

A slow news day.

The Newsnight planning meeting was a shambles. Raised voices echoed across the fruit bowl on the table and right on through the BBC.

'We need a proper guest list. No Mickey Mouse D list politicians and biased political commentators. We need gravitas, someone who can light up the airwaves with their wit, repartee and astute comments.'

A general air of agreement rippled through the room.

'Look we've had the last three PM's, the FO, the treasury and every for and against Brexiteer. Who else is there?'

Everyone shrugged their shoulders.

'They all act like a bunch of cartoon muppets. Hey! That's not a bad idea. Let's get some fairy-tale characters in. They can't be any worse than their real-life counterparts.'

An assistant opened her laptop. 'Goldilocks is available.'

'I'm not having that trollop on again. Last time, her rider included three of everything. No. No. No. Think higher, bigger. Pass me an apple.'

'What about the Giant from the beanstalk?'

'Never, all those fe fi fo fum's, yet all you can smell is his colossal BO. Slob hasn't washed in ages. Next?'

'The Golden goose?'

'Nup, she never lays on air. Can't perform with an audience.'

'The Pied Piper is free for a gig.'

'Do we have to. He's as bad as Truss. She waltzed off, not with the kids, but with all our money and I hate flute music. Ugh. It's so eighties progressive.'

The assistant trawled her laptop. 'The Sly Old Fox? Wait, he's doing time in Pentonville for PPE fraud in the pandemic.'

'Why don't we try and resurrect the career of Henny Penny or Chicken Licken; whatever she's calling herself these days. Some decent exposure after that three in a bed scandal.'

'Sorry boss, she was last seen jumping the gates to Buckingham Palace, trying to tell the King that the sky is falling down. Even he won't believe that one. I say, does the King do interviews? If not, how's about Randy Andy or the ginger one. He lives in a world of his own and he's got a book out that is pure fairy-tale'

'Are you having a laugh? Let's get that firebrand Rumpelstiltskin on. He's always good for a slip of the tongue. Pair him up with Mick Lynch and light the touchpaper. A full-blown general-strike, live on air. Priceless.'

Silence.

'Look am I going to have to call in the Dwarves. Again?'

Acknowledgments floated with the birds that chirped about the chandelier.

'I suppose Doc could do a piece on the NHS, Happy can cheer viewers up after Grumpy has read the news-headlines. Just don't let Sneezzy anywhere near the cameras.'

10:00 PM BBC 2.

'5,4,3,2,1 and we are live.'

'Good evening. I'm Snow-white and this is Newsnight.

With a sweet pout and then back to the thin scarlet lips, Snow-white continued. 'Tonight, we have Dick Whittington and Sajid Khan. From streets paved with gold, to streets bathed in blood.'

'Cut to VT.'

Snow-white smiled. Paxman and Wark; eat your heart out.'