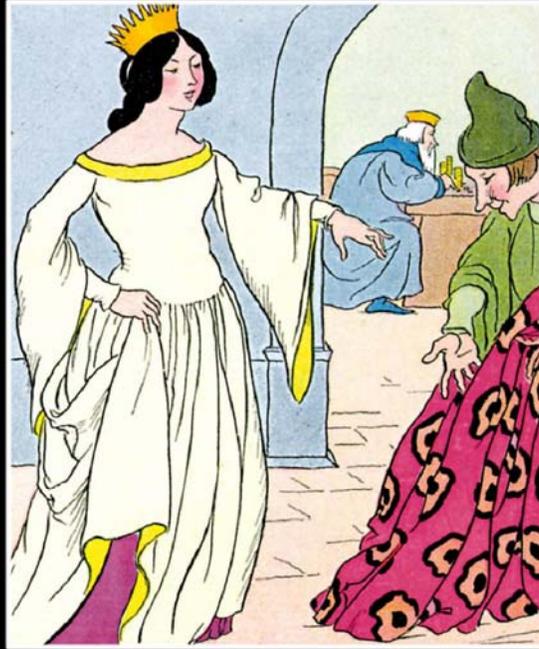


Queen Zixi of ix



Or, the Story of the Magic Cloak

John I. Baker III

Adapted from the novel by L. Frank Baum

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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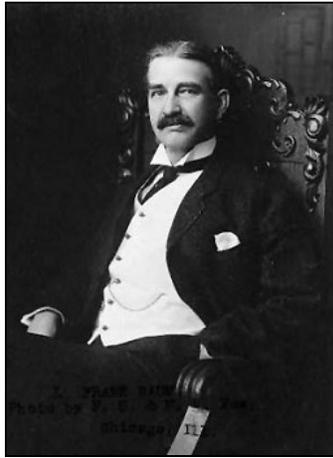
QUEEN LULEA/DAME DINGLE: Lily Shafer
FAIRY 1/NANCY NINK: Whitley Homolka
FAIRY 2/BETSY BARX: Jenna Fuehrer
FAIRY 3/ROLY-ROGUE 1: Elisabeth Bunyard
ESPA/ALLIGATOR: Erin Case
EREOL: Lauren Thomas
MAN IN THE MOON: Samantha Bunyard
TULLYDUB: Ethan Milleson
TOLLYDOB: Deidre Freitas
TILLYDIB: Ella Wilkins
TALLYDAB: Clare Wilton
TELLYDEB: Alex Reetz
JIKKI: Daniel Freitas
PRINCESS FLUFF: Sarah Anderson
KING BUD: Riley Nigh
AUNT RIVETTE: Hannah Anderson
SOLDIER OF NOLAND 1/PIG: Bridget Yamber
SOLDIER OF NOLAND 2: Kennedy Cool
MERCHANT: Trinidi Rice
OLD BAGGER/ROLY-ROGUE 4: Clara Booth
LAME WOMAN: Mckinlee Legg
BART: Trey Bunyard
BERTHA THE OLD WOMAN: Nema Stracener
WOMAN IN THE CROWD/SALLY SOG: Emory Flynt
OLD MAN: Dakota Brown
BOY: Austin Dye
FAT OLD WOMAN/IX SOLDIER/ MILLER'S WIFE: Skylar Cardenas
THIN OLD WOMAN/OWL: Julie Tremaine
COW/ROLY-ROGUE 2: Cameron Turner
DONKEY/ROLY-ROGUE 3: Addison Legg
HALF-A-DOZEN SERVANT 1: Grace Uhler
HALF-A-DOZEN SERVANT 2: Emma Uhler
HALF-A-DOZEN SERVANT 3: Claire Uhler
HALF-A-DOZEN SERVANT 4: Hannah Doremus

