

THE MAGICIAN:  
AN ORIGINAL PLAY

by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Aristotle discussed the qualitative parts of drama as plot, character, thought, diction, melody, and spectacle. These are the materials of which plays are made. The playwright's task then is to utilize these elements in formulating a script. This task can vary according to the emphasis given to one or more of these Aristotelian elements. It was the problem of this thesis to incorporate the qualitative parts of drama into an original play for children. The play's script was to provide an illustration of good conduct and morals for children. The story line of the script was to be original and not an adaption of any children's story.

Sam Smiley's Playwriting: The Structure of Action served as a guide for the preparation of the script. Dr. Smiley's suggested writing procedures proceeding from germinal idea through scenario and initial draft to final version were followed. A scenario which included working title, full description of characters, a narrative of the story line, and a beat-by-beat analysis of the play's action was first presented to the chairman of the committee, Dr. Richard Weaver, and

then to the other readers, Dr. Clifford Ashby and Mr. Ronald Schulz. The scenario was then altered following suggestions of the committee.

The suggested scenario changes included alteration of the title and renaming characters. The Magician Tiamat served as a working title. In the scenario, characters' names were taken from myth and dragon stories. Since these obscure names were too ambiguous for children, the character names were made more descriptive. Accordingly, for the first draft, the title, The Magician Tiamat, and the character by that name were shortened to The Magician. Other character names were altered as well. King Ra became King Noble; Queen Ereshigal, Queen Nefarious; Mani, Mandy; Tama, Peter; Jove, Sebastian; and Knight Zoroaster, Knight Duteous. The names for Knight Thuddeaus and the Nergal remained the same.

Following the revision of the scenario a draft of the play was written and presented to the committee chairman and then to the committee. On advisement from the committee, several changes in the initial draft were made prior to performance. The changes included individualization of vocabularies, clarification of the story line, and rearrangement of two entrances.

A major character differentiation is made through individualized character vocabularies. Vocabularies of

several characters were changed in re-writing the play. The verbs in the speeches of the Magician, Mandy, and Peter were revised to provide more individuality. In the final draft verbs used by each character were individualized to fit the personality of the character. In this way, the Magician appears mysterious, Peter bold, and Mandy sweet and innocent.

Knight Duteous's vocabulary was also changed. His vocabulary was improved by removing innuendo lines used for comic effect and including stage directions supporting his statements with physical action.

In the first draft some elements of the story line were confusing. Queen Nefarious's evil plans for overthrowing King Noble's kingdom were unclear. Queen Nefarious's method for destroying all good in the kingdom and crowning her own son, Knight Thuddeaus, king had to be clarified. The final draft includes a scene in which Queen Nefarious describes her evil plans to Knight Thuddeaus. In addition, the Nergal demonstrates Queen Nefarious's evil power by developing terrible pains when attempting to act contrary to the Queen's evil wishes. This action improved both the plot development and the characterization of the Nergal.

Sebastian and Knight Duteous made their first entrances in the original draft simultaneously with

Queen Nefarious, Knight Thuddeaus, and the Nergal. This placed Sebastian and Knight Duteous in harmony with Queen Nefarious and her evil plans. The final draft has Knight Duteous making his first entrance prior to that of Queen Nefarious and her evil partners. Knight Duteous, therefore, establishes his character in harmony with King Noble's children, Mandy and Peter. The entrance for Sebastian, the dragon, was delayed. The committee felt it necessary to hold Sebastian's entrance because of the audience attention a dragon would command. Sebastian makes his first entrance after all the details of the Queen's evil plans have been announced. With these changes accomplished the committee approved the script for the next step—production.

Jack Bilbo agreed to direct the first production. A cast of students interested in performing for elementary age children participated. The cast utilized a minimum of costumes, make-up, lighting and scenery. The actors were allowed to read their lines from scripts.

The reading performance of The Magician was presented at the Texas Tech Laboratory Theatre on the Texas Tech campus. One class of third-grade students from the Lubbock Public Schools and three classes of elementary age students from a private school in Lubbock

attended. The thesis committee, several instructors from the education department of Texas Tech, friends of the cast, and several theatre majors were present. Following the performance the audience was invited to remain for an open discussion of the play.

During the discussion several suggestions were made for the improvement of the script. These suggestions were to increase suspense in the plot, include an obligatory fight scene between the good force and the evil force, and eliminate the potion the Magician made for Queen Nefarious. These suggestions were incorporated into the final script.

In the first draft King Noble reveals his disguise as the Magician to everyone except Queen Nefarious early in the play. Holding the revelation of King Noble's disguise until the end of the play intensifies suspense.

A scene of confrontation between Knight Duteous, the force for good, and Knight Thuddeaus, the force for evil, was added. Originally the fight scene occurred between Sebastian, the dragon, and Knight Duteous. Since both these were good forces the purpose of the confrontation was unclear. The fight scene between Sebastian and Knight Duteous in the first draft was removed and the fight scene between Knight Thuddeaus and Knight Duteous was added.

In the original script, Queen Nefarious ordered the Magician to make a magic potion which would help her evil plan. The Magician's cooperation with her evil plan confused his character. Hence the scenes involving the Magician's attempts to accomplish Queen Nefarious's orders for an evil potion were cut from the play.

The final script is presented in the form approved by the Graduate faculty of Theatre Arts. The script was presented to the chairman of the committee and to the committee for the final reading. The approved script is presented as a thesis in partial fulfillment of a Master of Arts degree in Theatre Arts from Texas Tech University.

CHAPTER II  
THE MAGICIAN

by

Phyllis Lynn Robertson

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

KING NOBLE, 45, the father of Mandy and Peter

THE MAGICIAN, 45, King Noble in disguise

MANDY, 16, the image of a fairy tale princess

PETER, 9, son of King Noble and legal heir to the throne

SEBASTIAN, 275, an ancient dragon

KNIGHT DUTEOUS, 18, a righteous knight who loves Mandy

QUEEN NEFARIOUS, 45, an evil queen

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS, 18, her son

THE NERFAL, 100, an underground animal who is under Queen  
Nefarious's evil spell

The action occurs during one day in King Noble's castle courtyard.

**SETTING:** The play takes place in a castle courtyard. There are three entrances. The Stage Right entrance leads to the outside of the castle; the Stage Left entrance leads to the interior of the castle. An arch Upstage leads down into the dungeon of the castle. A throne chair is Upstage.

(The curtain opens on KING NOBLE'S castle courtyard. A throne chair stands Upstage. A young boy, PETER, runs on from Left Stage. He is looking for a place to hide. He is bold and mischievous and barefoot.)

MANDY

(MANDY enters from Stage Left. She is PETER'S older sister. She is the epitome of a fairy princess.) Please, Peter, don't run from me. I'm not mad at you.

PETER

Promise?

MANDY

Yes.

PETER

Great!

MANDY

Still you should put on your shoes.

PETER

Why?

MANDY

Because you must act like a grownup. Remember, our step-mother, Queen Nefarious, told you acting like a grownup was the only way for you to become King.

