

The Dragons of Spring

A Two Act Play for Junior High

By Richard Van Den Akker

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Cast

Knights

Sir Irwin: Likes to wrestle dragons. Dresses in khaki's (shorts)

Sir Esterhaus: Stickler for the rules.

Lords

Lord Perceval:

Lord Cornbluth:

Lord Dunbrooke:

Ladies

Princess Clementine: King's oldest daughter. In love with Claudius, against her parents wishes.

Princess Sue Ellen: King's youngest daughter. Wants to marry a knight, shop and go to parties.

Dragon

Grunthos: The most dangerous dragon in the village (actually the only dragon in the village). Really very peaceful, but wants to be left alone.

Others

King Robert: Forgetful, but likeable, king ("Call me Bob, okay?")

Queen Ferriday: Let's just say dragons aren't the only ones that breathe fire.

Claudius: The castle plumber. Can fix anything, but is afraid of animals, especially dragons.

Maid Mary: Clementine's Lady in Waiting.

Harold the Herald:

Royal Archers: Two

Peasants:

Peg: Sue Ellen's Lady in Waiting.

*Springtime! Flowers are blooming,
birds are singing,
love is in the air...
and so are the dragons!*

Scenes

Act I - The Throne Room

Act II - The Village Green

Act III - The woods

Act IV - The Throne Room

Act I, Scene 1

(Curtain rises on a medieval throne room. The king slumped down in the throne, asleep. Three Lords enter and move down center during the following conversation. They do not see the king.)

PERCEVAL: We've searched everywhere.

CORNBLUTH: Even the royal privy.

DUNBROOKE: The what?

PERCEVAL: The privy...you know the powder room.

DUNBROOKE: Oh, the armory.

CORNBLUTH: Not the gun powder room. The rest room.

DUNBROOKE: Oh, the bed room.

PERCEVAL: No no no. You've got it all wrong. It's where you go when you have to, you know, go.

DUNBROOKE: Oh, the dungeon. Why on earth would he be there?

PERCEVAL: Oh, never mind. Let's just say we searched everywhere.

(King slowly wakes up.)

CORNBLUTH: And he's definitely not in the castle.

PERCEVAL: You know, I suspect foul play.

DUNBROOKE: What, with chickens and such?

PERCEVAL: No, some sort of plot.

DUNBROOKE: I'm afraid you lost me.

PERCEVAL: A plot...a scheme...dirty work afoot...

(The King moves behind the three lords.)

CORNBLUTH: We think someone kidnapped the king!

DUNBROOKE/KING: No!

PERCEVAL: Yes. And something must be done immediately.

KING: Quite right. Send for the royal guards.

CORNBLUTH: Yes the guards!

KING: Summon the Knights.

PERCEVAL: Yes, the knights.

KING: Close the drawbridge!

DUNBROOKE: The draw bridge, why didn't I think of that?

KING: Summon the royal baker.

PERCEVAL/CORNBLUTH: Yes, of course, the royal...*(looks at the king, finally realizing he's there)* baker?

KING: These searches always make me hungry. Last time we searched right through lunch.

DUNBROOKE: Sire, we've been very concerned. Where have you been?

KING: Napping. I always nap on Saturday afternoons.

PERCEVAL: Sire, this is Friday.

KING: Well...don't put off till tomorrow, I always say.

DUNBROOKE: Sire, as your chief advisor I insist...

PERCEVAL: Chief advisor?

DUNBROOKE: Well, as your most trusted advisor...

(both Cornbluth and Perceval shake their heads and clear their throats.)

DUNBROOKE: Favorite advisor?

(both Cornbluth and Percval shake their heads again.)

DUNBROOKE: Well, as ONE of your advisors, I insist that you keep us informed of your whereabouts. You never know when some emergency might arise and we'd have to...

HAROLD: *(Entering and interrupting Dunbrooke with an announcement)* Her majesty, Queen For a Day

KING: Speaking of emergencies.

QUEEN: *(entering and striking Harold on the shoulder)* That's Ferriday, herald.

HAROLD: That's Harry...no wait, you're right, it is herald. Sorry.

QUEEN: Don't let it happen again. *(Harold exits)* *(To Robert)* Oh, Bobbie. How I've missed you last night. Where have you been, pray tell?

KING: Uh, well I uh..

PERCEVAL: He was with me, your Highness, attending to important matters concerning the kingdom.

KING: Yeah, yeah, that was it *(aside to Dunbrooke)* Most trusted advisor eh? Why didn't you think of that?

QUEEN: Well, if I can tear you away from business for a moment?

KING: Okay, off with you guys. And, uh, as we discussed, be sure to do that thing with that other thing that needs to be done...uh, okay?

