

PERUSAL SCRIPT

**A Hero's Journey:
The Epic Fantasy Choose Your Own Path Adventure**

Conceived by Next Stage Productions

Written by **Anthony Buck**

Based on a story by Liz Christensen



Newport, Maine

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A Hero's Journey

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PERUSAL SCRIPT • A Hero's Journey by Anthony Buck

Cast of Characters: (5M, 3F, 1 Either)

Narrator: M/F, narrates the story, interacts with the audience, explains choice points and coordinates the flexible elements of the story.

- **King Pacrod:** M, the ruler of the kingdom. This actor also plays Baltak the **Dragon**, Crazy **Witch** and **Maldrik**.
- **Aquayna:** F, Pacrod's daughter, the princess. She is also a novice magician.
- **Farfrum:** M, Pacrod's court magician.
- **Sir Freddick:** M, a knight.
- **Hayson:** M, a criminal held in Pacrod's dungeon.
- **Iyew:** F, Pacrod's advisor. A doctor and scientist.
- **Norrun:** M, Freddick's squire.
- **Reyla:** F, a warrior.
- **LOH:** Leader of Heroes, these lines will be delivered by the character chosen by the audience to lead the company in addition to regular character lines.
- **Captive:** these lines will be delivered by the character chosen by the audience to be captured by the dragon in addition to regular character lines.
- **Dreamer:** these lines will be delivered by the character chosen by the audience to reveal his or her dream in addition to regular character lines.
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The show is conceived as a staged reading with few costumes (except possibly Pacrod, who plays multiple roles.) Once entering, the actors should rarely if ever leave the stage. They might instead sit on stools upstage if they are not needed for the action.

In the original production, voting was often executed through a cell-phone app., with results graphically displayed for the audience to see. In less high-tech circumstances, voting has been carried out through loudest cheer, by a single audience member poll, and a veritable slew of methods. This script does not specify which voting method to use at any point, but leaves it to the discretion of the producer and/or director.

Prizes can be offered for correct predictions. Free tickets to upcoming performances are a favorite, but creativity will yield a plethora of options, many of which will add to the comedy of the performance.

The Hero's Journey - A Choose Your Own Path Adventure by Anthony Buck. 5M, 3F, 1Either. The audience chooses the way in this fantasy adventure that features knights, squires, wizards, princess, dragons, and more! A band of adventuring heroes embark on a quest to defeat a Dark Wizard and end his terrible curse. But will their own rivalries destroy their alliance before they finish the dangerous task? With multiple choice points and eight separate endings, the audience will stay engaged from the very beginning until the last second.

Anthony Buck has over 100 productions to his credit as actor, singer, director, stage manager, music director, composer, librettist, and playwright. His writing credits include the libretto for an operatic setting of *A Christmas Carol*, a new English language version of *Die Fledermaus*, radio adaptations of *Arabian Nights*, the "choose your own path plays" *A Hero's Journey* and *Wild in the West*, and the trio of comedies based on *commedia dell'arte* themes and Italian art songs, *Pantalone and the 7 Lovers*, *Pantalone's Pockets*, and *Pantalone Plots Again*. He lives in Salt Lake City with his wife and three adorable children.

Assembling the Band of Heroes

(The Narrator enters.)

Narrator – Over the next hour, you will join a band of heroes on a journey of life and death. That's right; you will join them, because your choices will guide their actions.

King Pacrod, the majestic and wise ruler of the Kingdom of Nexsta, faces a near hopeless obstacle. A powerful, Dark Wizard has begun to wreak havoc in his land. Who is this mysterious Wizard? No one knows! Safely hidden in a secret lair high atop Mount Hurg, this malefactor unleashes deadly magic on Nexsta with anonymity.

The first choice set before you, our wise and brave audience, our comrades in battle, is this – what horrible spell, what deadly curse has been unleashed on Pacrod's people in the Kingdom of Nexsta? Shout out the curse of your choosing.

(Take audience suggestions, choose, and clarify.)

You have spoken. The people of Nexsta are under the curse of _____.

Noble King Pacrod is a man of action and will not sit idly by as his people suffer with the curse of _____. He has resolved to assemble a Band of Heroes to find this Wizard and defeat him, releasing Nexsta's citizenry from the awful curse of _____. On this very day, before your very eyes, the Band of Heroes begins to assemble.

(Freddick and Norrun enter. Freddick is always aware of his appearance, both physical and social. Even now with his squire, he is working to keep up his image as the hero. Norrun the squire is not hard to understand. He says exactly what he means, but always with good humor.)

Norrun – A Band of Heroes battling a Dark Wizard? I'd like to help you, but it sounds a bit out of my league.

Freddick – Don't be silly, Norrun. A loyal squire like you is indispensable to a knight like me.

Norrun – You're too kind, Sir Freddick. But really; out of my league. Like here's me

(holds thumb and forefinger close together)

and here's that.

(arms stretched wide)

Don't you remember the last time there was a Dark Wizard in our land?

Freddick – Don't even speak of him, Norrun!

Norrun – Who, the king's brother?

Freddick – That traitorous Dark Wizard has been banished for years. This is a new Dark Wizard we face, and even if it puts our lives in eminent peril to battle him, we are honor bound to do it.

Norrun – *(wry)* Sounds delightful.

Freddick – Besides, Princess Aquayna will smile warmly on a hero who risks his life to release us all from the curse.

Norrun – *(eager)* Then sign me up. The princess is one fine-looking lady.

Narrator – *(acting as a herald)* Announcing her royal Highness, Princess Aquayna.

Norrun – Speak of the devil.

(Aquayna enters. She is self-assured and charming; a magnet for men and an object of jealousy for most women she meets.)

Freddick – Your Highness. What a privilege.

Aquayna – Do me the courtesy of a kiss, Sir Freddick.

(She holds out her hand, and he kisses it.)

What brings you to court?

Freddick – Your father has summoned me to battle the unseen Dark Wizard and put an end to the curse on our land.

Aquayna – What a dangerous task

Freddick – *(mock-stoic)* It's a danger I'd face for the King.... And the Princess.

Aquayna – I'm sure the princess would thank you sincerely if you return victorious.

Norrin – Should I leave you two alone?

(Reyla enters with Hayson, who is in manacles. Hayson is a full of wrath and fear. He lashes out at everyone around him. Reyla is not one to put up with nonsense and effortlessly keeps control of the situation. Her main tool is physical force.)

Reyla – *(to Hayson)* Move it, criminal!

Hayson – I'm in no hurry to go where you're taking me.

Reyla – *(pushing him to his knees)* Quiet, dog!

Freddick – Is that Reyla?

Reyla – Sir Freddick!

(They embrace.)

Reyla – What are you doing off the battlefield, comrade?

Freddick – Heeding King Pacrod's call. And you?

Reyla – Much the same. I am a guard in the royal palace for now. Today my duty is to take this murderer to the headsman's block.

Hayson – I may be a prisoner, but I'm not a murderer.

Aquayna – Then why are you in my father's dungeon?

Hayson – Not all killing is murder, your highness.

Freddick – You dare speak before the princess?

Reyla – *(hits Hayson with the pommel of her sword)* That's the language this criminal speaks, Freddick.

Norrin – Then I'll be sure to stay out of earshot.

Narrator – *(acting as a herald)* His Majesty, King Pacrod of Nexsta, and his advisors, Farfrum the wizard, and Iyew the scientist.

(Pacrod enters with Iyew and Farfrum. Freddick, Reyla, Hayson and Norrin kneel. Pacrod carries the bearing of nobility easily. He can be gentle and kind when needed, but forceful and authoritative when the situation pushes him to it. Iyew's intellect is astounding, but she doesn't always have the people-skills to make her point understood. She has never cared about anything but being taken seriously. Farfrum would also like to be taken seriously, but knows he doesn't

deserve it. He has learned the art of diversion – if he is grouchy enough, people will think he knows what he's talking about.)