PETER

Grownup, that's all I hear. Act grownup! Well, I'm not a grownup and I don't know how they act. I'm not sure I'd act like one if I did. I do know I'm King Noble's son and he's proud of me just like I am.

MANDY

But, Peter, King Noble is dead. He was killed by the dreadful dragon.

PETER

(Angrily.) That's a lie!

MANDY

Our stepbrother, Knight Thuddeaus, found Father's clothes in the dragon's cave.

PETER

I know!

MANDY

Then you have to grow up and understand. Our father is dead. Knight Thuddeaus captured the dragon who killed him.

PETER

Thuddeaus couldn't have nabbed the dragon by himself. Everybody in the kingdom helped. The dragon didn't have a chance.

MANDY

The dragon is dangerous. He killed our father. Queen Nefarious says he could kill others if he's not stopped.

PETER

He didn't kill our father!

MANDY

I wish you were right, Peter, but wishing won't make it so.

PETER

I know.

MANDY

You do miss Father, don't you, Peter?

PETER

Sure! But I know he is all right. And I know Father will stop Queen Nefarious and her evil plan.

MANDY

What evil plan?

PETER

I don't know for sure, but I have a hunch Queen Nefarious wants dumb Thuddeaus to rule Father's kingdom.

MANDY

How do you have a hunch?

PETER

(Mysteriously.) That's a secret.

MANDY

(Wheedling.) Peter!

PETER

(Changing the subject. PETER crosses to the throne chair and sits down.) How do I look?

MANDY

Don't try to change the subject, Peter. I want to know the secret.

PETER

The secret is. . .the dragon.

MANDY

Oh?

PETER

(From Stage Left are heard bells followed by the sound of drums.) What's that?

MANDY

Queen Nefarious is calling everyone to the assembly.

PETER

What for?

MANDY

I'm not sure. I think she's going to announce how the dragon will be punished.

PETER

Punished?

MANDY

For killing father. His death must be avenged.

PETER

The dragon didn't do it.

MANDY

Queen Nefarious thinks he did and that's all that matters. Please put on your shoes. Maybe Queen Nefarious will think you have grown up and you can take your rightful place as King.

PETER

(PETER begins to put on shoes. MANDY crosses to Stage Left entrance.) She'll never let me have the throne. She'll figure some way to give it to that dumb Thuddeaus.

MANDY

She can't, Peter. Only a direct descendant of King Noble is entitled to the throne. That means you or me. (Trumpet sounds.) Sounds like Queen Nefarious is angry.

PETER

(Laughs.) Thuddeaus probably stepped on her. He has such big feet!

MANDY

Don't be cruel, Peter. It is not grown up.

PETER

(Mocking.) It is not grown up.

MANDY

Look, Peter, here comes (Sigh.) Knight Duteous.

PETER

You are blushing.

MANDY

Oh!

PETER

Queen Nefarious has forbidden romance.

MANDY

No one will know, not even Knight Duteous. You won't tell anyone will you?

PETER

My lips are sealed.

KNIGHT DUTEOUS

(KNIGHT DUTEOUS enters Stage Right. He is a handsome knight. He has a white plume in his hat.) Peter. (He bows before MANDY.) Mandy. I received a summons from Queen Nefarious. (Shows a letter to PETER and MANDY.)

MANDY

(Taking the letter and reading.) "Knight Duteous, you are to appear at court before her majesty, Queen Nefarious."

KNIGHT DUTEOUS

I anticipate the Queen has determined the naming of a new king. Yet she gave no explanation. (Trumpet sounds.)

PETER

(Seeing QUEEN NEFARIOUS and her procession.) Well, get ready 'cause here it comes.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(QUEEN NEFARIOUS enters Stage Left. In procession behind QUEEN NEFARIOUS are KNIGHT THUDDEAUS and the NERGAL. QUEEN NEFARIOUS has a long black cape and is carrying a staff. Her appearance is evil. She crosses to the throne chair. She pounds her staff on the floor.) Order! Order!

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

(KNIGHT THUDDEAUS is small in stature and rather dumpy. He repeats every word spoken by his mother, QUEEN NEFARIOUS. He has large feet.) Order! Order!

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(To the NERGAL.) Is everyone here?

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

(To the NERGAL.) Is everyone here?

NERGAL

(NERGAL is of neuter sex. The NERGAL is an evil appearing creature, much like a troll. The NERGAL has been checking a list.) Everyone except the dragon, Your Majesty.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Good!

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Good!

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(Points the staff at the NERGAL.) You—

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

(Looking at the NERGAL.) You—

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(To KNIGHT THUDDEAUS.) Will you shut up, Thuddeaus? (To the NERGAL.) Read today's proclamation. It is appropriate for an underground fiend to announce today's events.

NERGAL

(The NERGAL unrolls the scroll.) By order of her sovereign majesty, Queen Nefarious, today is declared a day of

resolve. Since the royal crown and documents have been lost forever, Queen Nefarious has determined a just method of naming the new king. Two knights have been selected from all the kingdom to engage in hand to hand combat and the victorious knight will be named the new king.

PETER

(Quickly.) But the law says I should become King after my father's disappearance. I am the only son of King Noble.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(Pounding her staff on the floor.) Silence! Don't you know better than to interrupt when a queen's proclamation is being read? I can see as your stepmother I have a lot of teaching to do. I have made new laws. Besides, Peter, you are not King Noble's only son. You have a stepbrother, Thuddeaus, remember? (Turning back to NERGAL.) Continue, Nergal.

PETER

(Sits down and takes off shoes.) It didn't work, Mandy. I'm still not grown up.

NERGAL

The selected knights are Knight Duteous, King Noble's trusted knight and Knight Thuddeaus, the son of Queen Nefarious. The knight victorious will be crowned the new king because he will be given the hand of Princess Mandy.

MANDY

(MANDY, PETER, and KNIGHT DUTEOUS are shocked.) What?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

So be it!

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

So be it!

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

It is the law. Should anything happen to the King, the throne and crown will be passed to the oldest direct descendent.

PETER

(Upset.) Oldest descendent! I don't remember. . .

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Silence!

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Silence!

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(To THUDDEAUS.) Oh, shut up! (To PETER.) Only a king can destroy laws. A Queen makes adjustments and (to PETER.) I have made "oldest" an addition to the law. I am so good at adjusting laws to fit my evil plans. (To MANDY.) Mandy, I know you will want what is best for the kingdom, won't you?

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Won't you?

MANDY

Yes, of course, but. . .

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Then it is settled.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

It is settled.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(To KNIGHT THUDDEAUS.) Oh shut up. Mandy will have as her husband and king the victor of today's contest. I find myself excellent in determining the laws for my kingdom.

MANDY

Is no one to avenge the death of my father?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Oh yes! The knight who wins today's contest will also avenge the death of King Noble by determining the fate of the dragon. Thuddeaus will have the dragon beheaded.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Beheaded!

PETER

(Shocked.) Oh!