HALF-A-DOZEN SERVANT 5: Olivia Linhart
HALF-A-DOZEN SERVANT 6: Jordyn Harms
RUFFLES: Isaac Reetz
CREDITOR 1/IX SOLDIER: Megan DeHart
CREDITOR 2/IX SOLDIER: Audrey Mohorn
CREDITOR 3: Atleigh Hirschfeld
QUEEN ZIXI: Kathleen Esser
GENERAL LEXI: Will Wilton
COUNSELOR OF REXI: Paige Thomas
QUAVO THE MINSTREL: Gracie Booth
IX SOLDIER 1: Jessica Fuehrer
IX SOLDIER 2: Raima Kreifels
JESSTE: Lily Otte
RESSTE: Ariana Cardenas
RULER: Mara Coates
RODGER: Lewis Hendricks
RACHEL: Logan Ericson
ROLY-ROGUE 5: Tenley Williamson
SHEPHERDESS/ VILLAGER: Ava Goodwin
ZIXI'S MAGIC IMP 1/SAILOR: Phoenix Brown
ZIXI'S MAGIC IMP 2/VILLAGER: Jainey Rinehart-Carroll
VILLAGER/IX SOLDIER: Allie Colburn
VILLAGER: Maelynn Ericson
VILLAGER: Kale Jones

Queen Zixi of Ix Or, The Story of the Magic Cloak

CLASSIC. Adapted from the novel by L. Frank Baum. This fantastical adventure will charm your audiences with its wit and whimsy. When the Queen of the fairies grows tired of merrymaking, she has her fairies weave a magic cloak that grants its wearer one wish. The Queen orders one of her fairies to give the cloak to the first unhappy person she meets, who happens to be a poor orphan girl, Margaret. Margaret becomes a princess and her brother Bud is declared the new king of Noland. Meanwhile, the rascally, rotund Roly-Rogues have conquered the kingdom of Noland and forced its citizens to tend to their every need. The citizens have to constantly feed the ravenous Roly-Rogues large pots of soup and scratch their big bellies. With the help of Queen Zixi of Ix, King Bud and Princess Margaret must find the magic cloak so they can rid themselves of the maddening Roly-Rogues once and for all.

Performance Time: Approximately 100-120 minutes.



L. Frank Baum (1856-1919)

About the Story

Lyman Frank Baum was born in Chittenango, NY, and grew up on his family's large estate, where he was the seventh of nine children. Baum did not like his first name, Lyman, so he went by his middle name Frank. Baum was influenced by the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, and Lewis Carroll. Baum's best-selling children's novel, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, was published in 1900. *Queen Zixi of Ix, or The Story of the Magic Cloak* was serialized and first appeared in a children's magazine in 1904-05. It was then published as a novel in 1905 and Baum considered it one of his best books. Baum wrote 14 novels set in the Land of Oz as well as numerous short stories, poems, and novels before he died in 1919. Baum's final book, *Glinda of Oz*, was published in 1920, one year after his death.

Characters

(8 M, 21 F, 39 flexible, extras)

(With doubling: 6 M, 17 F, 25 flexible. Tripling possible.)

- MAN IN THE MOON:** Narrator, voice only; male.
- QUEEN LULEA:** Queen of the fairies in the ancient land of Burzee; tired of merrymaking and wants to find a new way for the Fairies to entertain themselves; female.
- ESPA:** Fairy who encourages the other Fairies to make a magic cloak that grants its wearer one wish; female.
- FAIRY 1, 2, 3:** Fairies faithful to Queen Lulea; female.
- EREOL:** Fairy who served as guardian to the old King of Noland and thinks all mortals are wearisome; has fluffy golden hair and blue eyes; female.
- TULLYDUB:** Chief counselor to the King of Noland; old and pompous; wears a black robe, a periwig, and spectacles; flexible.
- TOLLYDOB:** Lord High General of the King of Noland's army and second in command; wears a black robe and a periwig; small in stature; wears a costume with fake muscles; male.
- TILLYDIB:** Lord High Purse-Bearer to the King of Noland and third in command; wears a black robe and a periwig; flexible.
- TALLYDAB:** Lord High Steward to the King of Noland; wears a black robe and a periwig; flexible.
- TELLYDEB:** Lord High Executioner to the King of Noland; wears a black robe and a periwig; wears a fake hand attached to a accordion-like arm that can be manually extended; flexible.
- JIKKI:** The King of Noland's nervous, talkative valet and servant; wears a jacket with silver buttons; flexible.
- BUD:** Orphan who becomes the new King of Noland because he was the 47th person to cross through the gates of city of Nole; wears a soiled, ragged jacket; male.
- MARGARET:** Bud's sister who becomes Princess Fluff when she crosses through the gates of the city of Nole; nicknamed "Fluff" due to her fluffy hair; wears a worn gray dress and patched shoes; female.
- AUNT RIVETTE:** Bud and Margaret's grim, stern aunt and guardian; works as a laundress; wears worn clothing and a bonnet and uses a cane; female.
- SOLDIER OF NOLAND 1, 2:** Guards to the King of Noland; flexible.