PERCEVAL: *(BOWING)* We'll get right on it, Sire.

CORNBLUTH/DUNBROOKE: *(BOWING)* Your leave, sire.

KING: And don't forget to summon the baker.

(the three Lords exit.)

KING: Well, My dear, what is it that you wish?

QUEEN: Oh Robert. You are always too busy with the kingdom to see to your own family. You simply must pay more attention to what goes on around here.

KING: What did I do this time?

QUEEN: It's what you didn't do. You forgot to select a suitor for Clementine. She's nearly 15 and it is long past the time she should be married.

KING: Clementine? But isn't she already married?

QUEEN: You dolt! She was engaged, but broke it off.

KING: Oh yes, to that miner. Well, she would never have been happy living in that cavern in a canyon anyway.

QUEEN: You must find another suitor for her.

KING: But dear, she's in love with that guy that fixes the castle water system. The clod, or whatever his name is. She won't even look at another suitor.

QUEEN: The very idea; a princess marrying a plumber! You know perfectly well that he is not a proper suitor for my daughter.

KING: You mean our daughter.

QUEEN: Right. Hopefully we can find a suitor that will overlook her paternal influence.

KING: Her what?

QUEEN: Oh, quit stalling and find a suitor for your daughter!

KING: I know, I'll summon all the knights in the kingdom to a tournament. And she will be betrothed to the winner!

QUEEN: It's been done. And it never works out the way it's planned. Can't you come up with something original?

KING: I could have the royal baker bake 5 golden tickets into loaves of bread, hold a banquet, then the five winners come to the castle and...

QUEEN: That's been done too.

KING: How about a rock paper scissors tournament?

QUEEN: Fool! We need a suitable challenge to ensure only the most capable nobleman can marry our daughter.

KING: Let's see now...I have it, how about we post a reward for slaying the dragon. Then the winner will find out that the small print says he marries Clementine.

QUEEN: Now you're thinking. That sounds like it might actually work.

KING: Now we just have to find a knight brave enough to face a snarling, fire-breathing monster...

QUEEN: And he gets to be my son-in-law!

KING: *(Aside)* Make that two snarling, fire-breathing monsters.

QUEEN: What did you say dear?

KING: I said "I hope he also has a brother." You know...for Sue Ellen.

QUEEN: idiot! Sue Ellen is only fourteen. She's far too young to be married. How could you think such a thing?

KING: But, if Clementine is an old maid at fifteen...

QUEEN: Just get going and issue the proclamation.

KING: Yes dear. *(exits)*

QUEEN: Oh herald...herald?

HAROLD: *(entering)* Yes, your highness?

QUEEN: Please summon the princesses.

HAROLD: As you wish. *(cups one hand to mouth and yells offstage)* Princess Clementine, Princess Sue Ellen. You're wanted in the throne room.

QUEEN: Well! I could have done that!

HAROLD: Why didn't you, then?

QUEEN: You're supposed to go get them.

HAROLD: Look, I do this for a living. Do I tell you how to be a Queen? Well don't tell me how to herald then, okay?

QUEEN: Well I never!

HAROLD: So don't start now.

(Harold exits as Sue Ellen and Clementine enter)

CLEM: Yes, mother?

SUE: You wanted to see us?

QUEEN: Clementine, Sue Ellen. There is going to be a dragon hunt. Your father is issuing the reward now.

SUE: What, and you want us to go hunt a dragon?

QUEEN: No, what I am trying to say is that the dragon slayer will get two rewards: money and ...Clementine's hand in marriage!

CLEM: What? That's awful!

SUE: Yeah, I guess he'll have to take the bad with the good.

CLEM: Watch it, sister. You can be replaced.

QUEEN: Dear, don't you want to be married?

CLEM: Well, I guess so, but not to some guy I never met. I mean, what would our kids say: "Mommy, how did you and dad meet?" "Well dear, the priest said you may kiss the bride, and he lifted the veil and introduced himself."

QUEEN: Now, now... I think you're overreacting. We've always done it this way. This is how your father and I married, by arrangement. We never met first either.

CLEM: Yeah, and see what you got? Besides; I want to marry Claudius.

QUEEN: A princess must marry a nobleman; a knight or a prince or a king. That's the way it's going to be, whether you like it or not. Now go to your room and prepare for a wedding. I expect you to be ready to get married before the dragon's body is cold.

SUE: Aren't dragons cold blooded already? Being reptiles and all?

QUEEN: And you go to your room too...for insubordana... for instubodin... for insubroadina... for disrespect!

(Both princesses curtsey and exit. Queen says the following as she exits.)