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

And, Knight Duteous, if you should be so lucky as to defeat Thuddeaus what action will you take?

KNIGHT DUTEOUS

It would be an honor to avenge King Noble's death. I pledge to fulfill my duty unto the death.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Exactly what I had in mind.

PETER  
(To MANDY.) I told you. I'll never be king.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Silence! Muttering and whispering will not be allowed in my court! If you have a complaint bring it to me. I am the only one who can hear your complaints. I have power over all decisions. I will always be willing to listen.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
She will always be willing to listen.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Knight Duteous, you have one hour to prepare. Then the contest will begin. Thuddeaus dear, we must prepare you, too.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
Prepare me?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
(Impatiently.) For the contest!

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
You said I won't have to. You said to just go along with the plan!

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Will you shut up! Don't be stupid! (Whispering to  
KNIGHT THUDDEAUS.) The Nergal is going to help you.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
Oh.

KNIGHT DUTEIOUS  
Your Majesty?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
What is it, Knight Duteous?

KNIGHT DUTEIOUS  
I would ask leave to prepare for the day's task.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
One hour! You may go.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

You may go.

KNIGHT DUTEIOUS

Thank you, Your Majesty. I take my leave now. (Exits Stage Right.)

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Good! Mandy, you take care of Peter. Make sure he is ready, dressed and acting like an adult at the time of the contest.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

(To PETER.) Like an adult.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Oh yes, I almost forgot. Peter! Mandy!

MANDY

Yes, Madam?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

The dragon should be brought to the courtyard. Bring him here; then you can prepare for the festivities. Come Thuddeaus, Nergal. We have much to do. (Evil laugh as she exits into the dungeon.)

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Mother and I have much to do! (Crosses to the Upstage exit.) Don't let the dragon eat you! (He exits behind his mother.)

PETER

(Mocking.) Don't let the dragon eat you. Yeck!

MANDY

Peter I am afraid. We have to bring the dragon here and he might reach between the bars of his cage and. . .

PETER

Aw, don't be chicken, Mandy. I told you, the dragon is the secret. I'll protect you.

MANDY

You always know when I'm frightened and need a kind word. I am so lucky to have you for a little brother and friend. (PETER and MANDY exit Stage Left.)

NERGAL

(Crossing to Center Stage.) Friends! I used to have friends, lots of friends. We lived down in the dungeon. No one ever bothered us. I liked living down there. But now I don't like it. I just can't help it. Queen Nefarious came into the dungeon and put me under an evil spell. Under this evil spell I am powerless. She makes me do all kinds of evil deeds. I don't want to do these evil deeds, but because of the evil spell I must. If I refuse I am overcome by a terrible seizure and then—death. I don't like doing evil. I wish someone could help me. Please! Someone! Help me escape this evil spell before I hurt someone!

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(From the dungeon.) Nergal? Nergal!

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Nergal!

NERGAL

The Queen is calling me to the dungeon. She wants me to help her evil plan. An evil plan to get control of the throne for her son, Thuddeaus. I won't do it. I won't go. I don't want to be evil.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(She appears at the dungeon entrance.) Nergal! I heard you! (She points the staff at the NERGAL. The NERGAL begins to tremble and shake.) Evil spell, attack!

NERGAL

(In pain.) No, please stop! I am coming. (QUEEN NEFARIOUS withdraws her staff. The NERGAL'S trembling stops.) I have no choice.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Good! My evil spell controls all. Evil is wonderful. (Exits into dungeon.)

NERGAL

(Crosses to dungeon.) I don't like what is happening. I hope someone stops the Queen's evil plan before it is too late. (Exit.)

PETER

(Enters rolling a cage.) Boy, did you hear that?

MANDY

(Enters pushing the cage. Inside the cage is a large green dragon fast asleep. He begins to wake up.) The Queen has the Nergal under an evil spell. But how can we help? We are forbidden to even speak to the Nergal. Queen Nefarious would destroy anyone entering the dungeon without her permission.

PETER

It must be part of her evil plan. I'm going to find out how her plan works.

MANDY

(Frightened.) Not now you won't. You have to get ready for the contest.

PETER

You heard the Nergal. The Queen is planning something underhanded for today's contest. We should warn Knight Duteous.

MANDY

You are right. Knight Duteous should be warned. He must be alert to any unfair play. Queen Nefarious is not to be trusted. Oh, there is so much to do. We must prepare our clothes, dress, and warn Knight Duteous. If we are not dressed properly for the contest the Queen will punish us.

PETER

We can do it. You go dress and prepare my clothes so I can change quickly. I'll go warn Knight Duteous.

MANDY

You are a great little brother. I'll have your clothes ready. Tell Knight Duteous to be careful. (She exits Stage Left.)

PETER

(Looking to make sure no one is around. Speaks to DRAGON.) Don't worry, Sebastian. I'll figure some way to help you escape.

SEBASTIAN

(SEBASTIAN is an elderly dragon approximately two-hundred and seventy-five years old. He has seemed very fierce up to this moment. He has a definite English accent.) Please hurry. I'm beginning to worry, Peter. The thought of losing my head gives me the heebie-jeebies.

PETER

You have everyone fooled. You really have acted fierce.

SEBASTIAN

(Pleased.) Have I truly?

PETER

Everyone in the kingdom is convinced you are the meanest, most awful monster ever. Everyone except the Magician. Why don't you act fierce around him?

SEBASTIAN

Oh, pretending to follow his commands lets me rest for awhile. Besides, it makes him feel important for the people of the kingdom to believe him to be powerful enough to control a fearful dragon. You must remember, at my age, rest and helping other people feel needed are two things which give me great satisfaction.

PETER

(Mysteriously.) Have you heard anything?

SEBASTIAN

I beg your pardon?

PETER

Have you heard anything, yet? From you know who?

SEBASTIAN

Oh! You want to know if I've heard from your father?

PETER

Correct.

SEBASTIAN

When the time is right the truth concerning your father will be revealed.

PETER

The way Queen Nefarious is passing laws she would have him arrested and put in the dungeon if she found he was alive.

SEBASTIAN

Your father fears this the most. Once placed in the dungeon he could never prove his identity nor rule his kingdom again.

PETER

But he will rule again! I know he will.

SEBASTIAN

Right-ho! And we must help him every way we can.

PETER

What can I do?

SEBASTIAN

You must warn Knight Duteous of the peril he is facing. The Queen's evil plan will be completely successful should he lose the contest. Thuddeaus would be appointed King. No good knight would serve him. Our kingdom would be one of evil intent.

PETER

And you would be beheaded.

SEBASTIAN

Oh dear! Gives me the heebie-jeebies.

PETER

Don't worry, Sebastian. I won't let a friend down. I'll warn Knight Duteous. (Exits Stage Right.)

SEBASTIAN

I do sincerely hope so.

MAGICIAN

(A puff of smoke and a loud boom are heard Stage Right and the MAGICIAN is on stage. He has straight hair that sticks out from his head. His cloak is too large for him. He walks in a commanding noble fashion.) Ah ha! (Looks around but does not see SEBASTIAN in the cage.) Oh good, no one is here.