- MERCHANT:** Noland townspeople who doesn't want to give up his senses; flexible.
- BART:** Elderly Noland townspeople who is hard of hearing and tends to speak loudly; male.
- BERTHA:** Bart's elderly wife; female.
- OLD MAN/WOMAN:** Noland townspeople who seeks the King's advice in dealing with his son who keeps running away from home; flexible.
- BOY/GIRL:** Old Man's son who is tired of being whipped by his father so he keeps running away from home; flexible.
- FAT OLD WOMAN:** Noland townspeople who seeks the King's help in reclaiming her cow from Thin Old Woman; elderly fat woman; female.
- THIN OLD WOMAN:** Noland townspeople who seeks the King's help in obtaining the Fat Old Woman's cow; elderly thin woman; female.
- COW:** Bossie the cow who belongs to Fat Old Woman; wears a cow costume; flexible.
- SERVANTS 1-6:** Servants who appear when Jikki wishes he had six servants to wait on him; all look very much alike and wear wine-colored liveries with silver buttons on their coats; flexible.
- RUFFLES:** Tallydab's dog; begins to talk after Tallydab wishes him to do so; flexible.
- CREDITOR 1, 2, 3:** Noland townspeople who the King owes money; flexible.
- QUEEN ZIXI:** Queen of the kingdom of Ix; she is a witch, and through a spell, has not aged a day since her 16th birthday even though she is really 683 years old; appears as an old hag when she looks in the mirror; female.
- GENERAL LEXI:** Grand general of the army of Ix; struts about like a peacock; wears a uniform with a tight-fitting red jacket; male.
- COUNSELOR REXI:** Squire who serves as the Lord High Counselor to Queen Zixi; wears a long robe and has a long beard; male.
- QUAVO:** Minstrel who plays the harp and entertains Queen Zixi's guests; flexible.
- COUNSELOR 1, 2, 3:** Ix counselors; flexible.
- IX SOLDIER 1, 2:** Queen Zixi's soldiers; flexible.
- IMP 1, 2:** Magically transform Queen Zixi into a young woman with long light-brown braids; flexible.
- JESSTE:** Margaret's handmaiden; female.

RESSTEA: Margaret's handmaiden; female.

ALLIGATOR: Sad because he is unable to climb a tree; flexible.

OWL: Sad because he can't swim in the river like a fish; flexible.

PIG: Sad because he isn't human; flexible.

RULER: Ruler of the Roly-Rogues who looks like a sumo wrestler or a giant ball with hands, head, and feet; flexible.

RODGER: Roly-Rogue; male.

RACHEL: Roly-Rogue who gets stuck on a steeple in the city of Nole; female.

ROLY-ROGUE 1-6: Roly-Rogues; flexible.

SHEPARDESS: Found magic cloak and gave it to Dame Dingle; female.

DAME DINGLE: Wrinkled old woman who lives in a cabin and makes quilts; wears spectacles; female.

NANCY NINK: Quilter; flexible.

BETSY BARX: Quilter; flexible.

SALLY SOG: Quilter; flexible.

MILLER'S WIFE: Gave a piece of the magic cloak to her son for a necktie; female.

SAILOR: Son of the Miller's Wife; male.

EXTRAS: As Townspeople, Slow-Moving Beggar, Lame Peddler, Well-Dressed Man, Dinner Guests, Soldiers, and Roly-Rogues.

NOTE: For flexible roles, change the script accordingly.

Options for Doubling

SHEPARDESS/BERTHA/MILLER'S WIFE (female)
DAME DINGLE/ESPA (flexible)
NANCY NINK/FAIRY 1 (female)
BETSY BARK/FAIRY 2 (female)
SALLY SOG/FAIRY 3 (female)
SAILOR/OLD MAN (male)
JESSTEAFAT OLD WOMAN (female)
RESSTEATHIN OLD WOMAN (female)
MERCHANT/QUAVO (flexible)
ALLIGATOR/CREDITOR 1 (flexible)
OWL/CREDITOR 2 (flexible)
PIG/CREDITOR 3 (flexible)
BART/MAN IN THE MOON (male)
ROLY-ROGUE 1/COUNSELOR 1 (flexible)
ROLY-ROGUE 2/COUNSELOR 2 (flexible)
ROLY-ROGUE 3/COUNSELOR 3 (flexible)
ROLY-ROGUE 4/IMP 1 (flexible)
ROLY-ROGUE 5/IMP 2 (flexible)
ROLY-ROGUE 6/BOY or GIRL (flexible)

Setting

The kingdom of Noland and the kingdom of Ix.

