

KIJE!

A MUSICAL FAIRY TALE

by
Scott L. McGregor

Lyrics by Arthur Benjamin
Music by Arthur Darrell Turner

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Cast of Characters

(In Order of Appearance)

Murphy, the Wizard

Ms. Wiz, the Wizard's wife

Punch, the Jester

Dom, the King

Robin, the Minstrel

Charity Less, a lady-in-waiting

Merrilee Ouigaux-Alon, a lady-in-waiting

Faith Holsom, a lady-in-waiting

Hope, the Princess

Sonny Dey, a courtier

Larsen E. Quivocator, a villainous courtier

The Count Ur-Monet, a courtier

Sir Render, a courtier

Guards, Messengers, Peasants, Servants, Soldiers & Townspeople

Characterizations

WUZ, the land

WUZ is a kingdom under a curse. Things in the kingdom are pretty confused. One of the effects is that most everyone in the kingdom feels lost and without a sense of direction. They think that they want something but they already have it and don't realize it.

Murphy, the Wizard

An absent-minded but somewhat clever old man. Kind and likable. A bit of a wise acre, with fairly bad jokes. Inside him there is great magic, but he has yet to find it; instead he blunders about with poorly executed "tricks". Like Schmendrick in Peter Beagle's *The Last Unicorn*, he wants to find the true magic within himself, but he has confused magic with prestidigitation. His true magic is in his psychology, his ability to see into people's characters and thus predict and manipulate their actions.

Ms. Wiz

A real sexpot. This woman is a sort of Mae West figure whose mind is always on one thing: sex. Ironically, she is married to the cerebral Wizard who encourages her to fulfill her desires through her houseboys and slaves. She married the wizard out of an urge for power and domination, but found that his wizardly powers don't seem to run in that direction. Frustrated, she seeks to dominate in other ways. The wizard's reason for marrying her: alas, another case of Murphy's Law, he drank his own love potion.

Punch, the Jester

A fairly morose character whose grief comes from being a de facto failed comic. Still, a true friend who tries to cheer up the minstrel when he is glum. Punch wants to touch

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people, but he thinks he can't do this because he can't be heard. In fact, his tragedy touches everyone deeply. Since he doesn't realize this, he has turned to drink.

Dom, the King

A tired old man. His only joy is in his daughter. Short-tempered, he frequently wields the power of his office harshly and has intimidated many members of his court. He wants loyal subjects. He sees everyone as lying to him and is thus disappointed with them. He doesn't see that it is their fear of disappointing him and their loyalty to him that makes them try to deceive him, to tell him what they think he wants to hear, in the first place.

Robin, the Minstrel

A bit of Quixote, the minstrel is a romantic young man who lives too much in dreams and is the victim of reality. He is idealistic and struggles to be good and true and comes off as a bit of a "goody-good". He is a Dudley Do-right type. Since he is an outsider, he is even more confused than the others, because he doesn't really comprehend what is going on. In the end he is truly afraid, for while it is fun to dream, when dreams become reality, as his story of Kije does, other people are really affected, and sometimes the effects are not desirable. Moreover, as his story becomes real, he loses control over what goes on in it, and this loss of control is terrifying to him. He wants to be worthy of the princess, but he thinks that his class prevents him. Yet he really is worthy of her on the spiritual plane.

Merrilee Ouigaux-Alon

A simple-minded sort. The dumb-blond-type who just fawns upon any strong or masculine-type man. She thinks she needs physical strength in her man, but really needs a spiritual strength and confidence.

Charity Less

A status climber. She lusts after power and wealth. She's the type who wants to marry a doctor and drive a Cadillac. She thinks that she wants material wealth, but needs spiritual wealth, a friend to share things with.

Faith Holsom

The sensitive type. She is the type who always wants to be mothering someone or something, whether it is a child, a pet, or her husband. She thinks that she needs someone she can mother, but she really needs someone who she can work with as a partner.

Hope, the Princess

A levelheaded but strong-willed young lady with much of the fire of Kate from *The Taming of the Shrew* but with much better manners. She wants love and affection. She wants to be in love with someone worthwhile, a real class act, but she limits herself from finding him by not looking beyond her social class.

Sonny Dey

A sort of a puppy-dog-type character. A perpetual boy who never grows up. Perhaps a little vain about his boyish good looks. A bit more insecure than the rest. He wants to grow up and to be loved, but he thinks he must appear to be a lady-killer (which he is not)

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not) instead of just cute and vulnerable (which he is).

Larsen E. Quivocator

Sort of a Snidely Whiplash character, who does evil not simply because it benefits him, but because he's in love with the idea of evil for its own sake. However, he does not really enjoy real evil as he discovers when he gets his just desserts in the end.

The Count Ur-Monet

A real windbag. Loves to talk just to hear himself speak. Very conceited. Aristocratic and snobby. Sort of a Charles Emerson Winchester-III-type from *M*A*S*H*. He has power and money but thinks he has no friends.

Sir Render

The type who has a good deal of bravado but in reality is afraid of his own shadow. The cowardly-lion-type from *the Wizard of Oz*. He thinks himself a coward (as do those around him) but he is just confused about the difference between being brave and not being afraid. When he learns that it is okay to be afraid, he turns out to be brave indeed.

The Soldiers

These guys are not really cowards, they are tired and lost. They have been running away from battles for ten years, only to be gathered together to fight and run away, once again. It's not so much that they aren't strong, but rather they have no hope of winning. They lack leadership and a reason to fight.

The Guards

Keystone-cops-type of collection of characters. They are dedicated but bumbling. Their motto would probably be "I never get my man".

Townpeople

The Peasants are revolting! That is, they are stupid and dirty and all-around ignorant. Picture the peasants in Monty Python and the Holy Grail.

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Synopsis

The play consists of three acts, each of which is a day, beginning with Wednesday morning and running to Friday night.

In Act I, the wizard and the rest of the kingdom welcome the princess back to Wuz. She has returned to Wuz to select a suitor and get married. The king puts the wizard in charge of the evenings festivities, and the wizard complies with a little magic which fails badly. When this fails, the wizard introduces the minstrel who sings a beautiful ballad, during which the minstrel falls hopelessly in love with the princess. The princess dances with each of the courtiers but is interested in none of them. After the dance, the ladies and Ms. Wiz discuss who they think the princess will marry. She surprises them by telling them that she is interested in none of the courtiers, but shares with them her idea of a dream lover. When the king hears that the princess is not interested in any of the courtiers, he calls the wizard and asks for advice. The wizard suggests a competition, and when the king suggests that the most desirable quality is honesty, the wizard suggests telling a lie and seeing who corrects the king first. The suggested lie is about an imaginary hero, Kije. Unfortunately, none of the courtiers exposes the lie, but rather they all play along inventing fabulous tales of Kije's exploits. The princess hears this and falls in love with Kije. She sings of her love of Kije, as the minstrel sings of his love of the princess. Larson overhears the princess and concludes that she has fallen in love with him.

As Act II begins, Ms. Wiz is pestering her husband for a new slave. We then find the minstrel discussing the futility of his love for the princess with the jester, Punch. Meanwhile the king is worrying about what to do about the princess being in love with the imaginary hero. The wizard suggests that they turn on the heat a little more to see which courtier comes forth first. He suggests that the courtiers be asked to produce Kije. The courtiers are worried that the King will want to hear more, so they contract the minstrel to make up a further story. When the king calls them all together, the minstrel sings his ballad. Then the princess asks the king to send for Kije, which he was planning to do. The courtiers split up to figure out what to do. Larsen's plan is to disguise himself as Kije and seduce the love struck princess. As the seduction is being tried, the minstrel worries about what to do now that he is caught up in the lie. He concludes that he must announce that Kije has died. The guards announce this just as the seduction begins to get serious, and Larsen is exposed. The princess decides to become a nun since she has lost the only man that she loved.

As Act III begins, Larsen is in the stocks, and the minstrel is ashamed of his own involvement. When he finds out how hurt the princess was, he becomes bitterly unhappy. The King is also disturbed as he finds out how the princess is taking it. Hoping again to expose the lie he asks for more news of Kije, but the minstrel sings of the hero's fateful demise. The princess is particularly touched, and suggests that Kije be brought home for a hero's funeral. This suits the King just fine, since he is sure that this will finally expose the lie. The courtiers are worried now, since they must solve this problem without help from Larsen. They go to the ladies and retrieve a wooden box, some stones

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some stones to weight it with, and a coat of arms to drape it with to pretend it is the remains of Kije. When the Minstrel sees the coffin, he decides that the only suiting punishment for his own involvement is to be buried alive. He writes a final letter to the princess purportedly from Kije and climbs in. As things seem to have reached their absolute lowest point, the wizard finally discovers the key to magic that has eluded him. Instead of searching for magic in his books, he turns to his intuition and just guesses. Suddenly his magic is working! Finally it is time for the funeral. The King insists that the courtiers open the coffin, but the courtiers protest. Suddenly the soldiers march up. After having lost battle after battle for 10 years, they have suddenly won the war, inspired by the noble exploits of Kije! The soldiers open the coffin to give Kije the sword of the commander of the enemy. The courtiers are astonished to see a body! The princess reaches over to pin a medal on him, and stabs him with the fastener. The minstrel (transformed by magic into the fancy dress uniform of an officer) cries out in pain revealing that he is still alive. A celebration ensues until it is discovered that he is the minstrel, which he readily admits, thus finally ending the lie of Kije. The princess is hurt until she finds out that it was the minstrel who wrote the final letter. The king is furious, but is guided by the wizard into seeing that the contest has finally produced the most noble person after all. The show ends as the planned wedding is announced and the wedding and victory are celebrated.

Performance Notes

Kije! was originally conceived in 1978 at Haverford College in Haverford, Pennsylvania. It was inspired by a one-paragraph description of the plot of the Russian motion picture *Lt. Kije* which was scored by Prokofiev and which later led to the concert suite of the same name. *Kije!* was conceived as a musical fairy tale that would be enjoyable to both adults and children, mountable on a single set, with a modest ensemble cast of players, with a considerable freedom of interpretation left to the director.

In 1979, the author, Scott McGregor, prepared a short treatment of the planned work for submission to the annual *Scotch'N'Soda* original musical comedy completion held at Carnegie-Mellon University. The treatment was one of three selected finalist candidates, and the author then joined by the lyricist, Arthur Benjamin, and composer, Arthur Darrell Turner, produced the original draft that won the competition. Some additional music and lyrics by others went into the first production so that it could be produced during the traditional Spring Carnival at Carnegie-Mellon University. As a result, the work was produced in April of 1980 by the *Scotch'N'Soda* theater troupe. This work became the source of *Kije!* as it is today.

In the years since 1980, the show has been considerably reworked, featuring many new and revised lyrics and music, as well as substantial changes to the ordering and contents of the scenes. Music and lyrics by others which had been in the original show have been replaced to achieve a higher level of artistic consistency.

Kije!, in its new and revised form, was once again ready for production.

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About the Authors

Scott McGregor, author of *Kije!*, received a Bachelor's degree from Haverford College in 1978, and a Master's degree from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1980. In addition to *Kije!*, he is the author of *Eggs*, and *Subplots*, which were produced at Haverford College, Bryn Mawr College and Carnegie-Mellon University. He is a software entrepreneur in Silicon Valley.

Arthur Benjamin, lyricist, received his Bachelor's degree from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1983, and received a Ph.D from John Hopkins University. As well as writing lyrics, he is an accomplished magician and mentalist, and is the only American-born lightening calculator presently performing. He has appeared on national TV, at Hollywood's Magic Castle and in a number magazines in regards to his accomplishments as a lightening calculator. He is an Associate Professor of Math at Harvey Mudd College.

Arthur Darrell Turner, composer, received his Bachelor's degree in composition from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1984. He has been involved in a number of theatrical ventures in the Pittsburgh area. In addition to composing the music for *Kije!*, he has composed the music for several musicals including a few for which he also wrote the book and lyrics.

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Dedication

To Haverford College's professor Robert Butman,
 who gave me the seeds of *Kije!*,
to collaborators Art Benjamin and Darrel Turner,
 who helped plant and till them,
to Carnegie-Mellon University's Scotch'N'Soda theatre troupe,
 who brought them into the light,
to John Ramuta, Dave Wooldridge, Aaron Tanzer, Diane Mercieca and many other
friends,
 who kept them growing,
to Mary,
 who perserved through all of it,
and to my children, Taylor and James
 who keep me believing in fairy tales.
I dedicate the magic of *Kije!*

--Scott McGregor

Kije!

Set Description

The play utilizes a single set of the Castle of Wuz. The main stage is divided into three main playing levels. The lowest level, the downstage area, represents the bowels of the castle. Down right is the MINSTREL and PUNCH's dungeon room. Down center is an open playing area, and down left is the WIZARD's lab. The next level, the center and upstage floor areas are elevated from the downstage areas by three or four foot tall platforms. This level contains five entrances and is joined to the downstage area by four sets of stairs. The entrances are up right, up center, up left, center right and center left. The stairs are down left, down right, and a pair down center. This level comprises the great hall and various rooms in the castle. The final level consisting of three balconies, center right, up center and center left are balconies adjoining the rooms of the royalty. Specifically, the center right balcony is the KING's balcony, center left is the PRINCESS's balcony and up center is the center passageway.

