large storybook

Narrator In pantomime, and real life, there is evil versus good,
Like the Sheriff of Nottingham and hero Robin Hood.
People craving wealth and power—not happy with their lot.
But without good and evil pantos wouldn't have a plot.
Audiences would be bored if they couldn't hiss and boo,
Panto fairies would down wands for lack of things to do.
Our intrepid heroes, (*slaps thigh*) ouch, would have no wrongs to right,
If pantomime baddies were banished from our sight.

Old King Cole (*to Narrator*) Is it me yet?

Narrator (*slight bow to King*) Not yet, Sire.

Old King Cole Just fast forward to the bit about me.

Narrator Bear with me, Sire—only a few more rhyming couplets ...

Old King Cole Okay, dear chap, if you must, but hurry up, do.

I'm dancing at a concert in an hour or two.

Narrator (*to King*) Would you like to sing your song before I carry on, Sire?

Old King Cole (*cheerfully*) What a marvellous idea.

Old King Cole calls offstage to Fiddlers Three

Old King Cole Music, maestro, please. (*Claps hands gleefully*)

Enter R Three Fiddlers playing fiddles

Song 1

After the song Old King Cole sits on the throne

Old King Cole Singing and dancing makes me so happy,

I'm Old King Cole—I'm a cheerful chappy

Narrator (*to audience*) I'll tell you all the tale of a royal crown and throne,

Encrusted with precious jewels, it's origins unknown.

It's rumoured that Cole's crown has magical powers,

Cast upon it by fairies as they dwelt in leafy bowers.

Old King Cole (*to Narrator*) Enough about the crown, tell them about me.

Narrator Old King Cole was a merry old soul and a merry old soul was he.

He called for his pipe and he called for his bowl—.

Old King Cole (*shouts*) Nursie, where's my pipe and bowl?

Narrator And he called for his fiddlers three.

Old King Cole Fiddlers Three, bring my pipe and bowl.

I'm Old King Cole—I'm a merry old soul.

Enter R Nursie Knickerbocker wearing an outrageous frock and knickerbockers carrying a pipe and bowl and a blanket

Ah, there you are, Nursie— about time too,

I'm rather bored, I've nothing to do.

Old King Cole takes the pipe, sticks it in the bowl and starts blowing bubbles as Nursie Knickerbocker pats him on the head and puts the blanket over his knees

Nursie (*to audience*) He'll be as happy as a pig in muck now he's got his security blanket, bless his little cotton socks. I've been nursemaid to Old King Cole since he was this high (*indicates*) and I'm still looking after him. Oops, silly me, I haven't introduced myself, have I? I'm Nursie Knickerbocker. D'you like my frock? I made it when I was dishing the dirt on Dockyard Doris at our local stitch-and-bitch group. Ooh, you wouldn't believe what that floozy has been up to. She scared all the King's horses and all the King's men. Lucy Lastic is just as brazen, ooh the tales I could tell on some of the people around here ... Anyway, there I was doing a

few fancy embroidery stitches to my frilly knickerbockers when I dropped one. Nervous Nerys nearly fell off her chair in shock—I wouldn't mind but it was a silent one.

Narrator (*interrupts*) Do you mind? I'm in the middle of my narration here.

Nursie Knickerbocker sashays over to the Narrator

Nursie Ooh, a real life hunky handsome man. Would you like me to run you up a nice suit?

She takes a tape measure from her cleavage

I'll just measure your inside leg. Don't worry, I've got a steady hand. (*Rubs tape measure*) I'll just warm it up first.

Narrator backs away

No wonder I can't get a man, they all back away from me. I don't know why, I've been told I'm quite a catch.

Narrator Yes, a bit like the flu or measles—no-one wants that either.

Nursie I'm sure one of you lovely men in the audience is looking for a beautiful, sophistimacated young woman.

Narrator (*laughs*) Beautiful? Young?

Nursie Oh yes I am.

Narrator Oh no you're not!

Nursie Oh yes I am!

Narrator Oh no you're not!

Nursie takes a huge spotted handkerchief from her frock and blows into it noisily

Nursie Ooh the cheek of him. I think he's just playing hard to get.

Narrator Can I get back to my narration, please?

Old King Cole I've run out of bubbles, Nursie. Go and ask the Fiddlers to bring me some more.

Nursie (*to Old King Cole*) Nursie will sort some more bubbles for you.

Old King Cole You are a good nurse.

Nursie (*to audience*) It's a job. I get free board, lodging and Prosecco, all the cakes I can eat and as the King's personal bodyguard I vet all his gentlemen callers. Anyway, I'd better toodle off. I won't see you later because this panto is about baddies, and I'm a good girl, I am. If you believe that you'll believe anything—toodle-oo.

Nursie Knickerbocker pats Old King Cole on the head, takes the pipe and bowl and exits R

Narrator I thought she would never leave.