Hayson – Noble king, I plead for mercy!

Reyla – Pardon me, your Majesty. I was just taking this recreant to meet his doom.

Iyew – *(taken aback at the sight of Hayson)* Your majesty, who is this man?

Pacrod – Iyew, this man has been in my dungeon for many months, paying for his crimes. Only one thing remains for him.

Norrund – *(quietly)* I guess that's to lose his head.

Pacrod – Hayson, the sword you once used for evil, you shall now use in defense of my people, my kingdom, and my quest. When you return, your debt is paid and you shall go free.

Reyla – This criminal to go free?

Hayson – My lord, I will serve your quest and return. You have my word.

Reyla – Only his word?

Pacrod – His word is all I need. Iyew, unlock his chains.

(Iyew removes Hayson's manacles.)

Hayson – *(knowingly, to Iyew)* I am in your debt.

Iyew – Let there be no debts between us, Hayson.

Freddick – Your Majesty, you don't mean this man is to accompany me on my quest!

Pacrod – Not your quest alone, Freddick. Reyla the warrior will join you, as will my advisors, Farfrum and Iyew.

Reyla – Your Majesty, I'm honored to offer my sword in this quest.

Farfrum – As your faithful magician, my liege, I pledge to this quest.

Iyew – What Farfrum cannot supply, my liege, I will supply as doctor and scientist.

Hayson – *(skeptical)* Doctor?

Norrund – *(equally skeptical)* Scientist?

Freddick – Forgive me, my liege. But a scientist can't help us on such an errand.

Reyla – Don't doubt Iyew's skill. It once saved my life.

Freddick – What?

Iyew – Reyla had a spear buried in her shoulder. My skills restored its full use.

Hayson – I can vouch for the strength of the wench's arm.

Reyla – *(threatening)* Let me show you again.

Pacrod – *(silencing the brewing argument in the ranks)* Enough. You must trust each other, since all are pledged to your quest.

Farfrum – *(looking at Norrund)* Not all.

Norrund – Who, me? Just a simple squire. No pledge needed.

Farfrum – What is your name?

Norrund – Norrund.

Farfrum – Very well, No-one. Will you serve?

Norrund – What?

Farfrum – I said, “Will you serve?”

Norrund – No, no. You said “no one.”

Farfrum – I’m not above calling a squire by his proper name, No-one.

Norrund – But I’m not No-one. I’m Norrund.

Farfrum – What?

Norrund – Oh, nothing.

Farfrum – Very well, Nothing. Will you serve?

Pacrod – (*moving on*) Now the Band of Heroes is assembled. A knight, a warrior, a prisoner, a magician, a scientist, and a squire.

Aquayna – And a princess.

(*Freddick, Reyla, Farfrum and Pacrod laugh.*)

Pacrod – This is no time for joking, daughter.

Aquayna – I’m not joking. I intend to journey with this company.

Pacrod – Be off to your dressmakers. It is no task for you.

Aquayna – Yes it is! Farfrum will need my magical amulet!

Pacrod – A magical amulet?

Aquayna – Yes. I have used it with Farfrum many times.

Pacrod – You have practiced magic with my daughter?!

Farfrum – She insisted, your majesty.

Pacrod – Aquayna, you know the dangers of magic.

Aquayna – I am not my uncle Rane.

Pacrod – You dare to say his name!

Aquayna – I am not a Dark Wizard!

Pacrod – Farfrum, you will take the amulet. Aquayna will stay home.

Farfrum – (*embarrassed*) Actually, I am not sure I can unlock the power of the necklace without Aquayna’s assistance.

Iyew – What a surprise.

Farfrum – Please reconsider, your Majesty. I will need her help.

Freddick – If it must be so, I will keep your daughter from harm.

Pacrod – (*frustrated*) Fine. You may go.

Aquayna – Thank you, Sir Freddick.

Pacrod – (*to the whole group*) Take this with you. It will aid you in your quest against the Dark Wizard.

Norrund – A book? That’s sure to be helpful in battle.

Pacrod – This is no ordinary book. It is the mythical Book of Heroes. Take it, squire.

(*Gives it to Norrund.*)

Norrund – So... its strength is how absurdly heavy it is?

Pacrod – The Book tells the names and stories of Nexsta’s Heroes.

Norrun – Am I in it?

(Excitedly opens the book, then disappointed)

It's blank.

Farfrum – The pages will fill as we journey, telling the tales of our quest.

Iyew – Sounds like nonsense.

Farfrum – It's magic, Iyew. Of course you wouldn't understand.

Pacrod – Yet one thing remains before you depart. One of you must stand as the leader of heroes.

Freddick – I would be glad to lead.

Iyew – Perhaps the warrior would be a better choice.

Norrun – No need to fight. I'll gladly do it.

Narrator – Audience, we ask you. By loudest cheer, who shall lead our heroes in this vital quest? Norrun, Iyew, Farfrum, Reyla, Aquayna, Hayson, or Freddick? You have spoken. _____ will lead our band of heroes!

Pacrod – Depart now. Take the northern route to Mount Hurg. If you travel quickly, you should meet the Dark Wizard by the end of the third day. Do not delay, I am not sure the kingdom can take more than three days of the curse of _____.

LOH – My liege, we will serve you to our deaths.

*(Pacrod exits. The **Band** embarks on their journey.)*

Narrator – Led by _____ our heroes depart the kingdom. Uncertain of the company they now keep, these men and women must rely on strangers for their very lives. How can they trust each other, knowing so little? Fortunately for you, our audience, you can be privy to more. You will choose one member of our band to reveal more of his or her story! By loudest cheer, will you hear from Freddick the White Knight, Hayson the criminal, Aquayna the princess, Reyla the warrior, Farfrum the magician, Iyew the doctor, or Norrun the squire?

(after voting is finished)

You have spoken. We will hear _____.

(If desired, you may choose a second monologue as well.)

*(Only deliver the monologue of the character(s) selected by the audience. Then skip to **Journey Begins**, page 9.)*

Freddick – My father was a knight and so was his father. From the time I knew what a knight was, I wanted to be one more than anything in the world. But I was the second son and was forced to study plants and herbs instead. When my oldest brother got mysteriously and suddenly sick, I knew my prayers had been answered. Now I'm the knight in our family, and greeted with hospitality and kindness everywhere I travel. My position has kept me close to King Pacrod's court and in the graces of the princess. Traveling with her on the quest should wear down her defenses against me and land me a place at court for good. If only Reyla weren't with us. She hangs on me like a puppy and will get in the way of my wooing.

Hayson – After long months in the king's dungeon, I might look like a peasant or worse. But you would do well to know I come from a noble family in a land far south of here. Because I'm the second son, my father ordered me to the clergy. But that seemed to me a fate worse than death. Instead of studying the scriptures, I exercised my body instead until I was ready to enter a tournament under my older brother's name. When he saw me take the field, my father threatened to disown me. I didn't give him the chance: I left his house to make my own way in the northern lands. Penniless, I labored hard for my bread until the day I killed a man who was attacking an innocent woman. The one I defended is in this company, but I'm not sure she remembers me. Maybe I should have settled for the poverty and celibacy of the clergy after all – the poverty and celibacy of a prisoner are far worse.