The play consists of 3 acts, each act being one day in length, starting with Wednesday afternoon. The other acts begin with dawn and end at midnight. Act I begins on Wednesday. There are no breaks between scenes, as the play is designed to flow smoothly from scene to scene without blackouts, through the use of the unified stage areas. All props may be carried on and off stage by the principals who use them. The WIZARD remains on stage at all times¹. When not otherwise occupied, he spends his time in his lab staring into his crystal ball, lit only by dim green light diffused upon him from below the crystal ball.

¹ Except for immediately following his disappearing trick in Act III.

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Act I: Wednesday in Wuz: Birth of Kije

Scene i: Afternoon: The Wizard's Laboratory

(Lights come up revealing the WIZARD in his laboratory.)

Welcome my friends, to the land of Wuz. Let me introduce myself: I am Murphy, the wonderful Wizard of Wuz, our wonderful kingdom ruled by our good king Dom. Surely you've heard of me. No? Well, anyway, I know you've come here in search of entertainment. You look tired, rushed; sit back. Take it easy. Relax. There is no need to think too hard here. Forget the cares of everyday life. No hustle and bustle here. No tension, or distress. Come indulge in a pleasant dream.

Let's see what kind of entertainment I can conjure up for you? *(Wizard begins throwing items into the cauldron)*

Hmmm. Maybe something simple, perhaps? Nothing complex, just a simple story; straightforward, like the fairy tales of old. Yes, that sounds right, just a simple story, with just a hint of excitement or surprise for spice.... Ah, maybe this one... this looks good: I'll just throw in a valiant hero or two and an ignominious villain and his henchmen. *(He taste's the brew)*. No, no, no. It needs something sweet as well. What do we have here? How about a fair princesses in distress, defended by soldiers in great battles? That would do marvelously. Hmm. ... needs more something tart...a fearsome duel, and a poignant poem. Much better... But still not quite balanced ...I'll just add Love, and war...truth and deception...comedy and tragedy...ecstasy and despair...dreams and nightmares...music and dance...and perhaps, if we are very lucky, just maybe a little bit of magic. *(Small puff of smoke from cauldron)*. There we go. If you are looking for something to divert you from your cares, drink with me; I can assure you that you've come to the right place.

Song: A Simple Story

WIZARD

I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU ALL A SIMPLE STORY,
AND EVEN THOUGH MY TALE HAS JUST BEGUN,
I KNOW THAT BY THE TIME THE STORY'S OVER, *(light Punch - frozen)*
YOU'LL ALL BE FILLED WITH FANTASIES AND FUN.

AND I'LL RELEASE YOU FROM ANXIETY,
AND PRESSURES OF SOCIETY, *(light ladies and courtiers - frozen)*
AND WITH LARGE VARIETY,
I'LL TRY,
TO RID THE THINGS THAT TROUBLE YOU, *(light on Ms Wiz - frozen)*
JUST WATCH THE LAND OF DOUBLE-U,
U, Z, WUZ,

Kije!

AND BID ALL YOUR CARES GOOD-BYE.

WIZARD

Let me tell you, you are in for a royal treat tonight. Why, I saw the show last night and it was a marvel of joy and pathos. Yes, I haven't experienced such a perfect mixture of love and sorrow since the day I drank my own love potion by mistake!

MS. WIZ

(Facing away from the Wizard.) Oh, Wizard! Oh, where have you disappeared to now?

WIZARD

Well, anyway, as I was saying, there will be singing, and dancing, humor, dreams and maybe even a little bit of magic! *(That's my favorite part.)* Why, I'm working on a new trick right now. Here, let me show you.

I will now make these three different size ropes all into the same size! Hocus Pocus! (...or is it Abracadaba?) *(Wand flashes.)* Presto! *(Produces one long rope instead.)* Hmmmm. No doubt about it, I've got to get a new rope. I guess it's like my mother used to say to me, "Murphy, if anything can go wrong, it will!"

(Enter PUNCH in a drunken stupor.)

PUNCH

(Silently pantomimes and mouths and signs:) This is just great! How will any of the kingdom's problems be solved when our own wizard can't even pull off a simple trick like that?

WIZARD

Now folks this is Punch our dear jester. He used to assist me. I am afraid he is not a big magic fan the last ten years. You see, he once made an uncomplimentary remark while I was performing my magic. So I said, "If you can say anything good then people won't listen to you at all". *(Wand flashes again, inadvertently; PUNCH staggers a bit.)* And since then I am afraid, accidentally, that has been the case. No one in the kingdom has been able to hear him. It's been tough on his stand up comedy career. And I think he is still a bit peeved at me.

Punch, I'm very sorry! I think it must be the way I was holding the wand...Or maybe...? Anyway the answer must be in this Introductory Magic book somewhere! What do you think I should do with it, Punch? *(PUNCH gestures crudely.)* WELL!... You are supposed to be a jester, not a gesturer. You better run on now, Punch. I promise that I'll work on your problem later. I have to prepare for the princess' entertainment right now...

Song: Trick of the Trade

(SUNG) WHENEVER THERE'S A HASSLE IN THE CASTLE,
AND EVERYONE IS GLOOMY AND DEPRESSED,

Kije!

THE KING JUST CALLS UPON HIS SIMPLE SERVANT,
AND HAS ME DO THE THING THAT I DO BEST.

OH YES, I'M BLESSED WITH GREAT ABILITIES
OF ENDING ALL HOSTILITIES
AND IF YOU'RE FEELING ILL AT EASE
OR SAD,
I'LL UTILIZE UTILITIES,
AND FORMULATE FACILITIES,
AND THEN YOU'LL SEE
THAT THINGS WON'T BE
QUITE SO BAD.

Oh! The princess -- I forgot to tell you. It's my job to make sure that she marries the worthiest man in the kingdom. A man of vision, heart and feeling. A man with dreams. A man who is courageously honest. I must admit that I've had my eye on someone for a while, but I'm not sure just yet how to make the match. Anyway, I must prepare things immediately. In fact, I think I hear the king saying...

Scene ii: Afternoon: The Great Hall

(The cast gathers in the center stage area. At right we see the three COURTIERS: The COUNT, SIR RENDER and SONNY, with their three admiring LADIES: MERRILEE, FAITH and CHARITY, standing nearby looking on. Center is LARSEN who is frightening a bunch of peasants and townspeople who are standing left. Behind him stands MS. WIZ, ordering servants around and ogling young boys).

(Flourish; Enter KING and PRINCESS.)

KING

This day, my daughter, Hope, has returned to Wuz to choose the most worthy man in the kingdom for her husband. And this being Wednesday, and because I believe in long courtships, she shall have until noon Saturday to enjoy her last hours of prenuptial bliss. Hope, let me introduce to our fine courtiers: Larsen, the Count Ur-Monet, Sir Render and Sonny Dey. Gentlemen, this is my daughter, now as courtiers you should prepare to court her.

Wizard, have you prepared some special entertainment for our celebration?

WIZARD

Er-- Naturally, I found the worthiest entertainment that I could find. *(Refers to magic book.)*

"TURN A SCREW, TURN A PHRASE,
IN ENDLESS PALINDROMES.

Kije!

CALL SUBWAY SYLPHS AND TURNSTILE TROLLS
AND MIDTOWN METRO-GNOMES!"

(Flash pot in cauldron goes off.) Rats, out of tokens. (MINSTREL is thrust in center, followed by two GUARDS.)

GUARDS

We found this man snooping outside! Shall we kill him now?

KING

Why are you here?

MINSTREL

I was walking when two roads diverged in the wood. A kindly old man said "Go left young man, Go left". So, although it seemed the less traveled, I took the leftward track and that has made all the difference.

WIZARD

(Noticing the minstrel is carrying a musical instrument, he brightens.) Oh, I was wondering where he was! Free him -- this man must be the minstrel I have summoned up to perform tonight. *(Dramatic magic gesture).* You wouldn't believe the exhausting preparations that I have gone through to bring him here. *(Wipes brow).*

KING

Very well then. And now, let us hear from the minstrel who is before us tonight. Minstrel! Play for us!

(The MINSTREL, frightened, goes with the WIZARD's story and begins singing. The PRINCESS begins to dance with each of the COURTIERS as the MINSTREL plays. Several times she makes false steps to dance with the minstrel until she notices he is only a minstrel and quickly moves to a different courtier to dance with. With each feigned dance the minstrel falls deeper in love. Each Courtier preens for the Princess as they dance with her.)

Song: I Have Dreamed

MINSTREL

LET ME WARM YOUR HEARTS WITH SONGS OF VICTORY.
THEY'RE IN MY DREAMS.
LET ME EMPTY THEM WITH TALES OF TRAGEDY.
THEY'RE IN MY DREAMS.

LET ME FILL YOUR THOUGHTS WITH FEATS OF MYSTERY.
THEY'RE IN MY DREAMS.
LISTEN TO MY WORDS OF TWISTED HISTORY.
THEY'RE IN MY DREAMS.

Kije!

I HAVE DREAMED OF BEAUTY IN THE SKIES ABOVE.
I HAVE DREAMED OF TRUTH. I'VE DREAMED OF LOVE.
AND A THOUSAND OTHER THEMES IN MY DREAMS.

I HAVE DREAMED AND IN MY DREAMS I'VE SEEN THE WORLD
DESTROYED BY MEN.
I HAVE DREAMED AND IN MY DREAMS I'VE SEEN THE WORLD
BROUGHT BACK AGAIN.

THOUGH I'LL NEVER LIVE ALL THAT I PLAN TO SEE,
SOMEDAY I'LL DIE
IN A FANTASY.
AND THAT IS WHY I DREAM.
COME AND SHARE MY DREAM.

KING

Very good, minstrel, you'll stay on for the wedding. Guards! (the guards block the minstrel's exit) Now the day's entertainment is complete. And I have a special announcement to make: I would like to reward some dedicated servants of the kingdom tonight with a special award. (*The COURTIERS preen themselves in expectation, only to be disappointed.*) As my daughter has returned and has yet no servants, Merrilee, Faith and Charity, I now pronounce you ladies-in-waiting. You may now go to the Princess' chambers and wait. Daughter, you may retire to your chambers to consider your decision. (*PRINCESS exits.*)

MINSTREL

(*To PUNCH.*) It's so sad, this lowly minstrel in love with a lovely princess. A sadder tale than any of the ballads of old.

(*Exit all.*)

Scene iii: Evening: The Princess' Chamber

(*Enter LADIES left rear in darkness with dress form, cedar chest and vanity.*)

(*Lights shift to the ladies up stage which is set up as the Princess' dressing room. The room contains a dress form, a cedar chest, and a vanity table with a mirror frame. The mirror has been removed so that the audience may see through. The ladies are laughing.*)

CHARITY

How long do you think it will take for the Princess to make her decision?

MERRILEE

I can't see it being very hard. Sir Render is the obvious choice. He's so brave!

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CHARITY

Sir Render! What do you know? She'll pick the Count. He's so wealthy...

MERRILEE

What! The Count Ur-Monet? Ha! How could anyone choose that old windbag!

FAITH

I think she'll pick Sonny. He's so cuddly, he reminds me of a teddy bear.

CHARITY

Sonny! Come on. How would you care to make a wager on that?

FAITH

Certainly, I'll wager my antique cedar chest.

CHARITY

Come on, that worm-eaten old thing! *(She kicks it and the end panel comes loose.)* What about you, Merrilee, what do you have to offer?

MERRILEE

I'll bet my tapestry.

CHARITY

That thing? It looks more like a coat of arms than a tapestry.

FAITH

The one with that funny bird on it?

MERRILEE

It's a phoenix.

CHARITY

Oh, is that what it is? I thought it was a turkey!

MERRILEE

Well then, what about you? Are you afraid to wager?

CHARITY

I'll wager my gem collection.

MERRILEE

Gems! They're hardly better than rocks.

CHARITY

Some people have no taste!

Kije!

FAITH

Come on, are we agreed?

ALL

Okay. Done.

(Enter MS. WIZ.)

MS. WIZ

Have you seen my husband? He's always disappearing. I wish he'd get me that new slave I've wanted. Every woman ought to have a slave.

FAITH

Ms. Wiz, who do you think the princess will choose?

MS. WIZ

I don't know what the princess wants in a man, but listen to the voice of experience, girls. I know what I want in my man! *(Whistles.)* Hey, boys! *(Reaches off stage and yanks LARSEN in by his tie. COURTIERS, MINSTREL and PUNCH follow.)*

Song: I Want a Man

MS. WIZ

MUST MY MAN HAVE MULTITUDES OF MONEY?
NO. *(“WHEW!” FROM COUNT.)*
NEED HE BE BOMBASTIC, BOLD, AND BRAVE?
UH-UH. *(SIR RENDER MOPS BROW.)*
CHARISMATIC, CUTE, AND CUDDILY?
DON'T BE FUNNY--HONEY. *(SONNY SIGHS WITH RELIEF.)*
I WANT A SUPER, SENSUAL, SEXY, SERVING SLAVE.

I WANT A MAN TO MANEUVER,
A MAN WHO IS ABLE
TO CLEAN THE MANURE
FROM OUT OF THE STABLE.
FOR CHRISTMAS JUST ONE TOY COULD BRING ME JOY,
AND THAT'S A BOY I CAN EMPLOY, AND THEN ENJOY.