Sets

Ancient forest of Burzee. There a clearing in the form of a circle surrounded by giant oak and fir trees. A large log lies in the center of the circle.

Noland royal throne room. The King's throne sits in a commanding position in the room with a smaller throne next to it. Several footstools fill the room where those coming to see the king can sit. Two doors leading from the room are present: one leads to the waiting chamber outside the throne room, and another provides a quick getaway to other parts of the palace.

Queen Zixi's dining hall. There is large dining table with chairs.

Margaret's bedchamber. There is a chest of drawers and a chair.

City of Nole. There is a backdrop. A palace tower with a sharp point is depicted on which Rachel Roly-Rogue gets stuck. There are stairs behind the flat.

Cabin of Dame Dingle. Backdrop of a cabin in the woods.

High plain. A backdrop depicts a vast mountain range rising high into the sky with clouds covering the highest peaks. Mountain range resembles a giant stairway. There is an elevated area to represent the plateau where the Roly-Rogues live. There are stairs behind the flat.

Royal courtyard, kingdom of Ix. The palace of the Queen is in the center of the courtyard. It has white marble walks leading up to the front door. There is a backdrop of gardens, shrubbery, white statues, fountains, and flowers. There is a bench.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: The ancient forest of Burzee.

Scene 2: The kingdom of Noland, the city of Nole. A waiting room outside the King's bedchamber.

Scene 3: On the road to the city of Nole, the next morning.

Scene 4: Outside the gates of the city of Nole, later that morning.

Scene 5: King of Noland's royal throne room, later that day.

Scene 6: The great hallway at the palace of Noland.

ACT II

Scene 1: Dining hall at Queen Zixi's palace.

Scene 2: Kingdom of Noland's royal throne room.

Scene 3: Outskirts of the city of Nole.

Scene 4: A deep, dark clearing in the forest of Noland.

Scene 5: Margaret's bedchamber at the palace.

Scene 6: A deep, dark clearing in the forest of Noland.

ACT III

Scene 1: City of Nole.

Scene 2: Margaret's bedchamber at the palace.

Scene 3: City of Nole.

Scene 4: Royal courtyard, kingdom of Ix.

Scene 5: Forest clearing.

Scene 6: Outside Dame Dingle's cabin.

Scene 7: Forest clearing.

Scene 8: City of Nole.

Props

2 Identical cloaks	White dress with a pink sash, for Queen Zixi
Vase	Long light-brown braids, for Queen Zixi
Large old-looking book that is locked with a padlock	Fake muscles, for Tollydob
Donkey or cart loaded with family's possessions	Chess board
King's robe	Hair bow
King's crown set with gems	Key
King's jeweled scepter	Scarf
Long flowing princess dress, for Margaret	Ropes
2 Handkerchiefs	Thorns
Milking stool	Garden rake
Milking pail	3 Soup bowls (large)
Tree branch for switch	Spoons
Money purse filled with coins	Ladles
Money purse with just a few coins in it	Platter with bread and cheese
Wings, for Aunt Rivette	Platters of assorted food items
Assorted shoes for polishing and dirty clothing	Apron, for Tollydob
Large hat that blocks his vision, for Jikki	Fake rock (can be made with papier-mâché or foam)
Tree with an apple hanging from a branch	Scepter with a crystal at the top, for Queen Zixi
Tally sheet	Crook, for Shepherdess
Gold/silver food platters with assorted meat, fruit, vegetables on them	Quilts
Ornamental stands with sweets on them	Patches for quilt made from same fabric as cloak with Velcro so they can be stuck together
Harp	Assorted quilt patches
Large "mirror" that depicts the image of a hideous old hag	Needle and thread
Gold armor, for Queen Zixi	Washtub
	Dishes
	Berries
	Silver vial
	Goblet
	Tie, for Sailor

Special Effects

Man in the moon (light effect)
Dust (powder)
Sound of bells in the wind
Loud bell
Cow mooing
Magical bells
Stretchable accordion-like arm that can be extended manually, for
Tellydeb (can use an accordion dryer vent)
Harp music
Fanfare
Trumpet blast
Crash
Explosion
Shimmering light

“Of Noland now a tale I’ll sing,
Where reigns a strangely youthful king—
A boy, who has by chance alone
Been called to sit upon a throne.