Aquayna – The life of a princess comes with many privileges. Unfortunately, freedom of choice is not one of them. My father has groomed me for marriage to a noble of his choosing since before I could say, "Over my dead body." It sounds dangerous to say it, but my uncle Rane was the only one who ever understood me. Everyone admired his skill in magic, but I was one of the few who knew he was dabbling in the dark arts. When darkness overtook him and he tried to seize the kingdom I wasn't surprised, but I was still devastated. That's why I started practicing magic with Farfrum; to feel closer to Rane, but also to learn how to defend against people like him. I'll prove my skills on this quest, but I'll also travel very closely with Freddick. I do like him; he's charming, and he's in love with me – but there's something he's hiding. I need to know what it is before I can consider him.

Reyla – I was an orphan before I was five years old. I quickly learned there were only two ways for a girl living on the streets to survive. One of them was completely out of the question as far as I was concerned – the other was to fight. I was very strong for my age and learned how to use my fists for my bread. Once I broke my wrist and had to fight one-handed to keep from starving to death. But you know what they say – what doesn't kill you... well, I'm plenty strong now. And then I met Freddick. He made me feel something I'd never felt before: I wanted to be beautiful. I've always been so covered in blood and bruises, I didn't know what's under it all. I'd hoped Freddick and I could find out together on this quest. But now the princess joined our company... How can I turn Freddick's eye away from the princess?

Farfrum – I've not kept it a secret that I studied alchemy and magic at the king's college. The secret I keep is that I graduated last in my class. It's not because I'm lazy. I've studied and practiced day and night for over fifteen years. It's paid off: I've gone from abysmally unskilled to adequate for a novice. Sometimes I wonder if Pacrod wanted a weak and blundering idiot for his magician after his dark wizard-brother Rane tried to kill him and take his kingdom. It's more than galling to see a little flibbertigibbet like the princess gain more skill than me in only a few months of practice, but I'm glad to have her with us on the quest. Her skill may serve to cover my flaws. But that means I'll have to keep Iyew's mouth from running about me. She would expose me in a heartbeat.

Iyew – I've devoted my entire life to science because I don't believe in magic. I've developed powers greater than any supposed "magician" can possess. When I saved Reyla's life on the battlefield, I didn't use magic – I used science and she lives to this day. But my power has made many nervous. The first life I saved was a child in my village. She had a fever no magician could cure, but I returned her to health in a few short days. When the blacksmith's wife was sick, it was too late for me to save her and

she died. That's when he accused me of sorcery. Me! One who devoted her life to knowledge and medicine! The smith led the charge to have me killed, but a stranger stepped up to defend me, and killed my attacker. That man is in this band of heroes, but I'm not sure if he remembers me. Our quest will be enough to find out.

Norrin – Who wouldn't want to know about me? I mean, really. These dashing good looks, my obviously superior intellect, my brilliant sense of humor; they all beg the attention of the masses. But I will put your minds at ease. I am a man just like you. Shocking as it may be, I come from a family of simple sheep-herders. My ten brothers and I never had the benefits of formal education, but our natural intelligence has led us all on to brilliant careers such as dung-heap attendants, millstone sanitation professionals, village drunkards and of course, yours truly – the noble squire. But my life isn't without its bumps; sometimes Sir Freddick demands a lot, especially when he needs a messenger to go between several ladies in one night or when he needs to cover up some petty theft. But other than that, Norrin a-squire is your man about town and all-around good egg.

(PROCEED to page 9.)

Journey Begins

Narrator – The Band of Heroes set out on the first day of their journey to Mount Hurg.

(Norrin catches up to Farfrum as the group travels.)

Norrin – *(louder than necessary)* Farfrum. Hey Farfrum!

Farfrum – *(terse)* Yes?

Norrin – I'm Norrin.

Farfrum – Yes.

Norrin – So. *(beat)* You're a magician then.

Farfrum – Yes.

Norrin – Pretty agreeable person, are ya'?

Farfrum – *(deliberate)* No.

Norrin – I see what you did there. That's pretty funny.

Farfrum – Is there something you want?

Norrin – Yeah. I was wondering; can you teach me some of that magicking thing you do. I've always fancied magicking.

Farfrum – Absolutely not.

Norrin – *(whining)* It'll be fun.

Farfrum – No, it won't! Carry your pack in silence.

Narrator – By nightfall, our journeying band reaches the northern fork.

Reyla – Did King Pacrod say which route to take?

Freddick – No.

LOH – We can summit the mountain or cut under through the caves.

Norrin – Up or down. We can't go around?

Iyew – We would lose precious time taking such a circuitous route. We only have three days.

Farfrum – The caves are dark and chillingly damp. We should take the summit.

Reyla – I'm for the summit. Let's begin the journey.

Iyew – Hold a minute. The summit is covered in ice and snow.

Hayson – The doctor is right. I'm for the caves.

LOH – I will lead us where the majority choose to go.

Narrator – *(to audience)* You will decide if our heroes take the summit or the caves. Who is for the summit? Who is for the caves? You have spoken. Our heroes will take the **summit/caves**.

LOH – *(Freddick if Aquayna is LOH)* It's almost nightfall. We'll make camp here and start at first light tomorrow. We must gather all our strength to **scale the summit/cut through the caves**.

Aquayna – Finally. Who will help me pitch my tent?

Freddick/Hayson – *(together)* I will.

Freddick – I'd be more than happy to assist you, Aquayna.

Hayson – Please your highness. Allow me.

Aquayna – I'm sure there's plenty for both of you to do. No need to fight over it.

Reyla – Sir Freddick, can I talk to you?

Freddick – *(reluctantly)* Of course, Reyla. Excuse me your highness.
(To Hayson)

If you need help, don't hesitate to ask me.

Hayson – *(intentionally ambiguous)* I won't.
(Freddick and Reyla separate themselves from the group.)

Freddick – *(looking at Hayson and Aquayna)* That sight does not please me.

Reyla – It's good to be in league with you again, Freddick.

Freddick – *(still slightly distracted)* Truly, comrade. Our swords will be unstoppable, God willing.

Reyla – Sir Freddick, I wish to speak to you of Iyew.

Freddick – Oh, yes. Did she really heal you on the battlefield?

Reyla – Yes, she saved my life. But I'm worried. She seems... changed.

Freddick – What do you mean?

Reyla – *(indicating Hayson)* She has walked and talked with the criminal since we left the palace. If Iyew is to be trusted, it can't be as Hayson's ally.

Freddick – Yes. Alliances don't take long to make. We have to watch the two of them.

Reyla – Hayson is no better than an animal, yet he travels with our league.

Freddick – Sleep on your sword, and protect the princess at all costs.

Reyla – *(hurt)* The princess. Of course.

Freddick – Can the king and I trust you in this Reyla?

Reyla – You can always trust me Freddick. Sleep well.
(Freddick moves back to Aquayna's tent.)

Freddick – Your highness? Are your quarters prepared?

Aquayna – Ah, Sir Freddick. You're just in time. Iyew has just brewed the most wonderful tea.

Freddick – But what about your tent?

Aquayna – Hayson finished that long ago. Come sit with us.
(Hayson emerges from the tent.)

Hayson – Join us, Sir Knight.

Freddick – *(hurt and angry)* I'm afraid I must go to sleep. There's much to do in the morning.

Aquayna – You won't stay, Freddick?

Freddick – Good night, princess.

Hayson – *(a veiled taunt)* Good night, Freddick.
(Freddick goes to his place.)

Narrator – Audience, you now have the chance to make a prediction about our story. If your prediction comes true, you can win a special prize!

Princess Aquayna, Reyla, Sir Freddick and Hayson, stand forth. Four potential lovers stand before you. You must predict the two whose attentions will blossom into romance by the end of their quest.

*(*Texting was an effective way to gather this information, but many other strategies can be successful.)*

(After the predictions are arranged)

It's a short sleep before dawn calls our heroes to action again on their second day of travel. The journey **over the mountain pass/under the mountain through the caves** is a tough one and will take all the strength the band can muster.