I WANT A MAN FOR A PILLOW,
A MAN FOR A MATE,
A MAN I CAN MANAGE AND (UH) MANIPULATE.
WORK HIM TO THE BONE, DON'T LET HIM REST ANY,
AND THIS IS WHAT I CALL...MANIFEST DESTINY.

I WALKED FROM MAINE TO MANITOBA
BUT IT SEEMS THAT THERE IS NOBODY

Kije!

WHO WANTS TO BE A SLAVE ANY MORE.

WIZARD

(Spotlight wizard in Lab.) THERE'S NOT MUCH LEFT TO BE DESIRED
WHEN YOUR WAND IS LIMP AND TIRED *(Wand goes limp.)*
AND A HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FOUR.

CHARITY

GENERALLY,
MEN ARE ALL E-
QUAL IN MY EYES.

MERRILEE

I ROMANCE A LOT
OF LANCELOT
AND A LOT OF OTHER GUYS;

FAITH

BUT WHAT I'M AFTER,
I DON'T HAVE TO HAVE A
CAVALIER.

MS. WIZ

I 'LL TAKE A GRUBBY! CHUBBY! HUBBY, *(WIZARD vanishes as spot goes out.)*
IF HE DOESN'T DISAPPEAR.

I WANT A MAN WHO IS HANDY,
(Exit COURTIERS.)

LADIES

A MAN SHE CAN GRATE,

MS. WIZ

A MAN I CAN MANDATORILY MANDATE.

ALL

AND SO EACH DAY, I'LL SAY AND PRAY AGAIN,
I WANT A MAN,
A MANLY MAN.
OH MAN, OH MAN
A MAN.
AMEN.

MS. WIZ

What am I going to do about that husband of mine? There are rabbits running loose all over the house! They're jumping out of every hat in sight. *(Enter PRINCESS up left. LADIES help her change into a new gown.)*

Kije!

MERRILEE

Have you decided who you will marry?

PRINCESS

I don't want to marry!

CHARITY

What? You don't want to marry? Are you joking? You can have your choice of any man in the land. There's the Count... Sir Render... Sonny...even Larsen.

PRINCESS

Larsen! Ha! he's nothing but a two-bit villain. And the rest, nothing but liars and cheats. No, I don't want any of them. They're all a bunch of yes men. They're all afraid of my father. Every word he says they hang on. They follow his every command like mindless little puppies. There's nothing he could say that they wouldn't agree with! Why, he could tell the most marvelous lie and they'd never contradict him. I just can't marry that kind of man!

FAITH

Then there is someone. (*Music begins.*)

PRINCESS

Well yes, there IS someone. I mean, I'll know him when we meet...

CHARITY

What makes him so special?

MERRILEE

Tell us what he's like.

Song: Gentle

PRINCESS

GENTLE--THAT'S HOW I DESCRIBE HIS HEART.

TRULY--THAT'S HOW HE CARES.

A SOLDIER- ONE WHO'D SURRENDER HIS LIFE FOR ME.

AND FAITHFUL--THAT I WILL KNOW FROM THE START.

FREELY--THAT'S HOW HE SHARES.

AND WEALTHY--WILLING TO SPEND ALL HIS TIME WITH ME.

WHEN HE ARRIVES--

HE'LL TAKE ME TO HIS HEART

AND HOLD ME AND LOVE ME AS A MAN SHOULD LOVE HIS WIFE.

HE'LL FILL MY SOUL WITH THRILLS OF LOVE UNIMAGINED.

Kije!

IF HE'D ONLY HURRY TO ME--

FOR HIM WHO DESERVES MY HAND
HE MUST BE

ALL

WORTHY,
GRACIOUS, SOMETIMES BOLD,
YET SMART, SO REFINED
WITH NO LOFTY AIRS.
AND INWARD,
SHARING HIS SECRETS
WITH THE ONE HE LOVES
AND I'M THE ONE HE LOVES.

LORD WHEN HE ARRIVES,
HE'LL TAKE ME TO HIS HEART
AND HOLD ME AND LOVE ME,
AS A MAN SHOULD LOVE HIS WIFE.
HE'LL FILL MY SOUL,
WITH THRILLS OF LOVE UNIMAGINED;
IF ONLY HE'D HURRY TO ME;
IF ONLY HE'D HURRY TO ME.
FOR HIM WHO DESERVES MY HEART,
HE MUST BE GENTLE,
GENTLE...

PRINCESS

What do you think?

MERRILEE

You may never meet him.

FAITH

Well, that'll leave Sonny for me!

CHARITY

And the Count for me!

MERRILEE

And Sir Render for me!

CHARITY

But what about your father?

MERRILEE

She can't marry him, they're already related.

Kije!

CHARITY

I know that! I mean, what will your father say? He has the wedding all planned for Saturday.

PRINCESS

I know, but I don't care. I'll go tell him now. I'm not afraid to tell him I'm not going to marry. (*Exit PRINCESS.*)

(Exit all.)

Scene iv: Night: The Great Hall

(Enter KING & SERVANT on King's balcony.)

KING

Send for the wizard!

SERVANT

Send for the wizard.

WIZARD

(Flash pot fizzles, WIZARD stumbles forward, below.) Damned imports! What is it, King?

KING

Wiz, what'll I do? The princess doesn't want to marry anyone. She says they're all liars and cheats.

WIZARD

Well, the thing to do is to set up a contest, a puzzle or a competition -- then the one who wins is the right man for your daughter. There's a long history of this sort of thing.

KING

But, is it in vogue?

WIZARD

No, but I believe it's in Better Castles and Gardens...

KING

(KING misses joke.) How would it work?

WIZARD

Kije!

It depends upon the qualities you seek. For the fleetest of foot, a race, for the bravest, a dragon slaying, for the most intelligent, a puzzle, for the worldly-wise, a scavenger hunt.

KING

What about integrity? the most honest? the courage to tell the truth?

WIZARD

A good choice, Sire, but rather difficult. Let's see... Well, maybe a cherry tree chopping contest? (*Stern look from king.*) No, that wouldn't do, would it. How about this, you tell a lie yourself and see who dares to correct you and who goes along with the lie. That'll separate the men from the boys, if you know what I mean. Now, let's see, how to package the lie... Sire, tell them this: that in looking through some of the old military reports you noticed the name of a young soldier... (*sneezes*) Kije..., and ask to hear more of him. That ought to set the trap, and we'll just see who we catch.

KING

Capital! A truly monumental idea. Now I'll send for the courtiers and we can spring my trap. Ah, the benefits of working at home! A man's home truly is his castle. Send for the courtiers!

(Exit the servant. Offstage voices are heard calling "Send for the courtiers". Other members of the court drift in one by one. The PRINCESS appears on her balcony.)

(Enter COURTIERS. Enter MESSENGER. Reads singing telegram war dispatch to COURTIERS out of earshot of KING.)

LARSEN

What news have you from the front, man?

Song: Singing Telegram

MESSENGER

HERE'S THE LATEST DISPATCH FROM THE COURIERS,
ABOUT OUR NUTSY, GUTSY, KLUTZY WARRIORS.
ALTHOUGH THE FIGHT WE HAD LAST NIGHT WAS NOT TOO GOOD,
THEY DID THE BEST THEY COULD.

SONNY

Oh no, not another loss! What will we tell the king?

LARSEN

Don't worry, he'll probably never ask.

SERVANT

Kije!

His royal highness, King Dom of Wuz, has called this special audience to inquire about the state of the kingdom of Wuz and its war with its neighbor, Wuzn't.

COURTIERS

(To LARSEN.) Larsen! now what do we do?

LARSEN

Don't worry, I'll think of something.

KING

(Aside.) Now we'll see if these courtiers really are just a bunch of yes men. *(To the COURTIERS.)* Ahem, isn't it true that the sun rises in the west?

LARSEN

Yes, Sire, in our kingdom it does! *(COURTIERS agree.)*

KING

And isn't it true that geese fly north for the winter?

COURTIERS

Just as you say, Sire. Who could ever deny it?

KING

Very well, now, who will tell me about the latest dispatches from the front?

COUNT

What would you like to hear?

KING

Tell me how is the war going.

(Each of the COURTIERS looks at one another for an answer.)

LARSEN

(Pausing with deliberation.) Oh, Sire, it's never been better!

KING

Really?

COUNT

(Pausing to consider.) We've demonstrated remarkable consistency...

SONNY

(Thoughtfully.) Yes, We've never had so many victories before!

SIR RENDER

(Thoughtlessly.) We're so good I can't believe it!

Kije!

KING

I'll bet! Anyway, I want to know a little bit about this distinguished young man--what was his name--Kije? (*winks at audience*) that I read about in yesterday's reports. Have you heard about him?

(*Each of the COURTIERS looks at one another for an answer.*)

LARSEN

(*Pausing again with deliberation.*) Oh yes, we've heard nothing but praises!

COUNT

(*Carefully.*) Not a soul is braver.

SONNY

(*Thoughtfully, again.*) I can't think of a man like him.

SIR RENDER

(*Thoughtlessly, again.*) Yeah, he's damn good!

KING

Interesting. Tell me more.

LARSEN

What more can we say? The man's positively a hero!

KING

Well, maybe you can remind me of some of his exploits. They're getting a little foggy.

LARSEN

Uh, which ones would you like to hear about?

KING

Why not tell me about all of them?

COURTIERS

All of them?

KING

All of them!

LARSEN

Just a moment. (*The COURTIERS huddle.*)

Kije!

Song: The Grand and Glorious Kije

COUNT

THE GRAND AND GLORIOUS KIJÉ THE GREAT
THE MEANEST, KEENEST WARRIOR IN THE STATE.
NOW IF YOU LISTEN SIRE
I WILL TELL YOU OF THE FIRE-
BREATHING DRAGON THAT HE DID OBLITERATE.

SONNY

ONE MORNING KIJÉ WAS A-WALKING IN THE WOODS
A-STALKING SAVAGE WILD GAME
WHEN SUDDENLY A DRAGON
WITH ITS TAIL A-WAGGIN'
FLUNG A FIERCE AND FIERY FLAME.

SIR RENDER

AND THEN WITHOUT A MOMENT'S PAUSE
AND TRAVELING AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT
HE GRABBED THE MONSTER BY ITS CLAWS
AND TOSSED THE CREATURE OUT OF SIGHT.

LARSEN

OH IT WAS KIJÉ, VALIANT KIJÉ.
WISER THAN ANY PRIEST
AND STRONGER THAN ANY BEAST.
THAT'S KIJÉ, GALLANT KIJÉ
I HAVEN'T SEEN SUCH A WARRIOR
FOR A YEAR
AT LEAST.

KING

SUCH A NOBLE QUEST.
MEN, I AM IMPRESSED.
BUT MY MEMORY STILL FAILS ME
TELL ME MORE!

LARSEN

(Spoken.) Excuse me. *(The COURTIERS huddle.)*

COUNT

THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS KIJÉ THE GRAND
THE COOLEST, CRUELEST HERO IN THE LAND.
NOW IF YOU LISTEN CLOSELY
I WILL TELL YOU QUITE VERBOSELY
OF A FEAT HE MANAGED WITH HIS VERY HAND.

Kije!

SONNY

HE SLEW A SCORE OF SOLDIERS IN A SINGLE SWOOP
WITH HIS ASTOUNDING SILVER SWORD
AND WOULD NOT STOP TO REST
UNTIL HE WAS IMPRESSED
THAT ALL THE ENEMY WAS GORED.

SIR RENDER

AND FOLLOWING THE BATTLE
ALL THE VILLAGE PEOPLE CAME
AND THEY WERE SO DELIGHTED THAT
THE PEOPLE SHOUTED OUT HIS NAME.

CHORUS

THEY SHOUTED KIJE, VALIANT KIJE.

COURTIERS

INVINCIBLE TO ALL
WE'LL NEVER SEE HIM FALL.

ALL

THAT'S KIJE, GALLANT KIJE.

LARSEN

YOU'LL NEVER FIND HIM UNAWARE
ANYWHERE AT ALL.
THAT'S THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS KIJE, THE GRAND.

COURTIERS

THAT'S THE GRAND AND GLORIOUS KIJE, THE GREAT.

KING

PLEASE TELL ME MORE...

SIR RENDER

(Spoken.) He wants to hear more! *(They huddle.)*

SONNY

NOBODY'S BLOOD IS BLUER
AND NO ONE'S TONGUE IS TRUER
THAN THAT POWERFUL PURSUER
OF VIRTUE.

COUNT

YOU'LL FIND IN EACH ENDEAVOR
HIS MIND IS VERY CLEVER.

Kije!

SIR RENDER

AND HE'LL NEVER EVER REALLY WANT TO HURT YOU.

COURTIERS

THAT'S THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS KIJE THE GRAND.

SIR RENDER

MORE? (*Blank stares from all COURTIERS.*)

KING

MORE.

COUNT

MORE???

LARSEN

MORE.

LARSEN

(*Spoken.*) All right guys, I'll start.

(*Sung.*) THE GRAND AND GLORIOUS KIJE THE GREAT.

(*Spoken.*) Your turn, Sir Render.

SIR RENDER

(*Spoken.*) Uh, Thank you.

WE'VE TOLD YOU ALMOST ALL THAT THERE IS TO STATE.