QUEEN: What's a mother to do. Well, I must start selecting a bridal gown...and the caterers...and the band, we mustn't forget the band... oh, and a cake. And of course I must register her at Castle Depot...

End Act I Scene 1

(Curtain opens on a Village Green setting with one large tree in the center, with a wooden box in front of it, and a backdrop of peasant hovels. Some peasants are standing around engaged in conversations with each other.)

(Harold, flanked by royal archers with crossbows, enters with a rolled up piece of paper. He unrolls the paper.)

HAROLD: Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye... King Robert the merciful ...

PEASANT 1: We can't hear you, could you speak louder please?

HAROLD: *(Louder)* Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye... King Robert the merciful, defender of the ...

PEASANT 2: We can't see. If maybe some of those in front could sit down.

HAROLD: Look, I'll stand on this box. *(climbs onto box)* Now everyone can see, may I continue? Thank you. Ahem... His highness King Robert the merciful, defender of the weak, champion of the righteous, solver of puzzles,...

PEASANT 3: Did you say righteous?

HAROLD: Yes, now if you'll just...

PEASANT 1: *(Waving his hand in the air)* Ooh, ooh!

HAROLD: Just down the path, right past the tavern...

PEASANT 1: No, I have a question. Who are the weak?

HAROLD: You are. King Robert the merciful...

PEASANT 1: Oh, oh, oh...

HAROLD: What now?

PEASANT 1: What does 'weak' mean?

HAROLD: Powerless. King Robert the merciful...

PEASANT 1: Oh, oh, oh...

HAROLD: Yes?

PEASANT 1: And who defends us?

(Sir Esterhaus and Sir Irwin enter and stand to one side observing the crowd.)

HAROLD: Okay, enough questions. If you don't mind, I'd like to finish this before it gets dark and the dragons come out *(peasants all gasp and look searchingly at the sky at the mention of dragons)...hear ye..blah blah blah...defender of the...blah blah blah...saver of stamps...blah blah blah...can wiggle his ears... blah blah, okay, here we go. A reward of 5,000 pounds is offered...*

PEASANT 1: 5,000 pounds of what?

HAROLD: Look, I'm warning you.

PEASANT 1: I'm just asking...

HAROLD: Right *(signals to one of the royal archers who raises his crossbow. There is a arrow SFX and Peasant 1 pulls out an arrow and holds it to his chest.)*

PEASANT 1: Oh! *(Falls down)*

HAROLD: *(as archers raise their bows and scan the crowd)* Are there any other questions? *(Peasants shake their heads)* No one wants to know the weather report or local news? Maybe you're curious about the castle gossip? *(Crowd vigorously shakes their heads)* You sure there are no more questions? *(pause)* Very good. Now, If I may continue? *(Looks at crowd who nod vigorously)*. A reward of 5,000 pounds *(Peasant 3 raises hand, peasant 2 slaps it down)* to the man who slays the horrid beast plaguing the countryside.

PEASANT 4: What? Has the queen got out again? *(whole crowd laughs, including the archers and Harold.)*

HAROLD: *(making a cut-it-out gesture, hand across throat)* Okay, okay. I mean the dragon. *(crowd goes quiet)*

PEASANT 2: You want one of us to slay the...dragon?

HAROLD: *(to one of the archers)* And you said they were slow.

ARCHER: No I said they were revolting. And I don't mean that in a good way.

HAROLD: Yes, the man who slays the dragon gets five thousand pounds; *(Peasants look puzzled)* five thousand to the man who slays the dragon, *(a couple of peasants scratch their heads)* you slayee dragon - you getee five thousand, if dragon slay you will, young Skywalker, then get you five thousand pounds you will, ifay ouyay ayslay agondray ouyay etgay ivefay ousandthay oundspay. Do you want it in French too? Here, how about this *(Harold takes out pen and puts a piece of paper on one archers back and draws for a few seconds, then holds up a picture that shows a peasant killing a dragon, then an equal sign and a picture of a bag of money)* How's this? Can you figure this out? *(Some nod their heads.)* Listen anyone doesn't understand raise your hand and the archers will answer your questions, okay?

(As the archers scan the crowd Peasant 3 starts to raise his hand again, and both 2 and 4 hold his arms down by his sides.)

SIR ESTERHAUS: Let me be certain I understand the terms, Sir Herald. You simply need me to kill the dragon, and you will give me five thousand pounds? Not dead or alive, just dead? Is this pounds sterling or what, because I don't need any more potatoes.

HAROLD: I see, good knight, that you have dealt with the castle legal staff before.

SIR EST.: Unfortunately.