Hayson – The princess looks cold.

Reyla – She should wear thicker boots.

Freddick – Are you still glad you came your Highness?

Aquayna – Don't talk to me right now. It's taking all my concentration to keep from freezing to death.

Farfrum – Perhaps I could use your amulet to **clear the path of snow/bring us some more light**, princess.

Aquayna – Be my guest. Anything to get us through this faster.

(She gives her necklace to Farfrum.)

Iyew – Farfrum, don't upset the natural order of this place.

Freddick – Don't be silly, scientist. Any help the magician can offer will be a boon to all. Go ahead, Farfrum.

Iyew – It may not be wise to call attention to ourselves here.

Norrin – Let me see!

(Noses his way in to watch)

Farfrum – *(casting a spell)*

Powers given from days of yore,

Clear the path that lies before.

Hear, o token in my hand;

Aid this worthy heroes' band.

Norrin – Good rhyming, Farfrum; sure to do the trick.

Reyla – Look! It *is* working!

Freddick – The amulet's glowing.

(All start to cover their eyes.)

Aquayna – It's so bright.

Hayson – It's **melting the snow from the path/filling the whole cavern**.

(The light from the amulet fades, revealing a huge cache of treasure.)

Freddick – Look at all this treasure!

Reyla – All this was **hidden in the snow/buried in these caves**?

Hayson – *(holding up a golden harp)* A harp made of gold.

Farfrum – *(holding up a crystal key)* And a crystal key.

Hayson – Let's grab what we can take and get out of here.

(A deep and ominous rumble shakes the ground.)

Reyla – Do you hear that?

Farfrum – *(to Iyew)* What did you do, you crazy scientist?

Dragon – *(unseen and heavily amplified)* Who goes there?

Norrnun – No one! There's no one here.

Dragon – Someone is trespassing **on my mountain/in my cave**. Who is it?

Iyew – We are a band of adventurers on a quest. Who are you?

Farfrum – Are you a wizard?

Iyew – *(shushing Farfrum)* This isn't the Dark Wizard.

Farfrum – How can you be so sure?

Iyew – The Dark Wizard is on Mount Hurg, you cretin.

Dragon – *(deafeningly)* Stop your mouths. Your chatter makes my ears ring.

Hayson – Who are you, mighty one?

Dragon – Don't you know? I am Baltak the Dragon!

(The Dragon appears to the adventurers, who see it DSC. The audience sees it USC.)

Norrnun – A dragon!

(All scream.)

Freddick – Reyla, take the princess to safety.

(draws his sword and advances on the dragon.)

Reyla – My place is by your side Sir Freddick.

(draws as well)

Norrnun, you take the princess to safety.

Norrnun – *(hiding)* I already took myself to safety.

Hayson – Oh for crying out loud! I'll take the princess to safety.

(Aquayna lets Hayson draw her aside.)

Dragon – Your little band of adventurers makes too much noise! Maybe if there was one fewer of you, you'd be quieter!

Narrator – Baltak the Dragon reaches out his mighty hand, and sweeps up –

Someone of your choosing! Which of our band of heroes does Baltak sweep up? Sir Freddick the knight, Reyla the warrior, Hayson the criminal, Iyew the doctor, Norrun the squire, or Farfrum the magician? By your voice, _____ becomes Baltak's captive!

Band of Heroes – *(Cry out name of captive)*

Captive – *(as if held by the Dragon)* Help me!

Freddick – *(or Reyla if Freddick is captive)* This monster will taste my sword!

Aquayna – *(putting herself between Freddick [or Reyla] and the dragon)* Baltak the dragon!

Freddick – Princess, get back!

Hayson – Let her speak. She obviously has something up her sleeve.

Freddick – Kindly do not make reference to what is in the princess's sleeves!

Aquayna – What do you want?

Dragon – I want to be left alone! But since you chatterboxes won't let me do that, I'll just have to settle for dinner!

(All but Aquayna scream.)

Aquayna – It's quite a nice horde you have here, Baltak.

Dragon – What?

Aquayna – Gold, silver, jewels; it's quite remarkable.

Dragon – Are you planning to steal something from me? Marauders come through here all the time, and if they aren't trying to kill me, they're trying to rob me of my treasures!

Aquayna – Marauders! What a shame. Think of it. Marauders in Nexsta. We don't want to steal anything from you.

(She signals all to agree with her. They mumble ascent.)

And we certainly don't want to kill you!

(All mumble again.)

In fact, we've heard of your greatness and passed this way **over the summit**/through these caves because we knew you would protect us.

(More emphatic mumbling.)

Dragon – Protect you, eh?

Captive – Yes! Protect us!

Dragon – Shut up, you. I don't like my dinner to talk back to me.

(to Aquayna)

These chattering nincompoops are interrupting my beauty sleep.

Aquayna – You don't need beauty sleep, mighty Baltak!

Freddick – Yes. Just look at that beautiful flesh decaying in your teeth.

Aquayna – Don't mind him. He's a simple-minded servant who carries our gear.

Dragon – I like you. Who are you?

Aquayna – I'm Princess Aquayna of Nexsta.

Dragon – A princess! What's that necklace you wear?

Aquayna – It was a gift from a great magician. The amulet holds special powers.

Dragon – From a magician, eh? I could really use something like this.

Aquayna – I'm sure you could.

Farfrum – Not the necklace your highness! What will I do?

Aquayna – You'll have to pull yourself together without it, Farfrum; unless you want *(name of captive)* to be the main course for dinner tonight.

(to Dragon, handing over the amulet)

Here is the necklace, Baltak. Maybe you'd better put down our friend so you can see it better.

(Baltak releases the captive who rushes back to the group.)

Captive – I'm not eaten! Thank you, princess!

Dragon – Oh my! This is very nice. Very, very nice indeed. Princess Aquayna, please accept a gift from me as well. I hate to part with anything from my horde, but how can I resist your charms?

Aquayna – Thank you Baltak! I can just take anything I wish?

Dragon – Yes.

Hayson – Take the golden harp!

Farfrum – No, the crystal key!

Narrator – Both the harp and the key are precious treasures, but one of them may have magical properties. Which will you choose for the band of heroes? By loudest cheer, the harp? Or the key? You have spoken. The band will take the **harp/key**. May it serve them well.

Aquayna – Now Baltak, can you assure us safe passage through your lair?

Dragon – For you, Aquayna, anything.

Captive – Thank you, mighty dragon.

Dragon – I was talking to the lady! You stop your chatter. Drop by anytime, Aquayna. Just don't bring these chatterboxes with you.

Narrator – Safely past the lair of Baltak the Dragon and with night falling, the band of heroes is ready to make camp for the second night.

Freddick – *(to Aquayna)* Your highness, you handled the dragon with royal grace. You were right to insist on traveling with us.

Aquayna – I certainly can charm, can't I?

Hayson – *(to Reyla)* Hey Warrior. If you want to impress the knight, don't glare at the princess. He'll think you're being petty.

Reyla – What do I care what the knight thinks?

Hayson – Right.

(If you went over the pass, turn to Iyew/Farfrum 1, Page 15.)

(If you went through the caves, turn to Farfrum/Iyew 2, Page 15.)

(Iyew/Farfrum 1)

Iyew – Farfrum! You almost got us killed!

Farfrum – What?

Iyew – Insisting we go over the pass led us right into a dragon's lair. You were lucky the princess saved us!

Farfrum – Lower your voice, scientist. It was just a little bad luck.

Iyew – Bad luck is a poor excuse for not knowing what you're doing. If you hadn't insisted on using that "magical" amulet, the dragon wouldn't have woken up in the first place.

Norrun – *(trying to diffuse the tension)* Who wants some bratwurst for dinner?