COUNT AND SONNY

AND SO WE WILL NOT BORE YOU
BY ELABORATING FOR YOU.

COURTIERS

AND OUR TOUCHING TALE'S ABOUT TO TERMINATE.

CHORUS

OH YES IT'S KIJE, VALIANT KIJE.
SO IMPRESSED ARE WE
UNANIMOUSLY AGREE
ON KIJE, GALLANT KIJE.
I HAVEN'T SEEN SUCH A WARRIOR
LIKE KIJE.
OH KIJE, VALIANT KIJE,
INVINCIBLE TO ALL
WE'LL NEVER SEE HIM FALL.
OH KIJE, GALLANT KIJE
YOU'LL NEVER FIND HIM UNAWARE
ANYWHERE AT ALL.

Kije!

OH KIJE, VALIANT KIJE,
INVINCIBLE TO ALL
WE'LL NEVER SEE HIM FALL.
OH KIJE, GALLANT KIJE
YOU'LL NEVER FIND HIM UNAWARE, UNAWARE, UNAWARE
ANYWHERE AT ALL.
THAT'S THE GRAND AND GLORIOUS KIJE, THE GREAT.

(While the CHORUS sings, the COURTIERS disappear into the crowd.)

KING

Courtiers! Gone. I thought so. Well, good night all. Oh, one more thing, I think I'd like to hear a little more about this Kije tomorrow. *(Exit KING. The crowd disperses, revealing the COURTIERS again.)*

SIR RENDER

What are we going to do? He wants to hear more tomorrow.

SONNY

We'll never be able to come up with enough stories to satisfy the King.

LARSEN

We'll get the minstrel to write the stories. This is his kind of thing.

COUNT

An unqualified good idea. Let's get him. *(Exit the COUNT, SIR RENDER, and SONNY.)*

PRINCESS

Strong, sensitive, witty, suave and...cute. I think I've found my hero.

LARSEN

She must mean me!

Song: Love At Last

PRINCESS

I'M FEELING OH SO VERY, VERY
ECSTATIC AND EXCITED.
BECAUSE I THINK THAT I'M IN LOVE AT LAST.

AND IT'S SO EXTRAORDINARY.
I'M FEELING SO DELIGHTED.
BECAUSE I THINK THAT I'M IN LOVE AT LAST.

THIS MAN OF MINE
IS SO DIVINE

Kije!

AND GENTLEMANLY-LIKE AND CLEVER.
WE'LL MARRY SOON,
OUR HONEYMOON
WILL ALMOST POSITIVELY LAST FOREVER.

AND SO I'M READY NOW TO MARRY.
I YEARN TO BE UNITED.
DESPITE WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING IN THE TIME GONE PAST.
BECAUSE I THINK THAT I'M IN LOVE AT LAST.

MINSTREL

MY HEART STARTS BEATING, BEATING FASTER
WHENEVER I'M AROUND HER
AND I THINK THAT I'M IN LOVE AT LAST.

YOU KNOW I'M NOTHING BUT DISASTER
SINCE ON THAT DAY I FOUND HER
AND I THINK THAT I'M IN LOVE AT LAST.

IT ALWAYS SEEMS
MY RESTLESS DREAMS
ARE FILLED WITH FANTASIES ABOUT HER.
OH, GOD, I CRY
I DOUBT THAT I
WOULD EVER BE AT TOTAL EASE WITHOUT HER.

WHENEVER I AM WALKING PAST HER
MY CRAVING GROWS DEEPER.
I'VE NEVER FELT THIS WAY BEFORE IN ALL MY PAST.
BECAUSE I THINK THAT I'M IN LOVE AT LAST.

LARSEN

IT SEEMS LIKE SHE HAS FOUND HER HERO
SHE'S EVER SO ELATED
AND I THINK THAT I AM LOVED AT LAST.

PRINCESS

I LONG FOR THE MOMENT TO BE HELD IN MY LOVER'S ARMS.

LARSEN

YOU KNOW THAT I'M SECOND TO ZERO
AND GROSSLY UNDERRATED
AND I THINK THAT I AM LOVED AT LAST

MINSTREL

ALL OF MY RESISTANCE HAS BEEN JOLTED BY HER CHARMS.

Kije!

LARSEN

MY NOSE, MY EYES,
MY TOES, MY THIGHS,
MY POLISHED TEETH AND CLEAR COMPLEXION,
MY CHEST, MY CHIN,
JUST TURNS ME IN
TO A CREATURE ALMOST TOO GOOD FOR PERFECTION. HA HA!
I HEARD HER CRY OUT TO HER HERO
SHE'S READY TO BE MATED.
AND I'VE A PERSONALITY THAT'S...

PRINCESS

TIME GONE PAST, MY THOUGHTS HAVE NEVER BEEN SO CLOUDY

MINSTREL

ALL MY PAST, I DON'T KNOW HOW I'VE LIVED WITHOUT THEE

LARSEN

UNSURPASSED, SOMETIMES I EVEN DREAM ABOUT ME.
I THINK I AM LOVED...

MINSTREL

I THINK I'M IN LOVE...

PRINCESS

I THINK I'M IN LOVE...

ALL

AT LAST.

(Exit MINSTREL. Enter KING on PRINCESS' balcony.)

KING

(To PRINCESS.) Hello, dear.

PRINCESS

(Startled from her reveries.) Oh, hello father, I've decided who I will marry.

KING

You have? I knew you would come to your senses soon enough. Well then, who is it.

PRINCESS

The brave young hero, Kije!

LARSEN

(Eavesdropping below.) Kije?

Kije!

KING

Kije?

PRINCESS

Kije!

(Blackout.)

Kije!

Act II: Thursday in Wuz: The Story of Kije

Scene i: Dawn: The Wizard's Laboratory

(Enter WIZARD in his laboratory.)

Song: A Simple Story (reprise)

WIZARD

WELL IT LOOKS AS THOUGH IT'S NOT A SIMPLE STORY,
AND WHILE THE WAR HAS YET TO BE WON.
IF I CAN FIND THE MAGIC THAT'S WITHIN ME,
THEN SOON OUR TROUBLES WILL BE OVER AND DONE.

AND I'LL PURSUE MY INVESTIGATIONS
INTO PRESTIDIGITATIONS,
AND SOON THESE INFESTATIONS
WILL FLY.
THEN WHEN THE CAULDRON BUBBLES YOU
CAN BE SURE THE LAND OF W-
U-Z, WUZ, WILL SOON BE DOING FINE.

Well, welcome back, welcome back. How are you enjoying our little land of Wuz. You're just in time to see my latest magic trick, changing water into wine. *(Attempts and fails.)* Oh, well. Wasn't last night's entertainment absolutely magical? Why, I haven't seen the castle so full since the time I blew off my wife's girdle by mistake!

MS. WIZ

(Offstage.) Oh, Wizard? Where's that slave I've been asking for I just can't last another day without one. Now don't forget!

WIZARD

Yes, dear, I'm working on it... You know, several members of the court are quite taken with this minstrel, and well, I have to admit I am developing a little affection for him myself. I'll have to look in on him from time to time, just to make sure that he isn't getting into any trouble. In fact, I might just do that now, seeing that I have not too much else to do.

"GYPSY CABS AND GYPSY MOTHS
GO FLUTTERING AROUND THE TOWN.
MEANWHILE IN THIS LITTLE LAND OF OURS,
THE ELEVATOR'S STUCK BETWEEN UP AND DOWN."

Kije!

(Flash pot goes off. WIZARD struggles to get smoke out of way.) Ahem, I guess we'll just have to take the stairs. *(Exits.)*

Scene ii: Morning: The Dungeon

(Lights shift to the MINSTREL and PUNCH who are discovered in the dungeon in a room fashioned into the Minstrel's dressing room.)

MINSTREL

Oh Punch, here I am, in the castle but a day, lucky to be performing instead of sitting in the dungeon with the rest of my fellow travelers, and what happens? Like a fool--

(PUNCH signals "Who, me?".)

No, I didn't mean you, I mean like a foolish person, I fall in love. Not in love with someone obtainable, but like the women in songs, someone incredibly beautiful, and equally unattainable. Who am I to fall in love with someone like the princess. I'm not just in a lower class, I'm in a whole different school.

(PUNCH puts on his dunce cap and then stands in the corner.)

No, not that kind of principal. It's principles of logic, it's Love. Do you know how painful love can be?

(PUNCH pretends he's a bee, buzzing around and stinging the minstrel.)

Ah yes, that's just it. Love stings. Last night, I was in pure ecstasy. My heart sung and my love carried me away on gossamer dragonfly wings. But today, the dragonfly has flown and left only its sting as a memory. I realize now what I could not see in the last night's moment of blissful inspiration. I will be forever divided from my love. Oh, what to do?

(PUNCH offers him a bottle. He refuses.)

Oh, Punch, it's no use! I might as well die a thousand violent deaths.

Song: We are Divided

MINSTREL

SHE'S SO FAIR AND BEAUTIFUL
WHILE I AM POOR AND PLAIN
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO TO FUL-
FILL THE YEARNING IN MY BRAIN.

Kije!

NOW LIFE GETS COMPLICATED
AND LOVING BECOMES A CRIME
FOR WE ARE SEPARATED
BY A MOUNTAIN TOO HIGH TO CLIMB.

SHE'S OF THE NOBILITY
I'M A LOWLY PLAYER
AND BASED ON PROBABILITY
I'VE NOT A HOLY PRAYER.

NOW IF MY WAY WAS GUIDED
TO PRACTICE AND REACH MY PRIME
WE STILL WOULD BE DIVIDED
BY A MOUNTAIN TOO HIGH TO CLIMB

OH, IF HER FACE WERE SUCH,
SHE WOULDN'T TOUCH THE HEART SO MUCH
OR MAYBE EFFERVESCE
WITH CLEVERNESS
A LITTLE LESS.

FOR THEN THERE JUST MIGHT BE
THE SLIGHTEST HOPE FOR ME.

AND EVEN IF I WERE THE CLEVEREST,
ENDEAVOREST,
AND I COULD CLIMB MOUNT EVEREST
I'D NEVER REST
UNTIL MY CLEVER SKILL
COULD TOPPLE THAT HIGH HILL.

SHE'S SO FAIR AND BEAUTIFUL
WHILE I AM POOR AND PLAIN
IS THERE NOTHING I CAN DO TO END
THE BURNING AND THE PAIN?

(Exit.)

Scene iii: Noon: The Great Hall

(Enter the KING and 2 SERVANTS on Royal Balcony.)

KING

I want to see the wizard!

SERVANT

Kije!

The king wants to see the wizard.

SERVANT 2

The king wants to see the wizard.

(Enter WIZARD in Great Hall, up right.)

WIZARD

The king wants to see me.

SERVANT

Presenting the Wizard.

SERVANT 2

Presenting the Wizard.

(A flash pot goes off, a duck quacks and then falls dead on the stage in front of the WIZARD. WIZARD steps around it.)

KING

Hello, Wiz.

SERVANT

Hullo, Wiz.

SERVANT 2

Hullo, Wiz. *(KING gives the SERVANTS a stern look. They exit.)*

WIZARD

Hullo, King. What's the problem?

KING

Well, it's my daughter, and who she will marry.

WIZARD

A difficult decision, I'm sure. I can't tell you how sad I am that I am not single and available. I know that would simplify things *(aside)* for both of us.

KING

Well, yes, but the problem has gotten a little thornier.

WIZARD

Well, how about the scheme we devised? Didn't anything come of that?

KING

Well, they all went along. As suitors, none is suitable. Yes, that's it. What if the man the princess wants is... unsuitable?

Kije!

WIZARD

That's what the tests are supposed to determine.

KING

Well, she wants to marry Kije.

WIZARD

Oh... Well... (*Brightly!*) that's a little more difficult.

KING

What'll I do?

WIZARD

Don't worry. Take it easy, use your intuition as I do.

KING

You do?

WIZARD

Of course. I always follow my own advice. (*KING looks skeptical.*) Now, we'll just have to get them to produce this Kije. And the one who breaks down and admits the lie will be the most virtuous, sort of the lesser of the four evils.

KING

I'm not sure.

WIZARD

Look, there's no way they can produce the man, it will just show to the princess that he isn't really the man that she thinks he is.

KING

No way they can produce Kije. Show that he isn't the man she thinks he is. Not a bad idea. Thanks, Wiz. Oh, one more thing, have you got something for a headache?

WIZARD

For Christmas or as a birthday present?

KING

Guards!!!

(Exit all.)

Kije!

Scene iv: Afternoon: The Great Hall

(Enter LARSEN in the Great Hall.)

LARSEN

(LARSEN picks up duck and stuffs it in his jacket.) A two-bit villain she called me. I'll show her, I'll show them all. It isn't dedication that I lack, it's opportunity. But soon enough they'll see what caliber of man I am. *(Enter COURTIERS.)* Well my friends, I'll command the minstrel to write the stories; we're going to need him if we are going to save our necks. Yes. The king will be wanting to know some more about this Kije fellow, and we had better be prepared with the best lies money can buy.

SONNY

Do you think the minstrel will really do it for us? I don't think he'd tell a lie to save his life.