His sister shares his luck, and she
The fairies’ friend is said to be;
For they did mystic arts invoke
And weave for her a magic cloak,
Which grants its wearer—thus I’m told—
Gifts more precious far than gold.”

—Quavo

Scene 1

(AT RISE: *The ancient forest of Burzee. The moon rises, revealing a clearing in the form of a circle surrounded by giant oak and fir trees. A large log lies in the center of the circle. Queen Lulea is sitting on the log. Surrounding Queen Lulea are Fairies 1, 2, 3 and Espa.*)

FAIRY 1: My Queen, why do we not dance in the moonlight as we do every night?

QUEEN LULEA: I am tired of dancing, my dears. Every evening since the moon grew big and round we have come here to dance about and laugh. (*Fairies agree.*) Although those are good things to keep the heart light, one may grow weary even of merrymaking. So I ask you to suggest some new way to entertain both yourselves and me during this night.

FAIRY 2: That is a difficult task. We have lived through so many ages that we long ago exhausted everything that might be considered a novelty. Of all our recreations, nothing gives us such continued pleasure as dancing.

QUEEN LULEA: But I do not care to dance tonight!

FAIRY 1: We might create something by virtue of our fairy powers...

QUEEN LULEA: Ah, that is just the idea! Let us create something. But what?

FAIRY 3: I have heard of a thinking-cap having been made by some fairies across the sea. Whichever mortal wore this thinking-cap was able to conceive the most noble and beautiful thoughts.

QUEEN LULEA: That was, indeed, a worthy creation. What became of the cap?

FAIRY 3: The man who received it was so afraid someone else would get it and be able to think the same exquisite thoughts as himself that he hid it safely away...so safely that he himself never could think afterward where he had placed it.

QUEEN LULEA: How unfortunate! We must not make another thinking-cap, lest it meet a similar fate. Can you suggest something else?

FAIRY 2: I have heard of certain fairies that created a pair of enchanted boots, which would always carry their mortal wearer away from danger and never into it.

FAIRY 1: What a great boon to those blundering mortals!

QUEEN LULEA: And whatever became of the boots?

FAIRY 2: They came at last into the possession of a great general who did not know their powers. So he wore them into battle one day and immediately ran away followed by all his men, and the enemy won the fight.

FAIRY 3: But did not the general escape danger?

FAIRY 2: Yes, but at the expense of his reputation. He was then forced to retire to a farm and wore out his boots tramping up and down a country road trying to figure out why he had suddenly become a coward.

QUEEN LULEA: Surely, the wrong man wore the boots, and that is why they proved a curse rather than a blessing. We want no enchanted boots. Think of something else.

ESPA: Suppose we weave a magic cloak...

QUEEN LULEA: A cloak? Indeed, we might easily weave that. But what sort of magic powers must it possess?

ESPA: *(Brightly.)* Let the wearer have any wish instantly fulfilled!

(Fairies protest. Queen Lulea silences the Fairies.)

QUEEN LULEA: Our sister did not think of the probable consequences of what she suggested. An instant's reflection would enable her to see that such power would give the cloak's mortal wearer as many privileges as we ourselves possess. *(To Espa.)* I suppose you intended the magic cloak for a mortal wearer?

ESPA: Yes, that was my intention.

(Queen Lulea ponders this.)

QUEEN LULEA: The idea is good, and so I propose we devote this evening to weaving the magic cloak, only its magic shall give to its wearer the fulfillment of but one wish.

FAIRIES: One wish!

QUEEN LULEA: I am quite sure even that should prove a great boon to the helpless mortals.

FAIRY 1: Suppose more than one person wears the cloak. Who then shall have their wish fulfilled?

(Queen Lulea ponders this.)

QUEEN LULEA: Each possessor of the magic cloak may have one wish granted, provided the cloak is not stolen from its last wearer.

FAIRY 2: And in that case?

QUEEN LULEA: In that case, the magic power will not be exercised on behalf of the thief.

FAIRY 3: Should there not be a limit to the number of the cloak's wearers?

QUEEN LULEA: I think not. If used properly, our gift will prove of great value to mortals.

FAIRY 2: And what if the cloak is not properly used?