*(Turn to **Morals**, Page 16.)*

(Farfrum/Iyew 2)

Farfrum – Iyew! You almost got us killed!

Iyew – What?

Farfrum – Insisting we go through the caves led us right into a dragon's lair. You were lucky the princess saved us!

Iyew – If you hadn't insisted on using that "magical" amulet, the dragon wouldn't have woken up in the first place.

Farfrum – It was just a little bad luck.

Iyew – Bad luck is a poor excuse for not knowing what you're doing.

Norrun – *(trying to diffuse the tension.)* Who wants some bratwurst for dinner?

*(Turn to **Morals**, Page 16.)*

(Morals)

Narrator – Audience, it's time again for you to make another prediction. Last time it was romance. This time you will predict our story's moral. Three of our heroes will present a moral and you will choose which one you think will end our tale. Norrun, stand forth!

Norrun – The moral of the story is: a house divided against itself cannot stand.

Narrator – Farfrum, stand forth!

Farfrum – The moral of the story is: with a little bit of luck you can accomplish anything.

Narrator – Iyew, stand forth!

Iyew – The moral of the story is: knowledge is power – knowing is half the battle.

Norrun – That's two morals!

Iyew – It's hyphenated.

Narrator – From what you have seen so far, which do you predict? Norrun's moral: A house divided against itself cannot stand, Farfrum's moral: With a little bit of luck you can accomplish anything, or Iyew's moral: Knowledge is power, hyphen, knowing is half the battle. If your prediction comes true, you will be entered to win a special prize.

(Norrun approaches Farfrum.)

Norrun – Hey magician. Hey Farfrum!

Farfrum – What do you want, squire?

Norrun – So what are you going to do without the princess' necklace?

Farfrum – For your information, I have plenty of skills without that necklace.

Norrun – Like what?

Farfrum – Like incantations.

Norrun – Like that rhyming bit you did back there?

Farfrum – *(defensive and irritable)* Incantations are very powerful and are my specialty. They can be done without any sort of charms like the princess had.

Norrun – Show me one.

Farfrum – What, now?

Norrun – Okay, I'll try one. I've been thinking this up.

Farfrum – Wait a minute. You can't just –

Norrun – *(giving it a whirl)*

By the swearing of my tongue

I'm a big and fancy wizard.

Once this little verse I've sung,

Turn that rock into a lizard.

(Nothing happens.)

Huh. It didn't work.

Farfrum – You can't just make up an incantation on the spot! It takes skill and training.

Norrun – Well then give me some training, Farfrum.

Farfrum – For the last time, no!

Hayson – (*approaching Aquayna with the Book of Heroes*) Your highness, look at this.

Aquayna – What is it?

Hayson – Your name has appeared. The Book of Heroes tells about you charming the dragon.

Aquayna – How exciting! Let me see. The book really is filling with writing as we go! What else does it say?

(She turns a page. She is surprised by what she reads next.)

Oh my.

Hayson – What is it, highness?

Aquayna – Nothing.

Hayson – Let me see.

(He takes a closer look.)

Oh my, indeed.

(He angrily grabs the book.)

I'll bring this back.

(approaching Reyla)

Hey woman, what is this?

Reyla – It's the Book of Heroes, criminal. You know that as well as I do.

Hayson – No. I mean this.

(He points to a page in the book.)

Reyla – Isn't it all blank?

Hayson – Not anymore. "Hayson is no better than an animal, yet he travels with our league." Do you know who said that?

Reyla – How did that get in there?

Hayson – Never mind that. Do you know who said it?

Freddick – (*approaching*) What's going on here?

Hayson – I'm having a private conversation with Reyla, Sir Knight.

Freddick – Reyla, is he bothering you?

Reyla – Freddick, I don't need you to protect me.

(The others approach to listen.)

Freddick – You may think you can charm your way into the graces of some in our company, but I see you for what you are.

Aquayna – Sir Freddick, this isn't your fight. Leave them alone!

Freddick – I wouldn't leave anyone alone with this thief.

Hayson – What do you know of thievery? Some must choose between theft and starvation!

Freddick – Don't try to excuse your crimes with sad tales.

Aquayna – Sir Freddick, think before you speak.

Freddick – King Pacrod may think you're a hero, but I don't see your name in that book!

Hayson – *(shoving Freddick)* Don't talk to me about heroism, you painted toy!

Freddick – *(drawing his sword)* Get back, cur!

(The two are very near blows when Iyew, who has been watching from afar, interrupts them.)

Iyew – The man is no cur!

(Beat.)

Hayson is a man like other men. Maybe better.

Hayson – So you do remember me.

Reyla – What are you talking about?

Iyew – I owe my life to –

Hayson – Say no more of it, Iyew. Your debt is old and forgiven. I don't wish the princess to hear of it.

And our White Knight doesn't wish to hear anything but what is in this book of heroes.

(He throws the book on the ground.)

Reyla – Iyew, you knew Hasyon before?

Iyew – *(picks up the Book of Heroes.)* Not all heroic acts are contained between these covers. Nor are all acts written here worthy of a hero. Goodnight.

(Iyew retires as well.)

Farfrum – Something evil lurks in that alliance.

Aquayna – That's exactly what they're talking about, Farfrum! Can't you stop your mouth? I wish the dragon had put an end to your chatter when he had the chance!

Norrun – Maybe we should all turn in before anyone else finds something to fight over.

Aquayna – Good idea, squire.

(She retires.)

Norrun – *(cheerily)* No one's ever said that to me before.

Narrator – The Band of Heroes rests uneasily, plagued with troubling dreams. You, our wise audience can choose whose dream you will hear. Aquayna, Reyla, Hayson, Norrun, Farfrum, Iyew or Freddick?

(after voting finishes)

You have spoken. _____, stand forth and tell us your dream.

*(Use only the monologue from the character selected by the audience. Then skip to **Marshes**.*

Page 21.)

Norrun – You know the kind of dream where you wake up feeling like you've eaten your socks? That's the kind of dream I had last night. It left a bad taste in my mouth. The band of heroes came upon a crazy witch. She was hideous and deformed, her nose was like a giant cucumber and she had warts all over. Her hair was falling out and her breath smelt like a dung-heap. She reminded me of my late aunt Sylvia. She pointed her horrible finger at me and said, "One among you is a traitor! Beware!" I couldn't tell who she meant, but I knew it was one of the band. She said, "If you don't learn to trust each other, you will perish." When I looked at the rest of the band, they had all turned into skeletons. Then I woke up. I don't know how we can trust each other if one of us is a traitor, but I believe such dreams are a sign of things to come. And also I dreamt of bratwurst. I love bratwurst.

Aquayna – In my dream last night I walked past a lake. On one side it was day and on the other it was night. On the night side, there was a large tree where bats made their homes. The bats flew to me and swarmed all about my head, but I wasn't scared. They brought me a bouquet of flowers that smelled like lavender and lilac. Then, from a tree on the daylight shore, a swarm of wasps descended, stinging me and stinging me until I thought I would go mad. Suddenly, the wasps disappeared and a hideous witch stood before me. She pointed her horrible finger toward me and said, "One among you is a traitor! Beware!" I couldn't tell who she meant, but I knew it was one of the band I travel with. She said, "If you don't learn to trust each other, you will perish." When I looked at the rest of the band, they had all turned into skeletons. Then I woke up. I don't know how we can trust each other if one of us is a traitor, but I believe such dreams are a sign of things to come.