SEBASTIAN

I am, Magician.

MAGICIAN

(Startled.) Huh? Oh you. Thank goodness.

SEBASTIAN

You are getting on exceedingly well with the appearing act, sir.

MAGICIAN

If I could only be as good at disappearing when Queen Nefarious is near.

SEBASTIAN

Keep working on it, sir. Tell me, Magician, is there any further information on King Noble?

MAGICIAN

Why do you ask?

SEBASTIAN

Well sir, to be frank I'm wondering if your information is correct. King Noble should step forward if he is alive and claim his throne.

MAGICIAN

No, Sebastian. He could not risk it. He has no way to prove his identity.

SEBASTIAN

Why not! He is king is he not?

MAGICIAN

Yes! But he discovered that he was king only because of the royal documents and crown. When he wore his crown he was recognized and when he had the royal documents he could govern his people.

SEBASTIAN

You've discovered the Queen's evil plan.

MAGICIAN

Not all, Sebastian. I have discovered that King Noble was called to another kingdom. He was to go under a disguise. He gave his crown and royal documents to the Nergal. The Nergal was to guard them. Queen Nefarious seized the opportunity to put the Nergal under an evil spell. Under the spell he hid the crown and royal documents. He hid them so well that as long as he is under the evil spell he will not remember where they are. But, the evil spell will not last long. Queen Nefarious must keep a close eye on the Nergal. He must stay under her evil influence until Thuddeaus is named king. Then the crown and royal documents will belong to Thuddeaus, the new king.

SEBASTIAN

What of King Noble?

MAGICIAN

If he were discovered he would be locked away in the dungeon. Never to play with his children or govern his kingdom.

SEBASTIAN

Evil! Nasty stuff! Gives me the heebie-jeebies. With an evil plan like this Knight Duteous won't have a chance.

MAGICIAN

Knight Duteous?

SEBASTIAN

Yes. Queen Nefarious plans to have Knight Duteous and Knight Thuddeaus battle for the hand of Princess Mandy. Whoever wins the contest wins Princess Mandy and the throne.

MAGICIAN

So that's how Thuddeaus is to become king.

SEBASTIAN

In part, yes. His first official action will be the beheading of yours truly.

MAGICIAN

What other evil could Queen Nefarious have planned?  
(QUEEN NEFARIOUS and THUDDEAUS are heard coming up the  
dungeon steps.)

SEBASTIAN

I would speculate that Queen Nefarious and Nergal are this very moment down in the dungeon making an evil poison.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(QUEEN NEFARIOUS and KNIGHT THUDDEAUS enter from the  
dungeon. The MAGICIAN tries to perform a disappearing  
act but is not successful.) Oh good! The dragon is in  
place. Hope he has a hearty appetite. (Laughing.)  
About the size of Knight Duteous.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Mother, I don't want to fight.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Will you shut up? (She notices The MAGICIAN.) Magician,  
is something wrong?

MAGICIAN

(Surprised.) Uh?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Is something wrong? You seem to be unusually fidgety.

MAGICIAN

Your Majesty, nothing is wrong. I was just leaving.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Wait! Something is strangely familiar about you. Your voice reminds me of my late husband.

MAGICIAN

Oh?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Silly of me I suppose. You don't look anything like him. You don't act anything like him.

MAGICIAN

No!

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Let me see your face. (She looks hard into MAGICIAN'S face.)

MAGICIAN

I believe I'll be on my way. (Begins to exit.)

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Wait! (The MAGICIAN freezes. She speaks to KNIGHT THUDDEAUS in a low voice.) Is there anything familiar to you?

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Familiar to me?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

About the Magician, you imbecile. Think! (THUDDEAUS has a strained look.) Oh forget it. (To the MAGICIAN.)  
Magician.

MAGICIAN

(Begins to exit.) Yes, Your Majesty?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

I want to invite you to the festivities we are having today. I will watch that you are here and cheering for Thuddeaus to be victorious.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Victorious!

MAGICIAN

I'm sorry, Your Majesty, I have obligations elsewhere today.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

You will be here and cheering for Thuddeaus or the dungeons will be the only place to see your magic tricks from now on. You may go now. But you will return when you hear the three trumpet blasts announcing the contest.

MAGICIAN

Yes, Your Majesty. (MAGICIAN must time his exit so that when KNIGHT THUDDEAUS distracts his mother's attention MAGICIAN can hide. He must hear the following conversation.)

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

There is something strangely familiar about that walk. It is just like. . .

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Mother, you wouldn't really lock the Magician in the dungeon? Would you? He is so funny.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(Turning to THUDDEAUS.) Will you shut up? I can't stand it when everyone laughs at his stupid magic. None of the other magicians I have known have made people laugh. They performed real magic.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Real magic?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

This magician has never performed real magic. Something strange is going on here.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Strange?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Yes, stupid! If the Magician is not here I will have him hunted down and locked away.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

(Sadly.) Oh!

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Cheer up! Today will see you king. Then I will have power over all the kingdom. Power to stop all the foolishness that goes on. The Nergal as commander of war and pestilence will destroy anyone I command him to destroy. Ours will be a terrifying and powerful kingdom. Every kingdom will fall at our feet and follow our every command.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
Even my commands?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Of course, you idiot! You are the one I'm doing all this for. Don't you know that? Be devoted to my plan and obey my commands. Power will be ours.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
Yeah! Power will be ours.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Being evil is so much fun! Let's go get you dressed for the contest. (PETER runs onstage.)

PETER  
(To SEBASTIAN.) I couldn't find him.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Couldn't find who? Where have you been? Why aren't you dressed for the contest?

PETER  
Uh? I was looking for Knight Duteous.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
What for?

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
What for?

PETER  
(Frightened.) Uh?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Oh, never mind! You are always doing something to irritate me. You are a very disobedient child. I will punish both you and Mandy for being. . .irritating. Get out of my sight. Go to your room.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
Go to your room.

PETER  
Yes, Madam. (Crosses Stage Left and hides behind SEBASTIAN'S cage.)

## QUEEN NEPARIOUS

He is just like his father. I can never trust him. It is good I can trust you, dear Thuddeaus, my own son. Come, let's dress for the contest. Evil power is wonderful. (They exit Stage Left.)

## PETER

(Coming from behind SEBASTIAN'S cage.) What am I to do?

## SEBASTIAN

You could not find Knight Duteous?

## PETER

He will have no warning when the contest begins.

## SEBASTIAN

The Nergal must be brought out of the evil spell.

## PETER

I don't understand.

## SEBASTIAN

A formula exists which will reverse the Queen's evil spell on the Nergal. Once the Queen's evil power is expelled the Nergal will remember where he hid the crown and royal documents.

## PETER

Where would I find the formula?

## SEBASTIAN

Dragons first gave magic to the world. Why, before the time of King Arthur, magicians came to my father for special formulas and potions. All the great magicians have a dragon in council. Dragons have marvelous memories.