QUEEN LULEA: If misused, we can take back the cloak at any time and revoke its magic power. *(To Fairies.)* Are we all in agreement? *(Fairies agree.)* Good. Then let us set to work. *(Fairies spring up and begin to dance. As the dance proceeds, they "weave" the cloak. After the dance, Espa presents Queen Lulea with the magic cloak.)* It's very lovely, indeed!

ESPA: To whom shall we present it?

(Murmurs among the Fairies. Their murmurs are broken as Ereol enters the circle.)

QUEEN LULEA: Welcome, Ereol. You're late.

EREOL: *(In a low, grave voice.)* Yes, Your Majesty, I am late. But I could not help it. The old King of Noland, whose guardian I have been since his birth, has passed away this evening, and I could not bear to leave him until the end came.

QUEEN LULEA: He was a good man but woefully uninteresting. He must have wearied you greatly at times, my sweet Ereol.

EREOL: *(Sighs.)* All mortals are, I think, wearisome.

QUEEN LULEA: And who is the new King of Noland?

EREOL: There is none. The old King died without a single relative to succeed to the throne, and his five high counselors were in a great dilemma when I left.

QUEEN LULEA: Well, my dear, you may rest. By and by, once you are rested, I will appoint you guardian to some newly born babe.

EREOL: Yes, My Queen.

QUEEN LULEA: I am sorry you were not with us tonight, for we have had rare sport. *(Holding up magic cloak.)* See! We have woven a magic cloak!

EREOL: *(Examining magic cloak.)* And who is to wear it?

QUEEN LULEA: *(Smiles, laughs.)* Come! Let us leave the decision to the Man in the Moon. He has been watching us with a great deal of amusement, and once, I am sure, I caught him winking at us in quite a roguish way.

(Fairies turn and see the Man in the Moon appear in the sky.)

MAN IN THE MOON: *(Voiceover.)* So, I'm to decide another dispute, eh?

QUEEN LULEA: We wish you to say which mortal shall wear the magic cloak.

MAN IN THE MOON: *(Voiceover.)* Give the cloak to the first unhappy person you meet. Happy mortals have no need for a magic cloak. *(Fades until only the moon's outline remains.)*

QUEEN LULEA: *(To Fairies.)* Our Man in the Moon is very wise, and we shall follow his suggestion. Ereol, since you are free for a time, go and carry the magic cloak to Noland. And the first person you meet who is really unhappy—be it man, woman, or child—that person shall receive from you the cloak as a gift from our fairy band.

(Queen Lulea hands the magic cloak to Ereol.)

EREOL: *(Bowing.)* It shall be done.

QUEEN LULEA: *(To Fairies.)* Come, my children, the moon is hiding behind the treetops, and it is time for us to depart.

(As the Fairies disappear into the forest, Ereol exits in the opposite direction. Blackout.)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: *The kingdom of Noland. A waiting room outside the King's bedchamber. The Man in the Moon is looking down on the Counselors of Noland: Tullydub, Tollydob, Tillydib, Tallydab, and Tellydeb. The five Counselors are gathered, debating the course of action to be taken. There is much confusion and excitement among the Counselors.*)

MAN IN THE MOON: (*Voiceover.*) In the Kingdom of Noland, as the Fairies were weaving the cloak of magic, the old King died, leaving no one to succeed him. The King had outlived every one of his relatives, and since the crown had been in his family for generations, his Counselors found themselves at a loss to decide upon a fitting successor. (*Fades.*)

TULLYDUB: What are we to do?! The King is dead! What are your thoughts, Tollydob?

TOLLYDOB: (*Feigning assurance.*) As High General of the King's army, I say we must do nothing until we know what is to be done!

TULLYDUB: Hmm...wise advice. What do you think, Tillydib?

TILLYDIB: Yes, the King is dead. Umm-hum. We must do nothing, for if word of his death leaks out before there is a successor, the kingdom will go broke.

TULLYDUB: And why do you say that?

TILLYDIB: Well, I am the Lord High Purse-Bearer! Who should know more about money than I?

TOLLYDOB: True. What do you say, Tallydab?

TALLYDAB: As Lord High Steward, I suggest that service to the people should be first. Perhaps we should have told the people when the old King became ill instead of fearing the annoyance of many foolish questions.

(*Other Counselors look at Tallydab and shake their heads in disagreement.*)

TULLYDUB: Tallydab, we were correct in not telling the people. It was the King who has been foolish to die of old age.