Farfrum – I dreamt the band of heroes descended into a boggy marsh. I knew it was a place of great danger, but none of my comrades would listen to my warnings to leave at once. Instead, each of them cast a powerful spell over me to shut my mouth. I wondered how all of them had learned magic skill strong enough to silence me so quickly. As we journeyed through the marsh, we came upon a hideous and deformed witch, who in her age had lost her mind. When she saw us, she pointed out her horrible finger and said, "One among you is a traitor! Beware!" I couldn't tell who she meant, but I knew it was one of the band I travel with. She said, "If you don't learn to trust each other, you will perish." When I looked at the rest of the band, they had all turned into skeletons. Then I woke up. I don't know how we can trust each other if one of us is a traitor, but I believe such dreams are a sign of things to come.

Iyew – Last night in my dream I saw a great library. On one side, the books were beautifully bound with gilded pages. One of the them flew off its shelf and opened before my eyes. The pages told of our band's glory and success. I put it in my pocket and then saw the other side of the library. It was covered with cobwebs and a foul stench poured from its darkened corners. A hideous and deformed witch, who in her age had lost her mind darted from the shadows. She pointed her horrible finger toward me and said, "One among you is a traitor! Beware!" I couldn't tell who she meant, but I knew it was one of the band I travel with. She said, "If you don't learn to trust each other, you will perish." She disappeared in an instant. I went to pull the book out of my pocket, but found it, too had vanished. I don't normally put much weight on dreams, but this seemed so real and so strange that I awoke with my heart pounding.

Reyla – In my dream last night I was in a great battle. My sword was ready in my hand, but I did not know which side was my own. I couldn't strike a blow to any, for fear I would strike down my own comrade. Finally, rather than be hewn down myself, I fled the field. I found myself in a beautiful wood and thought myself safe to rest, but a hideous and deformed witch, who in her age had lost her mind appeared before me. She pointed her horrible finger at me and said, "One among you is a traitor! Beware!" I couldn't tell who she meant, but I knew it was one of the band I travel with. She said, "If you don't learn to trust each other, you will perish." She disappeared in an instant. I awoke in a terrible sweat and shaking for fear. The dream seemed so real to me that it made me wonder if there were some truth in it: if I could be in such a battle and not know my own captain, might I be the traitor and not yet know it?

Freddick – Last night in my dream I walked along a path that led through a beautiful garden, immense as a large fief. As I made my way through, the flowers on each side beckoned me to leave the trail and

wander in their ways. I turned to my left, the flowers there seeming fairest, but the flowers on the other side reached out their tendrils and pulled me back toward them. Immediately, the blooms on the left shot out their leafy arms and pulled me back toward them. These seemingly innocent flowers soon proved to be a trap most deadly and I began to fear for my life. I broke through and ran with all my strength to the far end of the garden. When I finally thought myself safe, I came upon a hideous and deformed witch, who in her age had lost her mind. She pointed out her horrible finger and said, "One among you is a traitor! Beware!" I couldn't tell who she meant, but I knew it was one of the band I travel with. She said, "If you don't learn to trust each other, you will perish." She disappeared in an instant. I awoke in a terrible sweat and shaking for fear. I don't know how we can learn to trust each other if one among us is a traitor, but I believe such dreams are a sign of things to come.

Hayson – It's been a long time since I've had a dream, but last night I had one that woke me in a sweat and I almost cried out. I was in a place from long ago that I never wish to revisit. It was the night I saved Iyew's life. But this time, instead of killing Iyew's attacker, I ran and let Iyew be slaughtered. Instead of misery in prison, I found wealth, luxury, ease and power. I was summoned to join the band of heroes, but instead of King Pacrod, a hideous and deformed witch, called us up. When the band assembled, she pointed her horrible finger at me and said, "One among you is a traitor! Beware!" I couldn't tell who she meant, but I knew it was one of the band I travel with. She said, "If you don't learn to trust each other, you will perish." I awoke in a terrible sweat and shaking for fear. The dream was so real to me that it made me wonder if there were some truth in it: if I could let one of our company perish, might I be the traitor and not yet know it?

(Continue to page 21)

(Marshes)

Narrator – With a terrible night of dreams behind them, the band of heroes sets forth on their third day of grueling travel.

LOH – Band, assemble. We should reach Mount Hurg by nightfall, but we must make an arduous trek through a dangerous marsh first. Let us put arguments behind us, and travel in silence.

(The Band begins their journey for the day.)

Narrator – I suggest you save your progress now. If you make the wrong decisions from here, things can get kind of scary.

Norrund – This marsh is as creepy as creepy gets.

Aquayna – I feel the influence of the Dark Wizard here.

Witch – *(offstage, singing)*

Here lieth under this marbill ston,

Riche Alane, the ballid man;

Whether he be safe or nocht,

I recke never -- for he ne roght!

Reyla – What is that sound?

Iyew – Someone's singing.

Farfrum – Norrund, quit that. We are to travel in silence today.

Norrund – It's not me. I'm a baritone.

Farfrum – Do not mock me, fool!

Reyla – That isn't Norrund, Farfrum.

Farfrum – Then who is it?

Iyew – Shh!

Witch – *(bound to a tree)* Good evening, fair travelers!

(The Band discover the Witch tied to a tree, and are startled at her appearance and apparent madness.)

Freddick – A witch!

Iyew – Tied to a tree.

Witch – Off to the circus are ye?

Dreamer – This witch was in my dream last night.

Aquayna – *(or Norrund if Aquayna is the Dreamer)* Sounds like a nightmare.

Witch – Tell me, do the mice still dance at the circus? I used to love how they tasted after a good dance.

Farfrum – This is an evil omen.

Witch – Speak up, pretties. I can't hear you.

Farfrum – Quiet. This witch could be an agent of the dark wizard. The farther we steer from her the better.

Hayson – The woman is tied to a tree, blind, and mad. How much harm can she do us?

Iyew – Hayson is right. This superstition is old-fashioned foolishness..

Witch – Will you untie a poor wretch and take her to the circus?

Narrator – Wise audience, the choice is up to you. You may untie the witch or attempt to sneak by unnoticed. Remember, the choice you make here is very important and could end very badly if you are unwise. By loudest cheer, will you safely sneak by the witch or take a risk and untie her?

You have spoken. The band of heroes will sneak by.

*(Turn to **Witch 1**. Page 23)*

OR

You have spoken. The band of heroes will untie her.

*(Turn to **Witch 2**. Page 25)*

(Witch 1)

LOH – Quiet. Sneak past her.

*(The **Band** begin to sneak past.)*

Witch – *(bursts the ropes tying her to the tree and opens her eyes)* Halt my pretties! Never shall ye reach the circus or anywhere else! To lie to a great witch is certain death!

*(She points out her finger and casts a spell on **Freddick**.)*

Sir Freddick, I turn your heart to stone.

*(**Freddick** freezes)*

Narrator – Freddick turns to a stone statue, frozen in the agony of death.

*(**Reyla** embraces him, and the **two** tumble to the ground. **Reyla** is crushed to death.)*

Reyla, overcome with grief at Freddick's demise, embraces his statuary remains for so long and with such fervency that it falls over and crushes her under its massive weight.

Witch – Iyew and Farfrum, I curse you with brains as large as you think you have!

*(At first gratified, **Farfrum** and **Iyew** soon feel the pain and fall writhing, to the floor before expiring.)*

Narrator – The scientist and the magician's brains immediately swell to twice their sizes, exploding out their eye-sockets and creating a mess too graphic to describe in a family show.

Witch – Princess Aquayna may you never pass gas again!

Aquayna – Thank you.

Narrator – The princess blows up like a balloon and pops in a cloud of stench.

*(**Aquayna** swells up and pops, then falls to the floor, dead.)*

The smell attracts a herd of rabid earthworms that viciously attack Hayson and eat him from the boots up.

*(**Hayson** collapses, first to his knees and then to the floor, writhing in pain the whole time.)*

Witch – Norrun, I curse you with bratwurst!