## PETER

Then you can. . .

## SEBASTIAN

Yes! My memory holds all the formulas and potions for everything conceived by magicians.

## PETER

You know the formula to reverse the evil spell on Nergal?

SEBASTIAN

I believe it to be an ancient formula. I vaguely remember. . . (Yawns.) Oh, my memory needs rest. (SEBASTIAN yawns and nods his head.)

PETER

Sebastian, this is no time to sleep. I must prepare the formula. Sebastian, I need your help, please! If you will help me I'll bring you a jar of honey.

SEBASTIAN

(Excitedly.) Honey!

PETER

(Nodding his head.) Yes.

SEBASTIAN

(Waking up.) Oh! Yes! Very well. Now where was I? No, don't tell me, I can remember. Ancient formula for reversal of evil spells. Hmmm.

MANDY

(Offstage.) Peter! Peter! (PETER runs and hides behind the throne chair.) Peter! (MANDY enters carrying PETER'S shoes.) I know you are hiding. Peter, I know you hate to wear shoes but. . .

MAGICIAN

(The MAGICIAN appears Stage Left. He is partly hidden by SEBASTIAN'S cage.) Mandy.

MANDY

That sounds like Father's voice.

MAGICIAN

Mandy!

MANDY

(Sees the MAGICIAN.) Oh, Magician, I did not see you. Magician, I need your help. Peter is hiding from me. I must prepare him for the contest. If I don't find him and get these shoes on him the Queen will punish us.

MAGICIAN

I think I know a way to bring him out of hiding. I'll perform some magic tricks.

MANDY

Wonderful!

MAGICIAN

Magic, Magic is wonderful.  
It makes us all delight.  
Magic, Magic is wonderful.  
It fools the sight. (Coin trick.)

There is nothing up or down my sleeve.  
There is nothing in my vest.  
But, out of my sleeve, would you believe?  
A special gift for my guest. (Pulls scarves from the sleeve of his cape.)

Why this egg will never do, (Takes an egg from behind MANDY'S ear.)  
And see here in your shoe, (Finds a letter for MANDY.)  
What's this? A letter marked, "Who?"  
Why, of all the people; it's "You!" (Gives letter to MANDY.)

Magic, Magic is wonderful.  
It makes us all delight.  
Magic, Magic is wonderful  
It fools the sight. (Pulls out a bouquet of flowers and gives them to MANDY.)

MANDY

Oh, I love it. Do some more.

PETER

(Coming from behind the throne chair.) Yeah! That was neat.

MANDY

So there you are!

PETER

(Disturbed.) Tricked!

MAGICIAN

A fair trick Peter. You were not outsmarted. Just humored.

PETER

Yeah, well, it was bad timing. Sebastian was telling me. . .  
(Realizing he has exposed his friend.)

Sebastian?  
MANDY

Quite!  
SEBASTIAN

(Surprised.) MANDY  
The dragon. . .he talks.

PETER  
(To MANDY.) I told you I had a secret.

SEBASTIAN  
Excuse me, but do you suppose someone could let me out of here? I truly need to stretch and these bars are a bore.

MANDY  
(Frightened.) Out?

SEBASTIAN  
Most certainly, Miss Mandy.

MANDY  
You know my name?

SEBASTIAN  
Your brother has spoken often of you. He's very proud of you.

PETER  
Aw, don't rub it in.

MAGICIAN  
Peter will let you out, Sebastian. (PETER crosses to the cage and unlocks it.) But should anyone come, you must quickly get back into your cage. It would not be wise for you to try to escape. The Queen would send the Nergal with all evil power after you.

MANDY  
But aren't you a fierce mean dragon?

SEBASTIAN  
Oh dear me, no. I'm a friendly sort.

MAGICIAN  
Sebastian is helping me find King Noble's crown and royal documents.

PETER

Me too! Sebastian knows a formula to reverse the evil spell on the Nergal.

MAGICIAN

If the Nergal shows us where he hid the royal documents then the Queen's evil plan will be destroyed. King Noble could prove his identity.

MANDY

You believe my father is alive?

MAGICIAN

I believe King Noble is protecting his children and his kingdom. When we find his crown and royal documents we will see how he has made provision for today.

MANDY

What about the contest? Knight Duteous cannot defeat Thuddeaus and the Queen's evil scheme.

MAGICIAN

I have a plan. (To SEBASTIAN.) Now, Sebastian, the formula for reversing the evil spell.

SEBASTIAN

Oh, yes! Now let me see! It is necessary to have. . . no, no, no, that's the formula to change frogs to people or people to frogs. Evil spells. Where did I last use such a formula? Reversal of evil spells. (During this attempt to remember the magic formula, SEBASTIAN begins to pace up and down the stage. Each character strikes a pose similar to SEBASTIAN and begins to pace behind him. The order in line would be: SEBASTIAN, MAGICIAN, MANDY, and PETER. When SEBASTIAN stops at the proscenium wall MAGICIAN bumps into him, MANDY into MAGICIAN, and PETER into MANDY. Then the return trip begins with each character apologizing to the other.)

MAGICIAN

Oh, excuse me.

MANDY

Pardon me, Magician.

PETER

Just like a sister. You are always in the way!

SEBASTIAN

It is no use.

PETER

No use?

SEBASTIAN

My memory fails me.

MAGICIAN

Are you sure, Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN

Quite sure, sir. My memory is gone. I can almost see the formula written down in one of the magic formula books from long ago. If we all think very hard. (SEBASTIAN holds his breath trying to remember. Everyone is spell bound trying to help him remember.) It is no use. I am sorry, sir. I just can't remember. If I could only see it written I am sure I would recognize it.

MAGICIAN

I know you have done your best, Sebastian.

MANDY

We will think of something.

PETER

Yeah! We got to!

MANDY

I know!

PETER

What?

MAGICIAN

What?

SEBASTIAN

What?

MANDY

Since Sebastian can recognize the formula if it were written down we will go and gather every magic book in the kingdom, bring them back here and hope Sebastian can find the right formula in one of them.

PETER

We can do it.

MANDY

I will get Knight Duteous to help.

MAGICIAN

I will search the dungeon.

MANDY

Peter, you search the castle. I will find Knight Duteous. We will search the village.

PETER

(Begins to exit.) Great!

MAGICIAN

(Exits into dungeon.) Watch for the Queen.

PETER

Evil beware for I am King Noble's son. (PETER exits Stage Left.)

MANDY

Come on, Sebastian. I better lock you in your cage. I hate to do this but we must not let the Queen suspect anything. You are a wonderful dragon. (She leans to give him a kiss.)

KNIGHT DUTEOUS

(He enters Stage Right. He is dressed for the contest.)  
 HALT! Quick, Mandy, out of the way. Don't be afraid. Your knight is here to protect you. (KNIGHT DUTEOUS comes between MANDY and SEBASTIAN. SEBASTIAN runs into the cage. KNIGHT DUTEOUS locks the cage door.) I am here to defend my lady.