TOLLYDOB: Quite true, Tullydub. If we had told the people, there might have been an uprising, and the King's army would have had to go to war against its own people. (*Pause. Thinks.*) Of course, we do have a perfectly good army that is wasting away, and it could have been put to good use...

TELLYDEB: Perhaps if we never tell the people of the King's death, then we will be all the better for it.

TOLLYDOB: That is a good idea, Tellydeb. *(Slight pause.)* But what if someone were to discover that the King is dead?

TELLYDEB: That answer is easy. As Lord High Executioner, I would execute them.

TALLYDAB: That would be too harsh! No one needs to lose their head over this matter. We just need to find a solution.

(The door to the waiting room bursts open. Jikki, the King's valet and servant, enters.)

JIKKI: Beg pardon, my masters, but do you think His Majesty will get well? *(Tullydub begins to answer, but is interrupted by Jikki.)* Beg pardon, but do you think His Majesty will die? *(Counselors take deep breaths and begin to answer, but before they can, Jikki interrupts.)* Beg pardon, but do you think His Majesty is any better or any worse? *(Tellydeb, in a fit of frustration, is about to throw a vase at Jikki, but Jikki starts to exit. Sighs.)* Well, let me know when you know. *(Exits.)*

TELLYDEB: *(To Counselors.)* I wish there were some law that would permit me to chop of Jikki's head.

TULLYDUB: *(Gloomily.)* There is no law but the King's will, and he insists that Jikki be allowed to live.

TILLYDIB: He is such a nervous old ninny.

TOLLYDOB: True, but none is more loyal to the King and to the kingdom. What do you think, Lord High Counselor?

(Tullydub ponders this.)

TULLYDUB: We must tell the old fellow for the good of the kingdom. Call him in.

TILLYDIB: *(Beginning to open the door.)* Very well, I will—

(Jikki bursts into the room, knocking Tillydib down.)

JIKKI: Beg pardon, my masters, do you believe the King will get well?

TOLLYDOB: Jikki, if you—

JIKKI: Beg pardon, do you think His Majesty will die?

(Tellydeb puts his hand over Jikki's mouth.)

TULLYDUB: Jikki, if you would just listen for a moment, your questions would be answered.

(Tellydeb removes his hand from Jikki's mouth.)

JIKKI: Beg pardon, Lord High Counselor.

TULLYDUB: It pains me to inform you that the King has died.

(Jikki does not respond. Surprised, the Counselors look at each other. Just then, Jikki has an extreme reaction to the news and begins to run around the room.)

JIKKI: *(Screaming.)* Arghhhhhhh! Oh, no, the King is dead! The King is dead!

TELLYDEB: *(Irritated.)* Oh, be quiet, Jikki, or I will remove your head from your body!

(Jikki stops screaming and running about. Pause. Silence. Jikki runs for the door, but Tollydob stops him.)

TOLLYDOB: *(To Jikki.)* Where are you going?

JIKKI: To the bell tower to toll the bell for the King's death.

TOLLYDOB: Remain here until we give you permission to go.

JIKKI: But the bell ought to be tolled!

TILLYDIB: Be silent! We know what ought to be done and what ought *not* to be done.

TALLYDAB: *(To Jikki.)* If we tell the people the King is dead, then the whole population will lose faith and fall to fighting and quarreling among themselves.

TULLYDUB: Then we must name a successor to avoid this disaster.

(Other Councilors agree.)

TELLYDEB: But who should we choose to be the new king?

TALLYDAB: That is a sensible question. Who should we choose?

JIKKI: Hadn't I better toll the bell?

COUNSELORS: *(Shout.)* No!

(Jikki runs off.)

TILLYDIB: *(To Counselors.)* Well, how do we choose a new king?

TALLYDAB: Perhaps one of us?

TULLYDUB: A good idea, but which one of us wants to give up
ruling the people?

TELLYDEB: *(Looking at Counselors.)* I daresay none of us.

TULLYDUB: Just as I thought, so then we need —

(Jikki sticks his head into the room.)

JIKKI: Beg pardon, hadn't I better —?

COUNSELORS: *(Shout.)* No!

(Jikki enters.)

JIKKI: Very well, I was only going to ask if I hadn't better get you
some breakfast.

COUNSELORS: *(Shout.)* Yes!

JIKKI: And shall I toll the bell?

COUNSELORS: *(Shout.)* No!

[END OF FREEVIEW]