Norrun – Bratwurst? I love bratwurst.

Narrator – One ton of bratwurst falls from the sky and crushes Norrun under its incredible and tasty weight.

*(**Norrun** is crushed to the ground.)*

Witch – *(menacingly, to the audience)* You have chosen... poorly!

Narrator – Well, our wise audience. Would you like to vote again? Will you take a risk and untie the witch? Let us go back a bit and try a second time.

*(The **Witch** resumes her position, tied to the tree with her eyes shut. The **Band** of heroes revive and take their former places.)*

Witch – Will you untie a poor wretch and take her to the circus?

Freddick – Yes, dear lady. Please accept our assistance. Norrun, untie her.

*(**Norrun** unties her.)*

We are not bound for a circus. We are adventurers on a quest to defeat the evil wizard whose spell has laid siege to this kingdom.

Witch – *(opening her eyes)* You are not the only ones who wish the Dark Wizard to be vanquished. I have little to give you, but what I have I offer. Listen well:

(Iyew rushes to write down the witch's riddle.)

“Like a sun in the glass is the work of the wizard. He who finds the glass will behold the sun and its shadow.”

(stretches forth her finger)

One among you is a traitor! Beware! Now off to the circus for me. I can't wait to get some mice!

(Witch cackles and rushes out.)

Aquayna – Well, that was strange.

Hayson – Iyew, did you get her riddle?

Iyew – Yes. I'll study it as we travel and let you know if anything comes to me.

Farfrum – Sounds like complete gibberish to me. We should have just sneaked past her.

(Turn to Seashore. Page 27)

(Witch 2)

Freddick – Yes, dear lady. Please accept our assistance. Norrun, untie her.

(Norrun unties her.)

We are not bound for a circus. We are adventurers on a quest to defeat the evil wizard whose spell has laid siege to this kingdom.

Witch – *(opens her eyes)* Too bad, my pretties! Never shall ye reach the circus or anywhere else! I am allied with the Dark Wizard! All who oppose him shall perish!

(She points out her finger and casts a spell on Freddick.)

Sir Freddick, I turn your heart to stone.

(Freddick freezes)

Narrator – Freddick turns to a stone statue, frozen in the agony of death.

(Reyla embraces him, and the two tumble to the ground. Reyla is crushed to death.)

Reyla, overcome with grief at Freddick's demise, embraces his statuary remains for so long and with such fervency that it falls over and crushes her under its massive weight.

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Norrun – Bratwurst? I love bratwurst.

Narrator – One ton of bratwurst falls from the sky and crushes Norrun under its incredible and tasty weight.

(Norrun is crushed to the ground.)

Witch – *(menacingly, to the audience)* You have chosen... poorly!

Narrator – Well, our wise audience. Would you like to vote again? Will you sneak by the witch? Let us go back a bit and try a second time.

(The Witch resumes her position, tied to the tree with her eyes shut. The Band of heroes revive and take their former places.)

Witch – Will you untie a poor wretch and take her to the circus?

Freddick – *(whispering to the group)* Let us sneak past. Speak nothing to her. *(All begin to sneak past.)*

Witch – *(bursts the ropes tying her to the tree and opens her eyes)* Halt, my pretties! You were wise not to offend me. I have little to give you, but what I have I offer. Listen well:

(Iyew rushes to write down the witch's riddle.)

“Like a sun in the glass is the work of the wizard. He who finds the glass will behold the sun and its shadow.”

(stretches forth her finger)

One among you is a traitor! Beware! Now off to the circus for me. I can't wait to get some mice!

(Witch cackles and rushes out.)

Aquayna – Well, that was strange.

Hayson – Iyew, did you get her riddle?

Iyew – Yes. I'll study it as we travel and let you know if anything comes to me.

*(Turn to **Seashore**. Page 27)*

(Seashore)

LOH – Let us be on our way. We are almost through the marsh.

Reyla – *(to Freddick as the group travels)* Sir Freddick, Did you hear what the witch said about a traitor?

Freddick – Of course I did. As did all our company. Keep your eyes open. The Book of Heroes may be able to write our words, but it cannot record vigilance.

Iyew – *(to Hayson as the group travels)* Did you hear what the witch said about a traitor?

Hayson – Of course I did. As did all our company.

Iyew – I will be at your side if there's danger, Hayson.

Hayson – Not another word. The Book of Heroes will record our words as well as theirs.

LOH – We are at the end of the marsh. Mount Hurg lies across the sea, there in the distance. We can skirt the waters or boat across.

Aquayna – Boating across would be much faster.

Norrun – And easier.

Farfrum – We should go around. On the west side of the sea there's a bridge leading to the foot of Mount Hurg. We should reach it in five hours' time.

Hayson – Aren't bridges often home to trolls?

Farfrum – The Kraken lurks in these waters and has pulled many a sailor to his grave. It's far more dangerous than trolls.

Norrun – What's a Kraken?

Farfrum – A terrible beast of the sea, as gigantic as it is vicious.

Iyew – There's no such thing.

Farfrum – Do not speak when you do not know. There is most certainly a Kraken in that sea.

Iyew – We have to get to Mount Hurg by sundown. We don't have time for these silly superstitions.

Farfrum – The Kraken is no superstition!

Iyew – Yes it is, magician!

Farfrum – Why must you flout me at every turn, scientist?!

Hayson – I have been across this sea many times and have never seen or heard a Kraken.

Farfrum – Sir Freddick, do you hear them?

Freddick – I've traversed many times and have yet to see such a beast either.

Farfrum – Even you? Curses!

LOH – Enough! We will put it to a vote.

Narrator – Wise audience, you may choose. By loudest cheer, will you take the longer, safer route around the sea, passing the trolls or take the risk of sea monsters on the boats? You have spoken.

The band of heroes will go around the sea.

*(Turn to **Maldrick 1**. Page 28)*

OR

The band of heroes will go over the sea.

*(Turn to **Maldrick 2**. Page 33)*

(Maldrick 1.)

Iyew – Well, great. And all for a ridiculous superstition.

Farfrum – I know the bridge keeper. He will take us across.

Aquayna – But what of the trolls?

Farfrum – Trolls can be difficult to defeat, but they're nothing compared to the dangers of a Kraken.

Iyew – I hope never to hear the word Kraken again!

Norrund – (*teasing Iyew*) Kraken.

LOH – (*Freddick if Iyew is LOH*) Let us make our way to the water's edge. There the bridge keeper will take us across to Mount Hurg.

Reyla – (*to Freddick*) Do you think we're right to follow Farfrum's warning, Freddick?

Freddick – I'm starting to question the magician's thinking. Farfrum has led us into danger on this quest and he may do it again.

Reyla – But aren't you loyal to him, Freddick? Isn't he your friend?

Freddick – I'm loyal to the king and the quest, Reyla. That is my loyalty above all.

Narrator – The sun had gone down by the time the band reached the bridge.

Farfrum – We're here.

Norrund – This place looks like a rat would have it condemned.

Farfrum – (*calling to the keeper*) Maldrick! It's me, Farfrum!

Reyla – Maybe he's not home.

Farfrum – Oh, he's home. He's just a little deaf.

Norrund – A deaf bridge keeper who lives in a rat's nest. Boy, this just couldn't get any better.
(Maldrick enters. He is ancient.)

Farfrum – There you are, Maldrick.

Aquayna and **Norrund** – You're kidding me.

Maldrick – Farfrum, my old friend. When did you get here?

Farfrum – Just a minute ago.

Maldrick – What?

Farfrum – Just a minute ago!

Maldrick – Oh! Well, why didn't you shout for me?

Farfrum – I did.

Maldrick – What?

Farfrum – I did!

Maldrick – Nonsense. I'd have heard you if you did. What can I do for you?