LARSEN

Don't worry, he'll never know it's all a lie, we'll tell him it's just a piece of fiction we want him to write. We'll tell him we've been telling a story to the king and have run out of ideas. We want him to write more. That'll hook him with what he likes to do. Besides, who can refuse the king? By the time he finds out, he'll be in over his head. Well, where is that sniveling little minstrel fellow, anyway? I told him to be here!

(Enter MINSTREL and PUNCH.)

LARSEN

Ah, a boy and his dog.

SONNY

We need your help.

LARSEN

Or else.

MINSTREL

Me? what can I do?

COUNT

You know some war ballads don't you?

MINSTREL

Yes, the finest tales of old. Tales of glory, virtue and truth.

LARSEN

Well how about blood? and gore? and deceit? that's what we really need!

MINSTREL

Kije!

Well, I don't know. *(Starts to exit.)*

LARSEN

Get him boys. *(They chase the minstrel off.)*

(Exit all)

Scene v: Evening: The Great Hall

(Enter the KING, the COURTIERS, the PRINCESS, the MINSTREL, the WIZARD, and the LADIES. They walk in, stepping over PUNCH who is sprawled on the floor where he has collapsed. The MINSTREL wakes him and helps him up.)

KING

Let the audience begin. Where are my courtiers?

COURTIERS

Here, Sire.

KING

Well, both my daughter and I would like to hear more about this hero Kije. Can you describe him a bit more?

PRINCESS

Oh, yes, tell me of his manly exploits.

KING

Well? Haven't you any more to tell me about Kije? Who has the tales of glory? Sir Render?

SIR RENDER

Sonny.

SONNY

The Count.

COUNT

Larsen.

LARSEN

Sire, please excuse me if I have taken too many liberties.

SERVANT

Probably, you've taken everything else that wasn't nailed down.

LARSEN

Kije!

Ahem, please excuse me, but I was so inspired by the latest news of this giant of a man that I've asked the minstrel to put them to music.

KING

Ah, a tall tale?

LARSEN

Minstrel?

MINSTREL

Uh, well, yes, I have indeed composed a few pieces based upon the information which the courtiers have given me, but I'm a little reluctant to perform them, I really haven't had much time to polish them. Uh... It seems that every time I get something down, Kije does something even greater, and, well, I...

KING

Never mind all that, give us what you have. I want to hear the whole story, and it better be good.

PRINCESS

Yes, please tell it to us.

COURTIERS

Yes, do tell us.

LARSEN

(Aside.) Or else.

MINSTREL

Uh.. okay, here goes.... The story of Kije by a wandering minstrel--with sagely advice from a fool.

(After the first verse, the WIZARD waves his hand and takes the story from the MINSTREL's hands. He then narrates the story as the MINSTREL, playing the part of Kije, and the others act out the story. Before the last verse, the WIZARD waves his wand again and gives the story back to the MINSTREL.)

Song: The Story of Kije

MINSTREL

IN A WORLD THAT'S WROUGHT WITH VICE AND SIN
IT'S NICE TO HEAR A STORY

OF LOVE, ROMANCE AND ALL THINGS GOOD
ENLACED WITH SPECKS OF GLORY.

Kije!

WIZARD

MY TALE IS OF A WONDROUS LAD
BOTH COMPETENT AND YOUTHFUL
AND WHILE HE CONQUERS ALL THINGS BAD
HE STRUGGLES TO BE TRUTHFUL.

OUR HERO'S NAME IS KIJE
AND THROUGH TALENTS AND DIVINENESS
HE STRIVES TO FIND ETERNAL PEACE
AND SATISFY HIS HIGHNESS

ONE EVENING HE WAS SCOUTING
THE FORSAKEN WILDERNESS
WHEN HE HEARD THE DISTANT SHOUTING
OF A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

HELD HOSTAGE BY A VILLAIN,
RUTHLESS AND EXPEDIENT
ASSISTED BY THREE HENCHMEN
RATHER CLUMSY, BUT OBEDIENT.

"RESCUE ME," THE PRINCESS CRIED,
AND KIJE HEARD HER PLEADING,
AND NATURALLY THE VILLAIN TRIED
TO STOP HIM FROM SUCCEEDING.

HE ROUNDED UP HIS HENCHMEN THREE
"GO FORTH!" THE VILLAIN SAID
WHEN ONE LIGHTHEADED SERVANT ASKED
IF HE COULD GO FIFTH, INSTEAD.

THEY CHARGED THE SOLDIER ONE BY ONE
WITH VARYING ABILITIES
BUT NONE COULD EVEN HOPE TO MATCH
THE QUICKNESS AND AGILITIES

OF KIJE, WHO
WITH FIDELITY AND FLAIR,
FINISHED OFF THE FELON
WHILE HE FREED THE FEMALE FAIR.

SOON THE NEWS OF KIJE SPREAD
HE SWIFTLY GREW IN FAME
AS PEOPLE THREW GREAT PARTIES
TO COMMEMORATE HIS NAME.

Kije!

HE REJECTED SEVERAL CHANCES
OF OBTAINING POWER AND RICHES.
HE AVOIDED FALSE ROMANCES
SO TO FOLLOW HIS GOAL WHICH IS

TO SIMPLY FIND ETERNAL TRUTH,
ETERNAL PEACE OF MIND,
AND ULTIMATELY, ETERNAL LOVE
FROM A LOVE HE'S YET TO FIND.

MINSTREL

SO WHERE IS KIJE GOING NOW?
AND WHAT DOES HE HAVE PLANNED?
WE'LL SIMPLY HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE,
AS HE ROAMS OUR SACRED LAND.
AS HE ROAMS OUR SACRED LAND.

KING

What a wonderful story, minstrel; this hero is practically...unbelievable.

PRINCESS

Father, oh father, please send for Kije! Will you, please?

COURTIERS

(Worried.) Send for Kije?

KING

Ah, exactly what I intended to do.. Send for Kije!

SERVANTS

Send for Kije!

COURTIERS

(Going along with the KING.) Send for Kije!

MINSTREL

Send for Kije? But...

PUNCH

Hic!

KING

Yes, send for Kije! Prepare a hero's welcome! Prepare a feast! Prepare a brilliant ceremony to award him the highest honor in the land, never before awarded, the King's Royal Medal of Honor. Prepare for the knighting of our brave hero and his induction into

Kije!

into the Order of the King's Mustache!

PRINCESS

Oh, thank you, father. (*Kisses him.*)

MINSTREL

No, wait! (*He tries to get KING's attention, but the KING refuses to see him.*) It's just a story. He's imaginary. You can't send for him, he's not real! (*Pleading.*) I tell you it's just a story.

KING

See to it! (*Aside.*) I'm almost starting to believe in him myself! I'd better take a nap. Now to enjoy the true benefits of royal living: king-size beds!

(Exit all except MINSTREL and PUNCH.)

MINSTREL

What to do? I made up that whole story, but they took it for truth. And when the king finds out, who knows what he'll do to me? Could anything be worse?

(PUNCH staggers around as if he were a Temperance Movement leader destroying the local tavern.)

What? Prohibition? Yes, Punch. I'm sure it's worse than that.

(PUNCH offers him a bottle.)

Some muscatel? No, I don't think so. Yes, I know that January was a very good month. Don't you see, Punch. The king wants to see Kije. But I'm not the wizard, I can't make him appear nor disappear. The only life I can give him is in song.

(PUNCH staggers as if dying.)

What a wonderful idea. We'll kill him off. Of course, it has to be a valiant death. I'll work on the story right now!

(Enter MS. WIZ.)

MS. WIZ

Have you seen my husband? All the wine in the house has turned to water!

(Exit all.)

Scene vi: Night: Larsen's Room

LARSEN

Kije!

(Lights shift upstage to Larsen's room, sparsely decorated by a desk containing only a huge picture of Larsen. Enter LARSEN in his room, center stage.) When a man of my station finds himself rejected as a paramour, it is time for the man to take action, to conquer as is his way. So you see, this silly princess in love with some illusory man needs my special attentions, to perform a sort of cure. Pinching and probing as a doctor can, while using my shyster ways, I should be able to convince her to start to see it my way. Women are often misguided, I suppose it's part of the frailty that gives the sex its name. It thus falls upon the stronger sex to protect them, from themselves. Now, I must make my plans for my seduction. Since she only has eyes for Kije, I have to disguise myself as him. She can come to know me later, after she has given in. Well, I must prepare my disguise. Tonight, I conquer! To the princess! *(Hisses and Boos from offstage.)*

Song: I Love Sin

LARSEN

WHAT I AM DOING ISN'T ALL THAT SHAMEFUL.
AND DESERVES NO EXCLAMATIONS OF DISGUST.
I'M SIMPLY PLAYING A LITTLE GAME FULL
OF LYING, LIBEL, LARCENY AND LUST.

I LOVE SIN!
SO MUCH THAT I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN.
I MUST CONFESS THAT I POSSESS A MARVELOUS OBSESSION:
I LOVE TO SEE OBSCENITY AND MEASURES OF OPPRESSION
AS LONG AS IT IS ME THAT GETS TO PRACTICE THE AGGRESSION.
YES, I LOVE SIN!

I LOVE CRIME!
YOU'LL FIND ME DOING JUST THAT ALL THE TIME.
I LOVE BEING A VULGAR, VICIOUS, VAGRANT OR A VANDAL
TO HELP ALONG AN AWFUL OR UNLAWFUL LITTLE SCANDAL.
I'VE NEVER SEEN A SCANDAL THAT I REALLY COULDN'T HANDLE.
YES, I LOVE CRIME!

I LOATHE DON JUAN
AND GHENGIS KHAN
THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS WERE FEW AND LITTLE
ALL HISTORY
COMPARED TO ME
EVEN NERO HAS TO PLAY A SECOND FIDDLE.

(Exits, then reenters for his self-important encore.)

I LOVE LIBEL!
OR ANYTHING THAT GOES AGAINST THE BIBLE.

Kije!

SO MANY PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD ARE MUCH TOO GOOD AND CAUTIOUS.
BOY SCOUTS DOING THEIR GOOD DEEDS AND ALL OF THAT HOGWASH IS
IN MY OPINION, WASTES OF TIME THAT ONLY MAKES ME NAUSEOUS.
YES, I LOVE LIBEL!

I OWN A PART OF BONAPARTE.
I LOVE POWER, WEALTH, AND GREED AND MONEY
WITH ALL I'VE DONE, EXCUSE THE PUN,
BUT ATTLA'S MADE TO LOOK SWEET AS
HONEY.

I LOVE LUST!
DENOUNCE IT IF YOU MUST BUT IT IS JUST.
A SIMPLE LITTLE RAPE OR JUST A CAPER. I HAVE KNOWN SOME
PEOPLE WHO'D SEDUCE WITH THE EXCUSE THAT THEY WERE LONESOME.
BUT ME, I'M SIMPLY TAKING WHAT I CAN'T GET ON MY OWNSOME.
YES, I LOVE LUST!

(Exit.)

Scene vii: Midnight: The Princess' Balcony

(Enter the PRINCESS on the balcony.)

PRINCESS

Oh, where is my hero? I can hardly bear another night of his absence.

(LARSEN enters carrying a ladder, disguised in a Groucho mask and the officer's jacket from the Story of Kije song.)

LARSEN

(A la Groucho.) Oh, Princess! Here I am! Let me be as a bird and fly to your side. Let me be the bee to the honey that is you. Yes, let me teach of the birds and the bees.

PRINCESS

Oh dear! Are you Kije?

LARSEN

Is the Pope Italian? Are pizza bagels Jewish? Now let me whisk you away to the land of my dreams.

PRINCESS

(Aside.) He's not exactly what I expected.

LARSEN

You were expecting maybe the Easter bunny?

Kije!

PRINCESS

No, someone tall, dark and handsome... And witty.

LARSEN

That's the most ridiculous thing I ever heard.

PRINCESS

(Aside.) Oh well, I guess you can't judge a book by it's cover. After all, he is a great hero.

LARSEN

Just say the secret word and I'm yours.

PRINCESS

The secret word?

LARSEN

Swordfish.

PRINCESS

Swordfish?

LARSEN

(Duck falls.) That's the secret word. I'm yours! *(Climbs over the balcony.)* Now to enjoy the honeymoon, honey.

PRINCESS

You can't do that. You're supposed to be married before you have a honeymoon.

LARSEN

That's not my philosophy. Never argue Kant with a philosopher, that's what I say.

PRINCESS

Now wait a minute!

LARSEN

I'll tell you what, you do the waiting, I'll start warming up the engines.

(Enter a servant on Royal Balcony.)

SERVANT

Twelve o'clock and all is wrong!

PRINCESS

All is wrong?

Kije!

SERVANT

The hero Kije is dead!

PRINCESS

What? Kije dead? But... You impostor! You're not Kije! (*Slaps him, knocks off disguise.*) You beast! Larsen E. Quivocator! GUARDS!!! (*LARSEN chased by GUARDS. Exit PRINCESS sobbing. LARSEN exits.*)

(Enter PUNCH.)

PUNCH

(Picking up Groucho mask.) Damn lepers, always leaving a mess. *(Exits.)*

(Re-enter the PRINCESS with the KING.)

PRINCESS

Oh father, he's dead. I don't know what I'll do without him. All my dreams are shattered.

KING

Now, there, there. I know you've had your heart set on this Kije, he's the man of your dreams, but don't worry. There will be other men, you'll see. We'll find you the right man. After all, you have a full two more days until the ceremony.