MANDY

Knight Duteous, listen to me.

KNIGHT DUTEOUS

You shall not harm King Noble's only daughter.

MANDY

Stop it! Stop it, Knight Duteous. Listen to me!

KNIGHT DUTEOUS

You need not be frightened anymore, Mandy. The terrible dragon is back in his cage.

MANDY

But, Knight Duteous, that's what I was trying to tell you. Sebastian is not a terrible dragon.

KNIGHT DUTEOUS

Sebastian?

NERGAL

(Enters from Upstage. He is carrying a container of poison.) What is this?

MANDY

The dreadful dragon escaped. Knight Duteous forced him back into his cage.

NERGAL

I will report to the Queen. Not much time is left until the contest. Nothing should harm the dragon before the contest! (He takes the container and exits Stage Left.)

MANDY

The Queen must continue to believe that Sebastian is a dreadful dragon.

KNIGHT DUTEOUS

My duty is to the throne.

MANDY

You don't understand, Knight Duteous. The Queen is evil. She has an evil plan to make sure you lose the contest against Thuddeaus. Sebastian. . .

KNIGHT DUTEOUS

Sebastian? Who is Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN

I am. She is quite right you know.

KNIGHT DUTEOUS

He talks.

MANDY

Of course he talks.

SEBASTIAN

Good Knight Duteous, your duty is to the King.

KNIGHT DUTEOUS

Yes, but you destroyed the King.

MANDY

I'm not sure Sebastian did harm father, Duteous.

KNIGHT DUTEOUS

What?

MANDY

Just trust me, please! Stopping the evil Queen's scheme is the important thing. I'll explain everything to you as we gather magic books. Let's go! (They exit Stage Right.)

SEBASTIAN

Funny how seriously humans take my being able to verbalize. Oh, there are stranger things in this world. Listen! Ah, wonderful silence at last. Time for a nice peaceful little snooze. (SEBASTIAN settles down for a nap. KNIGHT THUDDEAUS enters from Stage Right with the container.)

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Where can I hide the poison. The Nergal made it so powerful that one tiny nick and it's croak for virtuous Duteous. But, it must be fresh on the sword or all its power will be lost and it will be croak for me. Now where to hide it. I wonder what it smells like. (KNIGHT THUDDEAUS unscrews the top and smells the poison as he crosses to the cage and hunts a place to hide the poison. He is not aware of QUEEN NEFARIOUS and the NERGAL'S entrance.)

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(QUEEN NEFARIOUS and the NERGAL enter from Stage Left. QUEEN NEFARIOUS is angry. QUEEN NEFARIOUS notices KNIGHT THUDDEAUS. He is bent over looking under SEBASTIAN'S cage. QUEEN NEFARIOUS shouts at KNIGHT THUDDEAUS and SEBASTIAN turns over in his sleep.) Thuddeaus, what are you doing?

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

(KNIGHT THUDDEAUS is surprised. He spills some of the poison on his leg.) Ah! The dragon! Ah! The poison! Help, help, I'm going to die. (KNIGHT THUDDEAUS limps to Center Stage and falls down.) The poison, it is eating my leg off. Help, help, Mommie!

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Oh, will you shut up! Nothing is happening to your leg.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

The poison, oh my leg.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Only when there is a cut so the poison can enter your blood stream will you be harmed, idiot. The Nergal

explained that to you. Can't you remember anything?  
You are not hurt, idiot.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

But it feels. . .

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

I don't care what it feels like; get up. Now, have you found a hiding place? (KNIGHT THUDDEAUS shakes his head "no.") Well, find one. (KNIGHT THUDDEAUS limps to the throne chair and hides the poison under it.) Good! My beautiful plan is going as scheduled. I am amazing. My evil plan is marvelous.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

My leg really does hurt. I think it's getting shorter, too.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Will you stop that muttering! I do not like to be reminded of how stupid you are.

PETER

(PETER runs on from Stage Left. He is carrying several books and a jar. He tries to hide them.) Huh-oh!

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

What is this?

PETER

Uh. I was on my way. (He crosses to the cage.)

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

On your way where?

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Where?

PETER

To see the dragon. (He drops the books between the bars of the cage.)

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

What are you doing?

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

What are you doing?

NERGAL

He dropped something in the dragon's cage.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
I demand an explanation!

NERGAL  
(Crosses to the cage.) What did you drop into that cage?

PETER  
(The sleeping SEBASTIAN yawns, stretches and covers the books with his tail. To the NERGAL.) Wow! Did you ever see anything so mean? I wouldn't get too close if I were you.

NERGAL  
Tell me what you put in the dragon's cage or I'll. . .

PETER  
Nothing.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
What are you hiding?

PETER  
(Frightened.) Uh, just this jar.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Jar?

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
Jar?

PETER  
Of honey.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Let me have it. (PETER gives the jar to QUEEN NEFARIOUS. She opens it and tastes the honey.)

NERGAL  
What else did you hide in the dragon's cage? If you don't tell me I'll cut out your. . .

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Oh, leave him alone, Nergal. He is just a baby. A jar of honey. (She gives the jar back to PETER.)

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
Just a baby.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Where is your sister? I ordered her to take care of you! She was supposed to dress you and get you ready to act like an adult for the contest.

PETER

She did. I am dressed.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Something strange is going on here. . . Where is your sister?

PETER

She was in her room.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Was? Something strange is happening. I know it is not possible but I feel the presence of King Noble in my bones. I think we better go see that Mandy is in her room. Come, Nergal. I may need some help.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Come, Nergal she may need some help.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Will you shut up, you idiot! (QUEEN NEFARIOUS, NERGAL, and KNIGHT THUDDEAUS exit Stage Left.)

PETER

Whew! That was a close one. I better find Mandy and Knight Duteous, and tell them. (Starts to exit.)

MANDY

(MANDY and KNIGHT DUTEIOUS enter Stage Right.) Look, Peter! Here's our first bunch of books for Sebastian.

KNIGHT DUTEIOUS

Now the responsibility rests on the shoulders of Sebastian.

PETER

The Queen and Nergal are looking for you right now, Mandy. She suspects something. I don't know what to do.

KNIGHT DUTEIOUS

Remain calm. Our duty is to complete the task we have begun. Sebastian, here are the magic books.

PETER

Oh no!

MANDY AND KNIGHT DUTEOUS

What is it?

PETER

Sebastian is asleep.

KNIGHT DUTEOUS

Well, wake him up.

PETER

It is not that simple. One reason dragons live so long is their habit of sleeping when they need rest. If a dragon is wakened before his nap is over—WOW! He spits fire, stomps his feet, and hurls his tail about. It is a frightening sight.

MANDY

What are we going to do?

PETER

We need to wake him up in a good mood. I have this present for him and if everyone will help me by humming "The Wake Up" song, maybe we can wake him up in a good mood. (PETER takes out the jar of honey and unscrews the lid. MANDY and KNIGHT DUTEOUS hum. SEBASTIAN'S eyes, nose and body react to the smell of honey.)