Farfrum – We want to get across –

Maldrick – What?

Freddick – Let me handle this.

(loudly)

We want to get across the bridge to Mount Hurg.

Maldrick – Who are you?

Freddick – I am Freddick, the White Knight.

Maldrick – A White Knight? Heading for Mount Hurg! You must be wanting to battle the Dark Wizard.

Freddick – Yes!

Maldrick – What?

Freddick – Yes, we are!

Maldrick – The force of the Dark Wizard is strong down here. The curse afflicts us all.

Reyla – What can you tell us about the Dark Wizard?

Maldrick – How many of you wish to get across?

Reyla – I said, “What can you tell us of the Dark Wizard?”

Maldrick – I asked you a question first, sir. You’ll have to wait your turn. How many of you wish to get across?

Freddick – There are seven of us.

Maldrick – Oh. I must be hallucinating the eighth one.

Norrin – Oh great.

Reyla – *(very loudly)* What can you tell us about the dark wizard?

Maldrick – You already asked that question, sir. Hold your tongue!

Aquayna – Tell us, good sir. We have heard tale there are trolls beneath your bridge. Have you ever heard of one?

Maldrick – No. I have never heard one.

Reyla – Have you seen one?

Maldrick – What?

Freddick – HAVE YOU EVER SEEN ONE?

Maldrick – No need to shout! No, I’ve never seen one either.

Farfrum – Will you take us across?

Maldrick – Of course! 7 travelers across.... 5 florins each... that’s 35 florins.

Freddick – 35 florins!

Norrin – Holy cow pies!

Hasyon – Do we have 35 florins among us?

Iyew – King Pacrod gave me a purse that can pay almost any cost. We can pay it.

Freddick – I have a better idea. Bridge keeper! Please accept a great gift instead. We have a magic token from the horde of Baltak the Dragon. Please accept this **golden harp/crystal key** as payment for our crossing.

Aquayna – Sir Freddick, no. We may need that later. Let Iyew pay the money.

Freddick – Trust me. I know what I’m doing.

Maldrick – Would you look at that! This is from Baltak the Dragon, eh? You’ve got yourselves a deal!

Aquayna – This bridge looks highly suspect. Is it safe?

Maldrick – Travellers have crossed this bridge for a hundred years.

Aquayna – That does not allay my fear.

Narrator – Freddick furtively steals the Dragon's token from Maldrick's satchel.

Maldrick – I'll lead the way. Follow single file.

Narrator – The adventurers followed Maldrick onto the bridge and began their journey across.

(They embark. Maldrick leads, followed by Farfrum, Reyla, Aquayna, Freddick, Norrun, Hayson and Iyew.)

Reyla – Farfrum, ask this old man about the Dark Wizard. I've had no luck with him.

Farfrum – Maldrick, what can you tell us about the Dark Wizard?

Maldrick – Oh, the Dark Wizard. The Dark Wizard is a terrible force. His powers have covered this land for years. No one knows where to find him, but we all know he's there.

Reyla – Didn't you say he lived atop Mount Hurg?

Maldrick – What?

Reyla – *(louder)* Didn't you say he lived atop Mount Hurg?

Maldrick – I can never hear this man. What did he say?

Farfrum – She said, "Didn't you say he lived atop Mount Hurg?"

Maldrick – No. The Dark Wizard lives atop Mount Hurg. I live down here at the bridge.

Reyla – This is hopeless.

Farfrum – Maldrick is not what he once was. Perhaps the Dark Wizard's evil has driven him out of his wits.

Norrun – Maybe he's senile. Ever think of that?

Maldrick – Here is the end of the bridge. Godspeed to you on your quest.

(Freddick approaches Norrun with the Dragon's token.)

Freddick – *(secretively)* Norrun, put this **harp/key** in your satchel and keep your mouth shut about it.

Norrun – What the...? How did you get this back? I mean... Yes, sir.

Hayson – *(seeing what is going on)* What is this?

Freddick – Mind your own business, Hayson. I'm saving us 35 florins.

Hayson – You're stealing from an old man!

Freddick – You dare lecture me on morality, criminal?

Hayson – I've had enough from you, hypocrite. You'd better pray there's someone here to keep me from throwing you over this bridge.

Aquayna – What's going on, Hayson?

Hayson – Your White Knight is trying to steal the Dragon's **harp/key** back from this old man.

Freddick – Keep your voice down, Hayson. He'll hear you.

Hayson – That's the point, thief!

Reyla – Is this true, Freddick?

Freddick – No.

Hayson – It is. I saw it with my own eyes. Look in the squire's bag.

Reyla – *(pulls the dragon's token from Norrun's bag. To Freddick, in shock)* Traitor!

Maldrick – Shhh. Do you hear that?

(A low menacing noise is heard, followed by angry cries.)

Farfrum – What is it?

Iyew – *(seeing the Trolls approaching)* Trolls!

Reyla – Three of them!

(ALL see the three trolls. They are huge and deadly!)

Maldrick – Grab your swords, men if ye want to live!

Freddick – Reyla, draw swords with me!

Reyla – I won't fight next to a traitor! Join me, Hayson!

Iyew – We'll be safe over here, Aquayna!

(Amid panicked tumult, Iyew draws Aquayna to safety. Maldrick, Freddick, Norrun, Hayson, and Reyla draw swords and give battle to the trolls. Farfrum grabs the Dragon's token and begins to cast a spell with it.)

Reyla – Norrun, what are you doing?

Norrun – I've sat back for long enough. I am for this battle! Take that, troll!

(He lashes out with his sword)

Farfrum – Their skin is like leather. You must strike at the eyes!

Reyla – Easier said than done. You have to get past their clubs first.

Hayson – *(seeing Maldrick is in danger)* Watch out old man!

Maldrick – *(as if seeing them for the first time)* Trolls!

Narrator – One of the trolls picks up the old man and throws him over the bridge.

(Maldrick cries out and leaves the stage.)

Hayson – Farfrum, lend a hand!

Farfrum – Aquayna, use the token as a charm and cast a spell on it. I'll take up a sword.

(Farfrum drops the token and rushes to the battle. Aquayna picks up the dragon's token and begins to work with it.)

Norrun – Hayson, watch out!

Hayson – *(turning to see a huge troll before him)* God protect me!

(Norrun jumps in the way, taking the blow. He is badly wounded and cries out. Iyew rushes to him.)

Hayson – Norrun! He shielded me from the trolls' attack!

Iyew – He's badly hurt.

Aquayna – *(casting a spell with the Dragon's token)*

Thou troll whose clubs o'er power our might,

Turn to rock at sun's first light.

The power of day I make mine own

To turn your bodies into stone.

Narrator – The Dragon's token flashes a light brighter than the sun, turning each troll solid as rock.

Farfrum – She's done it! Strike now!

Narrator – And with a mighty blow, Reyla shattered one of the trolls into rubble, Hayson broke up the second and Freddick finished the third with one last blow.

Farfrum – Well done, my friends!

Reyla – Hayson. You fought bravely to defend us. Forgive my pride.

Hayson – It's forgotten already.

(Norrun cries out again.)

Iyew – Farfrum, lend a hand. Norrun is badly hurt and my skills may not be enough to save him.

Freddick – Let me help.

Farfrum – We don't need the help of one who would steal from an old man.

(Farfrum goes to Iyew and Norrun. Reyla and Hayson stand nearby to watch. Freddick stands alone, cut to the quick, until Aquayna crosses to him.)

Freddick – Isn't there anything I can do?

Aquayna – I think the best thing for you to do now is to keep quiet.

Freddick – How will we get him to the top of Mount Hurg?

(Turn to Mount Hurg. Page 38)

30 more pages to end (including 8 endings)