PRINCESS

(Sobbing.) No, father. There can be no other man for me, not after Kije. Who could be so brave and valiant? No, father, I think I'll become a nun!

KING

A nun?

PRINCESS

I'll always wear black. In mourning for Kije!

KING

That's really not necessary. I'm sure it will all turn out right in the end.

PRINCESS

No, father, you must try to see my position. I cannot marry anyone but the real Kije, and without him what is left to me?

KING

It's late, you've had a scare. Sleep on it. I'll send your ladies-in-waiting. *(Exit KING.)*

Song: A Vision, a Heart and a Feeling

Kije!

PRINCESS

ONCE I WAS CAUGHT UP IN A VISION THAT WAS SACRED
BUT FATE, SAD ENOUGH, CAN BE QUITE EXTREME
FOR IT TOOK MY POOR VISION WHEN IT TOOK HIS LIFE
BECAUSE OF THIS, FATHER I'M AFRAID TO
DREAM.

AND ONCE, I WAS BLESSED WITH MANY CHOICES FOR MY MARRIAGE
WITH LOVE THAT WAS QUITE LIKE A TWO-WAY TRAIL
BUT MY CHOICES WERE STIFLED WHEN THEY TOOK HIS LIFE
NOW MY OUTLOOK FOR LIVING SUFFERS JUST AS WELL.

OH, WHY MUST FATE BE CRUEL TO ME?
IT'S NOT MY WISH TO BE ANOTHER JOB.

SO FATHER PLEASE SEND HOME THE OTHER GUESTS
WHILE I LAY DOWN MY PROUD AMBITIONS
AND WEAR MY BLACK AND MARTYRED ROBE!

LADIES-IN-WAITING

ONCE SHE HAD SOME PLANS THAT WERE SPECIAL
BUT WAR, SAD ENOUGH, HAD TO SPOIL THE SCHEME.
FOR THEY STOPPED ALL HER PLANNING WHEN THEY STOPPED HIS HEART.

PRINCESS

BECAUSE OF THIS, FATHER I'M AFRAID TO DREAM, TO DREAM.

ALL

AND ONCE I WAS FEELING ALIVE FOR THE FIRST TIME
BUT FATE, SAD ENOUGH HAD TO TURN ON ME

PRINCESS

AND SO, THE FEELING'S GONE AND THE VISION'S SURELY GONE
AND MY HEART IS GONE.
SEND AWAY ALL THE OTHERS, I HAVE LOST MY DREAM!

(Blackout.)

Kije!

Kije!

Act III: Friday in Wuz: The Death of Kije

Scene i: Dawn: The Wizard's Laboratory

(Enter WIZARD.)

Song: A Simple Story (reprise)

WIZARD

NOW I MUST ADMIT THAT EVEN I AM WORRIED
IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THE PRINCESS WILL BE A NUN
I'LL HAVE TO STRUGGLE TO FIND A SPELL TO SERVE US
TO SET THINGS RIGHT BEFORE THE SETTING SUN.

I'LL STUDY ANCIENT MYSTICISM,
THAUMATURGY, MESMERISM,
AND EMPLOYING EXORCISM,
I MUST
CLEAR AWAY THE TONS OF RUBBLE, YOU
SEE ENCHANTING W-
U-Z, WUZ, AND THEN LOVE CAN REVIVE.

Well, things aren't going exactly as smoothly as might be desired around here, but then, it's times like this when we wizards are most needed. In fact, I'm working on a powerful spell, but more about that later. A lot has happened, my friends, and I'm not sure you realize what's really been going on. Ever since this whole Kije thing began, things have been going from bad to worse. *(Enter MINSTREL and PUNCH.)* It may have started with the courtiers, but it's on the minstrel's shoulders now.

MINSTREL

I know, that's why I came to you for help. But what can you do? What do you know of the pain of love?

WIZARD

I know plenty. I know what happened when I gave Punch a love potion, and he looked at a bottle. I know what happened when I thought it had no effect on Punch and so tried it myself. Then I looked at. *(glances at picture of Ms. Wiz)..* well, never mind. Let's get to your problem.

MINSTREL

What will I do now?

WIZARD

Well, Kije's dead, right? So now you've got to write a suitable story of his death.

Kije!

MINSTREL

It will be valiant, the greatest tale I've ever written... And how is the princess? Has she chosen a suitor yet?

WIZARD

The princess? If you must know, when she heard last night's announcement she decided to become a nun.

MINSTREL

A nun?

PUNCH

A-hic?

MINSTREL

Do you mean she fell in love with Kije? Oh, I never meant to deceive her. Larsen and the courtiers told me it was just a story.

WIZARD

And so it is, one great story. And she just happened to believe it. And then she fell in love with your Kije. Now that he's dead, she's lost her heart.

MINSTREL

Oh, what is there to live for?

WIZARD

There's plenty to live for. But if you don't watch your step, you'll end up like Larsen... Or worse.

MINSTREL

Like Larsen?

WIZARD

They've thrown him in the stocks for deceiving the princess. He'll be lucky if he gets through this one with his head still on his shoulders.

MINSTREL

How did he deceive her?

WIZARD

He disguised himself as Kije (*holds up Kije's jacket*) and tried to seduce the Princess.

MINSTREL

Is she all right?

Kije!

WIZARD

Well enough.

MINSTREL

A most beautiful princess brought to this. (*Takes jacket.*) My own character, the most valiant man who never lived... Come along, Punch. This ghost of Kije has caused too much grief already. It's time to put this mischievous spirit to its final rest. We must compose our sorrows into the finest eulogy ever written.

PUNCH

Hic. (*Exit PUNCH and MINSTREL.*)

WIZARD

Well, there goes a sad fellow. In need of help, I dare say. But there's some pretty important things going on in the great hall right now. Let's take a little peek. But first my famous disappearing candle trick. Presto! (*Candle is still there.*) Hm. Oh, well. Now, where did I put that book of spells? Are you sitting on it? No. Under your feet? Oh, here it is. Now let's see; K, candied apples, canned fruit, King. Oh, yes, this is familiar.

"PHILOSOPHER'S STONE, CHRONOS' SAND,
CHAIN OF GOLD AND WEDDING BAND.
SHOW US, SPIRIT, WHO RULES THE LAND!"

(*Highlight PUNCH center floor.*)

Oh well, wrong book.

(*Exit WIZARD.*)

Scene ii: Morning: The Great Hall

(*Enter the PRINCESS, the COURTIERS, LADIES IN WAITING, SERVANTS and TOWNSPEOPLE, and the MINSTREL. LARSEN is in the stocks. Enter the KING.*)

KING

What's going on here?

SERVANTS

Kije is dead! (*General sobbing.*)

LADIES-IN-WAITING

The Princess is going to become a nun.

COURTIERS

A nun!

Kije!

PRINCESS

Without Kije, there's hardly anything to live for.

KING

But how did he die? Sir Render?

SIR RENDER

It was a mysterious death.

SONNY

It was a valiant death.

COUNT

It was an heroic death. He was with us but a moment. A wisp of smoke that is gone with the autumn breeze. Just a passing sigh that will echo on throughout time. He was--

KING

Yes, yes, enough of all that. How exactly did he die?

MINSTREL

Sire, if you will permit me, I have the story. It's a sad story, yet inspiring. As heroic as any of the great myths.

PRINCESS

Oh, my Kije! (*Sobs.*)

MINSTREL

I have set the tale to music this very morning, and we have only rehearsed this afternoon, but for all its roughness, I should like to sing it to you, to honor the last of the great, the death of a hero.

Song: The Death of Kije

MINSTREL

MY LAST REPORT OF KIJE
HERE IN MY HANDS I HOLD.
THIS LAST REPORT OF KIJE
IS THE SADDEST EVER TOLD.
FOR ON THE BLOODY BATTLEFIELD
FROM WHAT I COMPREHEND,
IT WAS ON THE BLOODY BATTLEFIELD
WHERE KIJE MET HIS END.

WIZARD

(Spoken) LET THE MESSAGE NOW BE SPREAD
OUR HERO KIJE'S GONE,

Kije!

BUT WHILE HIS BODY MAY BE DEAD
HIS SPIRIT SHALL LIVE ON.

MINSTREL

HE FOUND THE FIGHTING MEN OF WUZ
SURROUNDED BY OUR FOE.

THEY WERE WITHOUT A LEADER
AND DID NOT KNOW WHERE TO GO.
THE ENEMY WAS MERCILESS
THEIR TORTURES HARSH AND CRUEL.
HE KNEW IF THEY WOULD REACH THE TOWN
THEY'D STEAL ITS PRECIOUS JEWEL.

MINSTREL, LADIES AND COURTIERS

A JEWEL, A JEWEL.
O'ER WHICH MANY MEN WOULD DUEL.
THE FINEST, FAIREST GEM IN ALL THE LAND.
THE LOSS OF THIS FAIR LASS HE COULD NOT STAND.

MINSTREL

HE KNEW THAT IF THE ENEMY
WOULD FURTHER THEIR ADVANCE

OUR RECKLESS, LUCKLESS SOLDIERS
WOULD NOT STAND A FIGHTING CHANCE.
AND THOUGH HE KNEW THAT HE WOULD NOT
COME OUT OF THIS ALIVE
HE LED THE TROOPS HIMSELF
SO THAT OUR KINGDOM WOULD SURVIVE.

WIZARD

(Spoken) FAREWELL, COURAGEOUS HERO
OUR HEARTS ARE SAD AND GRIEVOUS
FOR WARRIORS WILL COME AND GO
BUT HEROES NEVER LEAVE US.

MINSTREL

SO ENDS MY NEWS OF KIJE
I HAVE NO MORE TO SAY
BUT EVEN LOVELY AUTUMN LEAVES
IN TIME WILL BLOW AWAY
HIS MEMORY WILL LINGER IN
THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF ALL
THE PEOPLE HE PROTECTED
AND THE MEN WHO WATCHED HIM FALL.

Kije!

PRINCESS

It's so beautiful, so sad. Oh, I can't bear it any longer! (*Exit sobbing.*)

KING

This day I declare an evening of mourning, henceforth and forever, in honor of the dead hero, Kije. Let the story of his valiant death be told throughout the land. (*Exit LADIES and PEASANTS singing:*)

Song: The Mourning Song

ALL

OH YES, IT'S KIJE, VALIANT KIJE
SUCH AN AWFUL SHAME
WE'LL NEVER BE THE SAME
WITHOUT KIJE...

KING

Now let us turn to other things before us. You, Larsen, you are the biggest disgrace of all! Attempting to soil the good name of the now immortal Kije, and the good reputation of my daughter as well! What have you to say for yourself?

LARSEN

I demand justice!

KING

Justice?!

LARSEN

Leniency?

KING

Leniency?!

LARSEN

Kneeling, pleading, self-abasing mercy?

KING

I haven't come up with a punishment to fit the crime. The rack's too good for you. But I'm having the wizard work on a fitting punishment right now. More news at eleven. Until then, take him away.

(Exit everyone except the KING.)

Kije!

Scene iii: Noon: The King's Balcony

(Re-enter the PRINCESS, joining King on his balcony.)

PRINCESS

Oh, father, I can't bear the thought of Kije lying out there on the field of battle, or buried in some shallow grave. He deserves better than that.

KING

But what can I do, dear? I can't bring a man back from the dead any more than I could give him life in the first place.

PRINCESS

Father, surely you can do something! Give Kije a hero's burial.

KING

A hero's burial? (*Aside.*) How can I bury an imaginary man? But then, how can the courtiers produce an imaginary man? They can't just pull it out of thin air. Now, finally, here's a way to catch them in their lies and end this silly episode -- or at least end my daughter's sorrow. (*To the PRINCESS.*) That's a good idea, a hero's burial. Why, we can even still give him the medal of honor. It will be awarded posthumously. I'll even pin it on him myself.

PRINCESS

Oh Father, let me.

KING

Very well. (*To SERVANTS.*) Courtiers!

(*Enter MINSTREL, PUNCH, SONNY, SIR RENDER, and the COUNT.*)

KING

Bring me the body of the hero Kije.

COURTIERS

Kije's body?

MINSTREL

Kije's body??

(*MINSTREL and PUNCH cross to MINSTREL's dressing room.*)

Scene iv: Afternoon: Various Rooms of the Castle

(*The COUNT, SONNY and SIR RENDER cross to center.*)

Kije!

COUNT

Now what are we going to do? The King wants to see Kije!

SIR RENDER

I don't know what to do; Larsen got us into this spot.

SONNY

Larsen is always getting us into trouble.

SIR RENDER

Why do we listen to him?

COUNT

Because he's the only one who can ever get us out of trouble.

SIR RENDER

Well, he isn't here to save us now.

SONNY

He's in more trouble than we are!

SIR RENDER

So far.

SONNY

Well, we better do something to make sure we don't end up in the dungeon, too.

COUNT

We had better do something with the utmost rapidity. We've got to find a casket or a reasonable facsimile at least.

SONNY

Faith has an old cedar chest.

SIR RENDER

(Surprised.) They looked real to me!

SONNY

It's a trunk, stupid.

SIR RENDER

Who are you calling stupid?

COUNT

Now, wait a minute. We'll need something else. An empty cedar chest won't weigh enough. We need something heavy to fill it.