SEBASTIAN

Heaven! I must be in heaven. Everything is over and I'm in heaven. I always knew it would be full of honey. How grand!

PETER

No, Sebastian, it isn't over; not yet. But I did bring you a present. Honey! (PETER gives SEBASTIAN the jar of honey. MANDY and KNIGHT DUTEOUS stop humming.)

MANDY

We've got presents for you, too.

SEBASTIAN

So I see. Well, looks as though I should get busy. (They pass the books to him through the bars of the cage. SEBASTIAN settles down with the books and honey. As SEBASTIAN completes one book he drops it out of the cage on the Upstage side.)

NERGAL

(Enters.) Don't move, any of you. (Shouts.) Queen Nefarious.

PETER  
 (To the NERGAL.) No! Don't give us away, Nergal.  
 Queen Nefarious will be mean.

NERGAL  
 Mean?

MANDY  
 Mean to all of us.

NERGAL  
 Mean! I don't like being mean. Don't want anyone to be mean. Being mean is not fun. But I've got to follow Queen Nefarious's orders or. . . (The NERGAL begins to shake. He grabs his stomach.) Oh, please, stop! I will obey. (Shouts.) Here they are, Queen Nefarious. (QUEEN NEFARIOUS and KNIGHT THUDDEAUS enter. NERGAL points to PETER.) He gave the dragon something. What were you doing to the dragon?

PETER  
 Nothing.

NERGAL  
 Not true. I saw you. (NERGAL goes to the dragon cage. SEBASTIAN has hidden all the books behind him and lets out a terrible sound. NERGAL jumps back frightened.) You tell me what you were doing or I'll send a swarm of evil pests on you.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
 What's going on here?

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
 What's going on here?

NERGAL  
 I saw them hand the dragon something. (SEBASTIAN makes a fearful noise.)

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
 See, Mother I told you the dragon was mean.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
 Don't worry about that dragon. You've got to worry about Duteous. Check the poison, Thuddeaus. (KNIGHT THUDDEAUS crosses to the throne chair and sees the poison.)

PETER  
 Poison?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Nothing for you to be concerned about, Peter.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
It is still here, Mother.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Good! Nothing has disrupted my wonderful evil plan.

PETER  
(To KNIGHT DUTEIOUS.) So, that's what she was doing in  
the dungeon with the Nergal.

KNIGHT DUTEIOUS  
But, what is she going to do with the poison?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Silence!

NERGAL  
What did you give the dragon?

MANDY  
Nothing.

NERGAL  
(Pressing MANDY.) What did you give the dragon?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Leave them alone, Nergal. We'll take care of them soon  
enough. Thuddeaus, you and Nergal take turns at guard.  
I don't want the dragon left alone for a minute. As  
soon as the Magician arrives we will begin. (PETER  
crosses to SEBASTIAN'S cage.) Where do you think you  
are going?

PETER  
To get my shoes. (He sits down by SEBASTIAN'S cage and  
puts on his shoes.)

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
Well, it is about time. You and your sister look  
awful. It is hard to believe children of noble blood  
could look like you two.

MANDY  
(To DUTEIOUS.) I wish Father were here.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
What's going on over there? I told you I cannot stand  
muttering and whispering. Do you have a complaint?

MANDY

No, madam.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

There's something strange going on and I'm going to get to the bottom of it. I can feel it in my bones.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Yeah, something strange. (SEBASTIAN is secretly studying magic books during all this action. The MAGICIAN appears in a cloud of smoke.)

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(Surprised.) Magician.

MAGICIAN

(Bowling before QUEEN NEFARIOUS.) It is I, Your Majesty.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(Thrilled.) How nice that you bow before royalty. (She hits KNIGHT THUDDEAUS with staff.) Pay attention, idiot. (KNIGHT THUDDEAUS bows.) Not now, imbecile.

SEBASTIAN

(Excitedly.) I found it! I found it!

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

What was that? Someone said something.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Someone said something.

MAGICIAN

Uh, I didn't hear anything.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Well, I did!

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Well, I did!

MAGICIAN

Oh! It was this. (He pulls a dove from his sleeves.) I was going to perform for you after the contest.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

I don't believe you. Someone is hiding behind the dragon's cage. Thuddeaus, take that side; Nergal over here. (KNIGHT THUDDEAUS, NERGAL and QUEEN NEFARIOUS cross behind SEBASTIAN'S cage.)

SEBASTIAN  
 Quick! Here is the formula. (He hands the book to PETER. PETER takes the book.)

MANDY  
(To SEBASTIAN.) Are you sure?

SEBASTIAN  
 Sure? Of course, I'm sure. All you have to do is separate the Nergal from the Queen and Thuddeaus.

MAGICIAN  
 Don't worry. I've got the plan all worked out. Duteous, make the contest last as long as you can.

SEBASTIAN  
 Who will gather the ingredients?

PETER  
 I'm the only one. I will not be missed. It is time I proved myself worthy to be King Noble's son. (PETER exits Stage Right.)

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
 No one! But books and books on magic. I don't understand. How did they get there?

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
 How did they get there?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
 Oh shut up! It doesn't matter. I want to start the contest. Are you ready, Thuddeaus dear?

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS  
(Crosses to the throne chair and sticks his sword in the poison.) Yes, mommie, dear.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
 Knight Duteous, take your position. (KNIGHT DUTEIOUS crosses to Center Stage.) Wait! Where is Peter?

MANDY  
 He was here a few minutes ago. I am sure he wouldn't want to miss the contest.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
 Well, we are not going to wait on him. I am tired of his childish ways. I'm ready for the contest. Nergal, give the signal.

NERGAL

(Refusing.) I don't want anyone to be hurt.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(Angrily.) I will not let the evil spell vanish. (Points staff at the NERGAL.) Do as I command, Nergal.

NERGAL

(The NERGAL begins to shake. He grabs his stomach.) I don't feel well.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

You are still under my power. Follow my order or you will die.

NERGAL

(Giving in to QUEEN NEFARIOUS.) Very well. (The NERGAL instructs KNIGHT THUDDEAUS and KNIGHT DUTEIOUS to cross swords. The NERGAL stands under the swords.) The contest begins when I step from below your swords. This is a contest unto the death. The victorious knight wins Princess Mandy's hand and the right to rule the kingdom. (The NERGAL moves from under the swords. He crosses Downstage. KNIGHT THUDDEAUS and KNIGHT DUTEIOUS begin to battle. THUDDEAUS tries to cut DUTEIOUS with the poisoned sword.)

MAGICIAN

(The MAGICIAN moves close to MANDY. He hands her a flask.) Don't ask questions. Just make sure Knight Duteous drinks this if Thuddeaus injures him.

KNIGHT DUTEIOUS

(KNIGHT THUDDEAUS makes a small cut on DUTEIOUS'S arm.) Oh! (He falls on his knees. KNIGHT THUDDEAUS advances ready to kill. A cloud of smoke appears between KNIGHT THUDDEAUS and KNIGHT DUTEIOUS. It is KING NOBLE.)