Old King Cole (*shouts*) Hurry up with my pipe and bowl.

Enter R the Three Fiddlers carrying their fiddles and a pipe and bowl

Old King Cole Ah, there you are.

Fiddler 1 Nursie said you wanted more bubbles, Sire.

Fiddler 2 So we came as fast as we could.

Fiddler 3 (*rubbing his bottom*) That Nursie is a right bossy-boots.

Old King Cole takes the pipe, sticks it in the bowl and starts blowing bubbles

Fiddler 1 I'm getting fed up fetching and carrying for the King.

Fiddler 2 We're musicians, not servants.

Fiddler 3 (*pops bubbles*) I love popping bubbles.

Fiddler 1 (*admonishes Fiddler 1*) Stop that, we've got to play for the King.

Fiddler 2 Why?

Fiddler 1 It's our job.

Fiddler 3 (*sulkily*) Do we have to play?

Fiddler 1 Yes!

Old King Cole puts his pipe and bowl down and claps his hands

Old King Cole Fiddlers Three, play me a tune.

Fiddlers Three play their fiddles

(Dances) I'm a merry old soul. I love to sing, dance and party. *(Shouts)* Partay!

Narrator Old King Cole was a merry old soul and a merry old soul was he.

He liked to croon a merry tune as he danced to his fiddlers three.

Fiddlers Three play their fiddles as Old King Cole dances

Old King Cole I'm a merry old soul. I love to dance. *(Shouts)* Play faster, Fiddlers Three.

With a hey nonny nay, fal der rah, fal der ree.

Fiddlers down their fiddles in protest

Fiddler 1 That's it. We're on a work to rule. He may be king but he's very bossy at times.

Fiddler 2 Old King Cole has got us playing music all day. We're absolutely exhausted.

Fiddler 3 And we've got fiddlers' elbow.

Fiddler 1 *(disgruntled)* And what's more, we haven't even got names.

Fiddler 2 Just Fiddler One, Fiddler Two and Fiddler Three.

Fiddler 3 Why don't we give ourselves names?

Fiddler 1 What, like Huey, Dewey and Louie?

Fiddler 2 Or Snap, Crackle and Pop?

Fiddler 3 *(raises his hand)* Can I be called Brian?

Fiddler 1 and 2 look at Fiddler 3 in disbelief

Narrator *(to Fiddlers)* Do you mind? I'm trying to narrate here.

Old King Cole Please continue your narration.

And give mention to my nation.

Don't worry about my Fiddlers Three,

I'll sort something out, you'll see.

Fiddler 1 Proper pay and working conditions would help.

Fiddler 2 And addressing us as individuals.

Fiddler 3 *(raises his hand)* Can we have silky pink tabards instead of these itchy blue ones?

Old King Cole *(to Fiddlers)* Please don't be acrimonious,

Life should be harmonious. How about a fiver each in lieu?

Old King Cole gives the Fiddlers five pounds each and they resume their position

Narrator Old King Cole ruled Happily, he seldom wore a frown.

But nine noble panto characters coveted his crown.

Old King Cole *(sits)* I'm Old King Cole, I'm a merry old soul.

Narrator Well, he was—until the day he discovered a plot

To usurp him and take everything he'd got.

Old King Cole I've ruled Happily forever and a day

Why do these pretenders want to take my crown away?

I'll just hide under my blanket.

Old King Cole pulls a blanket over his head

Narrator In the nine corners of the land—

Look, I don't write this stuff, mate, don't shoot the messenger—

A royal coup was planned.

[L/X Cue 2]

King John, King Beauregard, Emperor Chan, King Rat, Abanazar, The Demon King, King Richard the Lionheart, King Arthur and King Henry VIII enter L and stand in front of the throne

Henry VIII Come out, come out, wherever you are!

Abanazar Where is Old King Cole?

King John *(to audience)* Have you lot seen him?

Demon King threatens Fiddler 1

Fiddler 1 He's behind you.

Beauregard We'd better have a look then

The nine baddies walk and strut around the stage menacingly

Emperor There's no-one behind us.

Old King Cole peeps out from under the blanket then covers his head again

King Rat threatens Fiddler 2

Fiddler 2 He's behind you.

Richard LH We'd better have another look then

The nine baddies walk and strut around the stage menacingly and pull the blanket off the throne

King Arthur BOO!

Old King Cole Don't just stand there, Fiddlers, do something.

Fiddlers huddle together and hug their fiddles to their chests

Narrator The nine villains, bad through and through,

Were prepared to do what they had to do.

Song 2

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By Cheryl Barrett

An inventive and hilarious take on the classic fantasy series.

Plot Summary

History, legend and fairy tale are interwoven in this rhyming tale about pantomime villains and their efforts to steal Old King Cole's crown and usurp his throne. But Old King Cole has a secret weapon: his mother!

Running time: 35 minutes