Kije!

SIR RENDER

But where will we get anything in time?

SONNY

Charity has a rock collection. It ought to be heavy enough.

SIR RENDER

How will we get it? She'd never part with it willingly.

SONNY

Maybe we could buy it.

SIR RENDER

She'd never sell it. Besides, where would we get the money? *(They look at the COUNT.)*

COUNT

Oh, no. No. I won't.

SONNY

It's your neck too.

COUNT

Well, okay. I'll try, but I don't promise anything.

SONNY

And what will you do, Sir Render?

COUNT

Probably run away leaving me holding the bag.

SIR RENDER

I'll get something to drape the coffin.

SONNY

Get Merrilee's tapestry.

SIR RENDER

Merrilee's tapestry?

SONNY

You know, the one that looks like a coat of arms.

SIR RENDER

Okay, I'll see if I can find her.

COUNT

Kije!

Okay, let's go. We'll meet back here in an hour.

(Trips over PUNCH waking him, exit all but Punch)

PUNCH

Here I am, alone as ever. You know, there nothing quite so lonely as when no one listens. Listen to me. I'm a jester. My mission, quite simply, is to touch you, your heart, your soul. To reach you, to make you laugh or to cry. But how can you touch someone when your voice is lost, a whisper in the wind? Ah, a truth: if a pin falls in a haystack with no farmer in the dell, does it make a sound? I think not. And so, they're left untouched. But when I drink, I dream. I speak, they hear. Why the very bottles around join me to dance and sing. Sorrow and joy, in proportion, make a well-mixed drink. Ah, in my dreams. Come drink with me and join me in the dance and song of my dreams.

Song: Punch's Dream (reprise of Love at Last)

PUNCH

THIS STUFF IS REALLY SO DELICIOUS,
THE BEST I'VE EVER TASTED,
AND I THINK THAT I'M IN LOVE (HIC) AT LAST.

AND ALL THOSE SILLY HUGS AND KISSES
COULD NEVER HAVE REPLACED IT
AND I THINK THAT I'M IN LOVE (HIC) AT LAST.
SOMETHING ALKA.. ALKA.. ALKA..
AL... YOU KNOW, BOOZE!

(DANCE OF THE BOTTLES)

(Two beautiful women in green with white labels, enter and lift up and dance with PUNCH, then exit.)

ONE OF MY VERY BIGGEST WISHES
IS SIMPLY GETTING WASTED.
THERE'S NOTHING I LIKE BETTER THAN GETTING SMASHED.
AND I THINK THAT I'M IN LOVE (HIC) AT LASHT.
FOR SNACK OR LUNCH
SOME POTENT PUNCH
WILL MAKE ME WANT TO DANCE AND FROLIC.
BUT THEN YOU'LL FIND
THAT I DON'T MIND
AS LONG AS I GET SOMETHING ALKA., ALKA., ALKA., AL..., YOU KNOW,
BOOZE!

(Dancing bottles exit)

Kije!

ONE OF MY VERY BIGGEST WISHES
IS SIMPLY GETTING WASTED.
THERE'S NOTHING I LIKE BETTER THAN GETTING SMASHED.
AND I THINK THAT I'M IN LOVE (HIC) AT LASHT.

Scene v: Various Rooms of the castle

(The Courtiers split up. SIR RENDER goes to the tapestry which is hanging left. He hides behind it. The COUNT picks up a rock and brings it to where CHARITY has several others on a table at right. CHARITY is counting her pearls. SONNY goes to the cedar chest which is at rear. He sits on it. FAITH is standing with her back to him, facing out the door. CHARITY, FAITH, the COUNT and SONNY freeze. Enter MERRILEE.)

MERRILEE

(Looking behind tapestry, to see who is behind it.) What are you doing here?

SIR RENDER

Looking for a place to hide.

MERRILEE

That's not a very good one. Your feet stick out.

SIR RENDER

Know any better?

MERRILEE

I do, but hiding is not the answer. You can't hide forever.

SIR RENDER

A long time would be fine with me. If you knew what trouble I'm in...

(They freeze.)

COUNT

(Aside.) Pearls before swine.

CHARITY

What was that, dear count?

COUNT

I said you're looking fine. How splendid your locks, how beautiful your brow. How shining your eyes. How magnificent your rocks, er, gem collection. It sets you off, a diamond in the rough.

Kije!

CHARITY

Okay, enough of that. You want something. What is it?

COUNT

No really, it's nothing. A mere trifle when I may gaze at you instead. I hardly feel it worth mentioning.

CHARITY

Mention it.

COUNT

This gem collection. I must have it. It cannot compare with the wealth engraven in your smile. But it is a consolation. How much would you like for it?

CHARITY

It's not for sale. I've put my heart into it, I've put love into it like nothing else.

COUNT

You misunderstand me, I must have it. Money is no object. Name your price.

CHARITY

No, it's not for sale. Not at any price. I'm disappointed in you, Count. I've always counted you as a friend.

COUNT

But I am your friend, my dear.

CHARITY

Well, a friend wouldn't presume upon a relationship with offers of money. You know how I feel about these gems.

COUNT

But, I do so need it. And I couldn't just ask.

CHARITY

Why not? That's what friends are for.

COUNT

(Flattered.) You mean you really do consider me your friend? I've always been looking for a friend.

(They freeze.)

SONNY

(A la Bogart.) Listen, sweetheart. Like I told you before. I need that box. See.

Kije!

FAITH

And I told you, I can't part with it. My future is all contained in it. It's my hope chest.

SONNY

Look, kid. Is that the kind of future you want. As empty as this box? That's not the kind of future for you. That's the future of a dead man. You don't want that. Listen to me, I know what's good for you.

FAITH

Don't bully me!

SONNY

I want your chest!

FAITH

I beg your pardon!

SONNY

(Preparing to slap her.) I need that box.

FAITH

(Slaps him instead. He is deflated.) I used to think I liked you, you were open, young and, yes, vulnerable. Now you play like a tough guy. Well, I don't like it. You're not so tough after all. You can't get people to do what you want by pushing them around. You have to work with them. Be open, then you really are charming. Not like this.

(They freeze.)

MERRILEE

It's okay to be afraid. But you have to swallow that fear and carry on anyway. Now what are you going to do?

SIR RENDER

Run away!

MERRILEE

No. Haven't you even an idea? Surely you can think of something, perhaps someone else has suggested something.

SIR RENDER

Well, yes, but I have to ask someone for something, and I'm afraid to ask.

MERRILEE

You've got to do it. Be brave. Go ahead. Go out to this person. Stand like a man and ask.

SIR RENDER

Kije!

Okay! I will. I want your tapestry!

MERRILEE

No!!! (*SIR RENDER collapses.*) Well, maybe. Look, I'll give it to you, but you must be careful, and remember be brave. (*Gives him the tapestry.*)

SIR RENDER

I will, I'll be afraid, but I'll be brave. (*Exits with tapestry.*)

MERRILEE

(Calling after him.) And careful. Don't forget to be careful. (*Exits.*)

CHARITY

A friend in need is a friend indeed.

COUNT

Ah, yes, a clever folk witticism. I do thank you for the collection, as I have said, it is well, uh, very important to me. You have been so kind.

CHARITY

Then you will drop by again sometime when all this is over?

COUNT

(*Flattered again.*) Friend, it would be a pleasure. Until that time, I take my leave. (*Exit.*)

CHARITY

Goodbye. It has been good talking to you. I think I have found a truer wealth through you. Adieu. (*Exits.*)

SONNY

(*MERRILEE is emptying the box.*) How can I ever repay you?

MERRILEE

Don't put on false airs, let us be partners, equals. And perhaps we may share some other times together when things are less desperate.

SONNY

(*SONNY goes to take box, but can't lift it.*) Okay. Uh, partner, could you give me a hand with this.

FAITH

Of course, dear. (*She picks up one end and helps him move it to center stage where the COUNT and SIR RENDER are waiting with the tapestry and rocks.*) Goodbye, love. (*SONNY blushes, FAITH exits.*)

Kije!

SIR RENDER

We don't even have a body to bury, what'll we do?

SONNY

We will if we don't do something soon. We'll have three of them -- us.

COUNT

We've got a coffin now. We'll fill it with these stones and close it up to present to the king.

SONNY

That sounds like a good idea.

SIR RENDER

No, it doesn't, it's stupid! No one would be fooled by a bunch of stones. That wouldn't look like a hero!

SONNY

It's all we've got.

COUNT

Help me fill this thing with the rocks. *(They start to fill it with rocks.)*

SIR RENDER

I hope the king doesn't open it.

COUNT

We'll have the servants nail it shut.

SONNY

What if he wants to look inside?

COUNT

We'll just have to come up with a good reason why he shouldn't.

SIR RENDER

I sure wish Larsen was here. He'd get us out of this.

SONNY

He got us into this! And if he were here now, he might get us into this. *(Indicates coffin.)*

(Enter 2 servants.)

COUNT

Kije!

Ahem! Now, look here, we want you to nail up this coffin and put it on that stand. Now, don't forget. *(To SONNY and SIR RENDER.)* Let's go, we have some planning to do. *(Exit COURTIERS.)*

SERVANT 1

(Starts nailing.) Who is this guy?

SERVANT 2

They say he's a hero, Kije.

SERVANT 1

(Knocks off the foot of the coffin.) Damn, I broke this side off.

SERVANT 2

What'll we do?

SERVANT 1

(Tries unsuccessfully to fix it.) Who cares? For the amount of money they pay us, what can they expect? Besides, there's no one in there.

SERVANT 2

No one in there? You're kidding!

SERVANT 1

No, really! There's just rocks.

SERVANT 2

Rocks?

SERVANT 1

Yeah, rocks. I dunno why they want to bury rocks.

SERVANT 2

Me neither. *(Finishes nailing. puts tapestry on top. Special note: at this point, the foot end of the box (the side that was knocked off) should be pointing to the left, so that the audience cannot see what is in it. Additionally, it and its stand should be stationed just forward of an exit so that when the minstrel crawls in, he can crawl out a hidden panel on the reverse side, make a costume change and return, all while the coffin is on stage. This adds a little magical touch to the minstrel's discovery at the end.)*

SERVANT 1

Let's go. We'll come back just before the funeral.

SERVANT 2

O.K. with me. There's no point in hanging around here any longer.

SERVANT 1

Kije!

No, not with all these dead rocks in here. (*Exit servants.*)

Scene vi: Evening: A Room in the Castle

(*Enter MINSTREL and PUNCH before the casket.*)

MINSTREL

Now I'm really in for it. Look what I've done! I've really messed things up. The princess wants to join a convent. Larsen's in prison, and the king wants to decorate Kije posthumously. When he finds out that it's all something I made up, he'll kill me.

PUNCH

Hic!

MINSTREL

True. I would be out of my misery. But, then, think of what it would do to the princess to find out her lover was but a figment of an idle imagination. And the shame to be the one who deluded her! I think I will take my life, Punch. But how to do it? Quickly, and painlessly -- no, that's the coward's way out, and too good for me. I must suffer as my broken heart commands.

PUNCH

Hic!

MINSTREL

What's that? You're right, it is open... Perhaps that's it! I could crawl in -- a fitting death that would be, to be smothered by warm mother earth since I cannot smother myself in the warmth of my true love's arms. But, first, let's take these rocks out. (*PUNCH starts taking rocks out.*) Since I am all that is left of Kije, how fitting that I, his murderer (so to speak), should take his place.

PUNCH

Hic!

MINSTREL

Quite right, I was forgetting. (*Sits down and writes.*) Punch, I want you to take this to the princess. Tell her it was the last letter written by Kije before he went to his death.

(*PUNCH takes letter.*)

MINSTREL

This will also be my final ballad to tell of my departing. Read this when they ask where I've gone. Now, where is that officer's jacket? (*Finds Kije's jacket and puts it on.*)

Kije!

Scene vi: Sunset: The Princess' Balcony

(Enter PUNCH with the PRINCESS.)

PRINCESS

Hello, Punch. What are you doing here? It's really no use trying to cheer me up, I'm not in the mood for jokes. I'm too sad. Now Kije is gone, and I've nothing to remember him by. Not even a lock of his hair...

PUNCH

Hic! *(Offers letter. PRINCESS takes it. PUNCH turns away.)*

PRINCESS

What is this? A letter? To me? From whom? It's from Kije! A letter from Kije! When did you get this? What does it say? *(PUNCH exits. The MINSTREL sings The Letter, then enters coffin.)*

Song: The Letter

MINSTREL

MY LAST WORDS, MY FINAL BREATH
MY LIFE LIES BEFORE ME.
NOT EASY TO TALK OF DEATH.
THE WEATHER HERE IS STORMY.
BUT LO, ON THE BATTLEFIELD,
THIS SOLDIER WILL HOLD STRONG.
I NOW LAY DOWN MY SWORD AND SHIELD,
AND WRITE TO YOU THIS SIMPLE SONG.

MY LAST WORDS, MY FINAL BREATH,
I'M SORRY I MUST LEAVE YOU.
NOT EASY TO THINK OF DEATH.
BUT MY ABSENCE SHOULD NOT GRIEVE YOU.
NOW DON'T STOP ENJOYING LIFE.
DO NOTHING TOO EXTREME.
REMEMBER ME AS NOTHING BUT
A HERO IN A BLISSFUL DREAM.