KING NOBLE

I have come for revenge, Queen Nefarious. You will no longer frighten my children and my kingdom with your evil.

MANDY

Father! You are safe.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

I knew it. I felt it in my bones. You are not dead. It has all been a trick. Arrest him, Thuddeaus.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

You mean me?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Yes, I mean you. You stupid imbecile. After him.  
(She pushes KNIGHT THUDDEAUS after KING NOBLE. KING NOBLE exits Stage Left.) He can't escape. We have him in the castle.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Here I come. (KNIGHT THUDDEAUS slips and falls in QUEEN NEFARIOUS'S lap.)

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

What is going on?

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

I'm sorry, Mother.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Get out of my way, dunce! I'll get him myself! (She grabs KNIGHT THUDDEAUS'S sword and dumps KNIGHT THUDDEAUS on the floor. She exits off Stage Left after KING NOBLE. Re-enters and points sword at KNIGHT THUDDEAUS.) Will you come on? Nergal, guard the dragon. Come on you idiot! You imbecile! . . . (Exits with KNIGHT THUDDEAUS.)

NERGAL

(Looking at SEBASTIAN.) Monster! (PETER enters and hides behind the cage. The NERGAL turns and sees MANDY giving KNIGHT DUTEIOUS a drink.) What are you doing? Get away from him. Queen Nefarious will. . . (PETER steps from behind the cage and sprinkles a magic powder on him. NERGAL falls on his knees.)

SEBASTIAN

Good! Keep your eye on him, Peter. Mandy, watch for the Queen and Thuddeaus to return. (KNIGHT DUTEIOUS is regaining his strength.)

MANDY

(Crossing to PETER.) Peter, Father is alive. I saw him.

PETER

Yes, I know. He helped me gather the ingredients for this magic potion for the Nergal.

NERGAL

Oh, my head!

PETER

Nergal, do you recognize me?

NERGAL  
Of course, Peter and Mandy. What's wrong with Knight Duteous?

                                  PETER  
He fought Thuddeaus. You don't remember watching the contest?

                                  NERGAL  
No! Was I here? I didn't hurt anyone, did I?

                                  MANDY  
No, Nergal, you didn't hurt anyone. But you might have.

                                  NERGAL  
What?

                                  PETER  
There's no time to explain. We know you wouldn't harm anyone, Nergal. Queen Nefarious has proved to be a vicious person. She has had you under an evil spell. We just broke the evil spell with this special magic powder. (Shows NERGAL the powder.)

                                  NERGAL  
Me? Under an evil spell?

                                  PETER  
While under the spell you stole and hid the royal documents and royal crown. We have to get them to Father. Do you remember where you hid them?

                                  NERGAL  
Only one place I would have hidden something so important.

                                  MANDY AND PETER  
Where?

                                  NERGAL  
The dungeon catacombs.

                                  PETER  
(To the NERGAL.) Let's go! (PETER and NERGAL exit into the dungeon.)

                                  MANDY  
Be careful.

                                  QUEEN NEFARIOUS  
(QUEEN NEFARIOUS and KNIGHT THUDDEAUS enter from Stage Left.) I don't understand. How did he disappear so suddenly?

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

So suddenly?

MAGICIAN

(He appears in a cloud of smoke.) I can answer your question.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Magician! Where have you been? I have needed some magic tricks. A man just appeared and then disappeared in a cloud of smoke. Just like you do. Only a magician does that kind of magic. How could a mortal have done it?

MAGICIAN

A special trick but I will be glad to show you how it is done. Look at the dragon. Is he securely locked in the cage?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Yes, he is.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Yes!

MAGICIAN

(Takes off his cape and waves it over SEBASTIAN'S cage. SEBASTIAN disappears.) Like that?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Unbelievable! Check the lock, Thuddeaus.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

(Crosses to the cage.) It's locked. (He unlocks the door and enters the cage.)

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Incredible!

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Incredible!

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

(Crosses to the cage and climbs in.) I can see for myself. Will you shut up and get out of my way? (SEBASTIAN comes from behind the cage. He slams the door shut and locks it.) I am Queen Nefarious. Where is the Nergal? He will destroy you. Nergal! (NERGAL and PETER enter from the catacombs. PETER has the royal crown and documents.) Quick, Nergal, use your evil power to release me. I command you. (She points her staff through the cage. SEBASTIAN grabs her staff.) Oh! Give that back you brute!

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

(To SEBASTIAN.) Please?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Shut up, you imbecile! Nergal! Follow my command!

NERGAL

No! I don't have to be mean. King Noble. . .

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

King Noble is not alive. (Making up an excuse.) That was a ghost we saw.

MAGICIAN

King Noble is alive. (He takes off the wig and removes the MAGICIAN cape. He is KING NOBLE.)

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

The voice is familiar.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Familiar?

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Yes, familiar! Will you shut up and stop repeating everything I say.

PETER

(Mocking.) Stop repeating everything she says.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

It looks like King Noble.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

It looks like King Noble.

KING NOBLE

I am King Noble.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

My perfect plan! Destroyed! Where did I go wrong?

KING NOBLE

You went wrong when you tried to do evil instead of good. Evil is not good.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

But, I had a plan. A perfect plan.

MANDY

Yes. The only good you taught Peter and me. A plan is important.

PETER

Only we had a better plan.

SEBASTIAN

A Noble plan.

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

The dragon talked!

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

Dragon?

SEBASTIAN

Amazes everyone, madam.

KING NOBLE

You see, Queen Nefarious, Sebastian only appeared frightening because you wanted him to be. Our plan has been to show you that being evil and frightening people is not the way to power. Power is given because people trust and have faith in your judgments. Now I must complete our plan by passing judgment.

KNIGHT THUDDEAUS

We are sorry, King Noble. . .

QUEEN NEFARIOUS

Will you shut up! We are sorry!

KING NOBLE

I believe you. But you must prove yourselves. Nergal is going to instruct you. As punishment you must remodel the dungeon. You will make it a nice place for weary travelers. Sebastian!

SEBASTIAN

Your Majesty!

KING NOBLE

To you I give the right to roam the kingdom in safety. Dragons will be treated with the greatest respect. Knight Duteous! (KNIGHT DUTEOUS kneels before KING NOBLE.) You are to be named Minister of Good Will. Our kingdom will be known for its concern for all people. Mandy and Peter. (MANDY and PETER cross to the throne chair.) Mandy, you are to be in charge of

romance. You must see that romance is never forgotten.  
Peter.

PETER

(Kneels before his father.) Your crown, sir. (PETER  
hands KING NOBLE the crown.)

KING NOBLE

(KING NOBLE puts on the crown.) Peter, you are to give every member of our kingdom a copy of the royal documents. You shall make certain our people understand the laws written in the documents. As for me, I will make sure every person in the kingdom knows me personally. There can be no mistake who the king is with or without a crown when he is your friend.

(As the curtain closes, everyone dances around QUEEN NEFARIOUS and KNIGHT THUDDEAUS.)