PRINCESS

(Spoken, read.) I write to you now, my coffin surely in sight. The enemy encroaches upon our camp and he's even more powerful and terrible than I had dreamed. He comes with force to the land of Wuz. I know what he is after. He comes to steal the finest jewel, the brightest star in the Lord's high heaven, you, fair princess. But my men and I will oppose him. I will lead the charge myself. My hopes, my dreams are all for naught. I will never return to stand by your side.

Kije!

MINSTREL

NOW YOU SHOULD GO ON IN LIFE.
THE WHOLE WORLD BEFORE YOU.
THINK NOT OF ANY STRIFE
NO TEARS DO I IMPLORE YOU.
BUT LO, ON THE BATTLEFIELD,
THIS SOLDIER WILL HOLD STRONG.
I NOW LAY DOWN MY SWORD AND SHIELD,
AND WRITE TO YOU THIS SIMPLE SONG,

SO CHERISH NOW THIS SONG OF LOVE.

FROM KIJE,

PRINCESS & MINSTREL

THE GRAND AND GLORIOUS KIJE, THE GREAT

(Exit PRINCESS. MINSTREL climbs into coffin.)

Scene vii: Night: the Wizard's Laboratory

Song: A Little Bit of Magic (Reprise)

(During this next song, the minstrel may surreptitiously slip offstage for costume change and then slip back.)

(WIZARD lights candle.)

WIZARD

(Spoken)

AH YES, AH YES,
TENSION AND DISTRESS,
HOW CAN WE BE RID OF THIS IDIOTIC MESS?
SUCH STRAIN AND STRESS,
HOW DO I PROGRESS?
DO I EVEN HAVE THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE FOR SUCCESS?
I MUST CONFESS
THAT I'M POWERLESS
DESPITE ALL OF THIS MAGIC THAT I SEEM TO
POSSESS.
YES
UNLESS, UNLESS,
I DISPENSE WITH THIS MESS! *(Wizard is throwing things into cauldron, the last thing is the magic book)* We won't need this anymore.

MAGIC FROM A BOOK CANNOT COMPETE WITH CLEVERNESS.

Kije!

THE ANSWER IS SO SIMPLE THAT IT'S ALMOST
EFFORTLESS!
I'LL JUST GUESS!

(Sung) WHEN YOU'RE FEELING DOWN
AND YOU WANT TO BE BROUGHT UP,
A LITTLE MAGIC DOES THE TRICK.

(Drops scarf. It returns to his hand.)

IF YOU WEAR A FROWN
THEN CONJURE UP A CUP
OF SOME MAGIC BREW.
A SIP OR TWO
SHOULD COMFORT YOU.

(Produces a cup.)

IF YOU STILL
ARE FEELING ILL
AND YOU CAN'T FIND A CURE THAT IS QUICK
THEN DON'T BE A CRAB,
JUST SAY ABRACADABRA!
LITTLE MAGIC DOES THE TRICK.
YES, IT DOES.
JUST A LITTLE MAGIC DOES THE TRICK!

(Turns cane into scarves.)

SOMEWHERE I HAVE READ
THAT IF YOU'RE FEELING BLUE
A LITTLE MAGIC DOES THE TRICK.

(Turns red scarf to blue.)

AND RESTING IN BED
MIGHT HELP YOU FIGHT THE FLU
OR A TEMPERATURE
BUT IF YOUR CURE IS NOT THAT SURE...

(Disappears scarf.)

DON'T FORGET
YOU'RE NOT DEAD YET,
AND AS LONG AS YOUR HEART WANTS TO TICK
THERE'S ALWAYS THAT SURE
GUARANTEED LITTLE CURE-ALL --

Kije!

A LITTLE MAGIC DOES THE TRICK!
YES, IT DOES.
JUST A LITTLE MAGIC DOES THE TRICK.

IF YOU ASK ME HOW I DO IT
IT'S MY SECRET, YOU PURSUE IT.
WELL, THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO IT.
AND YOU WONDER HOW I EVER GOT TO BE SO SLICK
BECAUSE I AM THE WIZARD OF WUZ!
JUST A LITTLE MAGIC DOES THE TRICK!
JUST A LITTLE BIT OF MAGIC DOES THE TRICK!

NOW IF YOU ARE STILL
FEELING SO DARN DEPRESSED,
A LITTLE MAGIC DOES THE TRICK.

(Produces petals from fingertips.)

YOU'LL FIND THAT IT WILL ALWAYS OPERATE THE BEST,
AND IT'S NOT THAT TOUGH.
WE HAVE ENOUGH OF ALL THAT STUFF.

(Turns candle to salt.)

REST ASSURED,
A MAGIC WORD
OR A QUICK LITTLE WAVE OF A STICK,

(Produces a cane from scarves.)

IS ALWAYS, YOU'LL SEE, A
SUPREME PANACEA.
A LITTLE MAGIC DOES THE TRICK!
YES, IT DOES!
JUST A LITTLE MAGIC DOES THE TRICK!

(WIZARD and dancing cane dance.)

IF YOU ASK ME HOW I DO IT,
IT'S MY SECRET, YOU PURSUE IT.
WELL, THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO IT.
AND YOU WONDER HOW I EVER GOT TO BE SO SLICK
BECAUSE I AM THE WIZARD OF WUZ!
JUST A LITTLE MAGIC DOES THE TRICK!
JUST A LITTLE BIT OF MAGIC DOES THE TRICK!

(WIZARD disappears onstage in a huge puff of smoke.)

Kije!

Scene vii: Midnight: The Great Hall

(The SERVANTS move the coffin. We now see the foot of the coffin, facing directly towards the audience, which allows us to see the minstrel's feet inside. The minstrel keeps wiggling his feet. Enter KING, PRINCESS, COURTIERS, LARSEN in chains and PUNCH.)

KING

Well, now, so here are the remains of Kije. Let us now have a moment of silence to honor him... To further honor him, the princess will present him with the medal of honor. Open the coffin.

SONNY

I don't think we should.

KING

Why not?

SIR RENDER

It's already nailed down.

KING

We can pry it open again.

COUNT

Well, Sire, actually, as you know, Kije died a violent and bloody death. His limbs were torn asunder. His body is quite unviewable. It would be too much for the Princess.

KING

Daughter?

(PRINCESS nods.)

(Soldier's March begins. Enter the soldiers.)

SONNY

Look! The soldiers are coming!

TOWNSPEOPLE

Oh, no! They must have lost the war!

KING

Sergeant, what is your report?

SERGEANT

We come to honor Kije, our hero.

Kije!

KING

And how will you honor him?

SERGEANT

I wish to give him this sword to be buried with him.

KING

And what sword is that?

SOLDIERS

It is the sword of the commander of the enemy. The enemy has surrendered!

KING

What!

COURTIERS

What!

TOWNSPEOPLE

What?

SERGEANT

When my men heard of brave Kije's noble death, they were inspired with a passion for revenge. The war cry went out: "Avenge Kije, the bravest of heroes!" The battle was ours as the enemy ran from our grief-torn soldiers, and in a moment we had ended ten years' toil. Victory!

SOLDIERS

Victory!

ALL

Victory!

SERGEANT

And, now, we must honor our dead, the brave and valiant Kije. (*Opens coffin.*) Kije. (*Places sword in coffin.*)

COURTIERS

Kije??

PRINCESS

(*Sobbing over Kije.*) Kije! He's even more handsome than I had dreamed. Kije, my lost love, I present you with the medal of honor. (*Pins on medal.*)

Kije!

MINSTREL

Ouch! (*Sits up.*)

COUNT

He's alive!

TOWNSPEOPLE

Hurray!

SIR RENDER

It's a miracle!

TOWNSPEOPLE

Hurray!

WIZARD

(*Aside.*) Actually, it's just a little magic.

LARSEN

Actually, it's the Minstrel!

KING

Guards!

COUNT

No, he's right -- it is the Minstrel!

MINSTREL

It's true, I am the minstrel. Choose your sentence, it cannot be worse than the death I had chosen, nor worse than a life without the princess I love.

PRINCESS

Deceived again! My Kije is gone!

MINSTREL

I never meant to deceive you or hurt you. I never dreamed my simple ballads would cause such misery. They were just tales to brighten up our empty lives. Now, sentence me if you will, for I will not play this lie a moment longer. I shall not flinch from this just punishment. For in breaking your heart, I have broken my own. You cannot do worse to me in death than I have done to myself in life.

PRINCESS

My Kije, the man of my dreams. I never knew you but in this minstrel's ballads and... (*Clutches letter tightly.*) But where is my Kije now? Strewn about the bloody battlefield? His noble body ravaged by dogs and birds?

Kije!

MINSTREL

He is a man who never was. Too immortal to ever die, he never had the chance to live, to know you, fair princess.

PRINCESS

But then, did you write this letter?

MINSTREL

Yes, I did. For there is no Kije -- only me, a simple minstrel.

PRINCESS

You?

Song: Love Letter

MINSTREL

MY LAST WORDS, MY FINAL BREATH
MY LIFE LIES BEFORE ME.
NOT EASY TO TALK OF DEATH,
THE WEATHER HERE IS STORMY.

PRINCESS

GENTLE--THAT'S HOW I DESCRIBE HIS HEART
TRULY--THAT'S HOW HE CARES.

MINSTREL

WE SOLDIERS MUST FIGHT OUR WARS
SO YOU'LL ONE DAY BE QUEEN

PRINCESS

MAYBE HE'S KIJE! HE MUST BE KIJE!
HOLD ME KIJE, SPEND ALL YOUR TIME WITH ME.

MINSTREL

I LAY DOWN MY SWORD AND SHIELD
AND SING TO YOU THIS PRAYER OF...

BOTH

LOVE.

PRINCESS

But, then, you are Kije, at least the Kije that I love. Father, spare him. Whatever he has done, this is the man I will marry.

KING

Kije!

The man you will marry! Him?

LARSEN

Him?

PRINCESS

Remember, you promised. You said any man in the kingdom, and I choose him.

KING

But, a lowly minstrel? Who broke your heart? Who --

WIZARD

-- Is the first one to tell the truth? To end the lie?

KING

Well, then, let it be. (*Motions to servants who remove the coffin from the stage.*) Remove this coffin. And now, my daughter, the princess, will marry Kije, the hero and minstrel, tomorrow at noon!

TOWNSPEOPLE & SOLDIERS

Long live Kije! Long live the princess!

KING

And for my deceitful courtiers, who are nothing more than a bunch of old women, a fitting punishment. Wizard! Wiz, what punishment have you devised? (*WIZARD whispers in KING's ear.*) Yes! Three wives to turn you into men! For Sir Render, Merrilee; for Sonny, Faith; for the Count, Charity.

LADIES-IN-WAITING

Yea! (*Run to their respective men.*)

KING

And for you, Larsen, the wizard has devised a special punishment to make you pay. Ms. Wiz.

MS. WIZ

Who, me?

KING

Yes. (*He indicates LARSEN.*)

MS. WIZ

For me?

KING

Kije!

Yes.

MS. WIZ

(Runs over to LARSEN.) HOT DAMN! My very own slave. Oh, thank you, your highness. Thank you.

KING

Don't thank me, thank your husband.

WIZARD

No thanks are necessary. This is thanks enough!

KING

Very well then. Now prepare for the celebration!

ALL

(Cheers.)

PUNCH

(Strikes KING.) Hey, what about me?! *(Everyone is astonished at hearing him speak. Their astonishment is increased as all the clocks in the kingdom begin to tick and chime. The WIZARD comes forward and takes control of the situation as he waves his staff and makes PUNCH's dream, the dancing bottles, come true. Two beautiful women in green with white labels come in from the wings and lift up PUNCH, as he opens the finale.)*

Song: Finale

PUNCH

YOU KNOW THIS BEAUTIFUL BONANZA
THAT MAKES ME JUMP FOR JOY IS
THAT I THINK THAT I'M IN LOVE...

MINSTREL

AT LAST I'M HOLDING IN MY HANDS A...

PRINCESS

A FEELING WARM AND JOYOUS,

BOTH

AND I THINK THAT I'M IN LOVE...

KING

AT LAST WE'RE DONE; THAT SURE WAS FUN.

WIZARD

AT LAST I CAN BE LAX AND LAZY.

Kije!

MS. WIZ

AND NOW I CRAVE MY VIRILE SLAVE!

LARSEN

YES, I SAID THAT "I LOVE SIN" BUT THIS IS CRAZY!

ALL

AND THIS ENDS OUR EXTRAVAGANZA
WE HOPE YOU DID ENJOY US
NOW HERE'S A WISHFUL MESSAGE FROM THE KIJE CAST
WE HOPE THAT YOU FALL IN LOVE AND...

WIZARD

WHEN YOU'RE FEELING DOWN AND YOU WANT TO BE
BROUGHT UP..

ALL

A LITTLE MAGIC DOES THE TRICK
YES, IT DOES
JUST A LITTLE BIT OF MAGIC
A LITTLE BIT OF MAGIC
A LITTLE BIT OF MAGIC
A LITTLE BIT OF MAGIC
A LITTLE BIT OF MAGIC
DOES THE TRICK!!!!

(Blackout.)

(Curtain Call.)

(The End.)