HAROLD: I invite thee, good sir knight, to read the proclamation yourself, it shall be posted here in the village square. *(Harold tacks the proclamation to the tree,)*

PEASANT 3: Actually it's sorta round...we been meanin' to get that fixed.

SIR IRWIN: Crikey, Esterhaus! That dragon isn't going to be easy to kill, he's a beaut, with long sharp rows of teeth, just perfect for crunching through armour...

SIR EST: You worried?

IRWIN: No worries, mate. We'll just pop on down and I'll show you how to wrestle up one of them dragons faster than you can throw a shrimp on a Barbie...

PEASANT 3: What's a shrimp?

PEASANT 4: What's a Barbie.

PEASANT 2: Say, you ain't from around here are you?

PEASANT 3: We don't like strangers here. What's your business?

(Crowd moves toward knights, threateningly)

IRWIN: Crikey, these blokes are getting hostile. Lucky for me the fella's bark is worse than his bite. Literally. *(Pointing to peasant 2's teeth)* The level of dental care in Medieval England was about the worst in history, second only to the Nile crocodile which never brushes...

(Crowd gets out pitchforks etc.)

ESTER: *(Taking Erwin's arm and backing away from the crowd)* If you don't mind, Sir Irwin, it appears we must be going.

PEASANT 2: Wha'd he say about my teef?

ESTER: *(dragging Irwin by the arm)* No time, we have dragons to fight, damsel's to save, you know. *(The two knights run off chased by the crowd.)*

HAROLD: *(Noticing the crowd is gone)* And in related news. There will also be a wedding, but I don't want to bore you with the details, do I? There, my work here is done.

ARCHER 2: Good. Let's get back to the castle, we're missing survivor.

HAROLD: Survivor...?

ARCHER 1: Three prisoners, one lion, in the castle courtyard.

HAROLD: Oh, yes, I see. Well, let's go then.

(Princess Clementine, in a hooded cloak to disguise her identity, and Mary, disguised as a Squire, enter.)

CLEM: *(talking in a disguised gruff voice)* Good afternoon sir. Is that the proclamation about the dragon?

HAROLD: Yes, stranger. Do you fancy taking the challenge?

MARY: You bet. Why Clementine here...

CLEM: *(interrupting Mary)* A-hem!

MARY: Uh, as I was saying, Sir Clem here is the terror of dragons. There never was a dragon she *(Clem elbows Mary)* I mean he couldn't handle. Why, one time she *(another elbow from Clem)* he faced two at once.

ARCHER 2: I don't know about dragons, but he's pretty tough on squires.

HAROLD: Well, the notice is posted if you would like to see it. If you want any more information, just visit our web site.

MARY: Web Site?

HAROLD: Yes, the castle information Booth. We call it a web site because of all the cobwebs - no body ever asks for information anymore.

CLEM: Why not *(in gruff voice)* I mean, why not?

HAROLD: Because *(eyeing Clem suspiciously)* only spies and troublemakers ask a lot of questions.

CLEM: Oh, well, good policy *(backing away)* Well, that's all the information I need, sorry to trouble you, I know you're busy.

HAROLD: Yes, I must return to my duties at the castle. Good day sir.

CLEM: Sir? *(in gruff voice)* I mean, uh...yes sir, uh...good day.

HAROLD: *(exiting with his archers)* The knights around here are getting weirder and weirder every day.

ARCHER 2: And the days are getting weirder and weirder every night, huh?

HAROLD: Oh, just be quiet!

(Exit Harold and archers)

CLEM: *(normal voice)* So this is it. *(points to proclamation)*. All I have to do is take this little part off here *(tears off fine print section at bottom)* an voila', no royal wedding.

MARY: But your ladyship, I don't think that will work.

CLEM: And why not? And just what does 'ladyship' mean, anyway?

MARY: I don't know...but it's what they used to call the Queen Mary. Anyway, the royal wedding doesn't depend on them knowing about the condition, it sort of relies on them not knowing about it.

CLEM: You mean the winner will still have to marry me, even if he doesn't know about that part?

MARY: That's the way it works.

CLEM: Well, then there's only one thing to do.

MARY: This sounds interesting, what?

CLEM: I'll get Claudius to kill the dragon. That way we can live happily ever after.

MARY: Claudius is going to face the dragon?

CLEM: Yes, with me and my trusty Squire by his side (*Mary looks around*) we'll face the raging beast and bring back his severed head as proof of the deed!

MARY: Yecch! Severed heads, fire breathing dragons. And who's this Squire you're talking about?

CLEM: Why, you of course.

MARY: (*shakes her head*) Uh-uh. Not me kiddo. (*points to herself*) Lady in Waiting. And I am not waiting for a dragon fight either!

CLEM: I guess you're right. It was silly of me, wasn't it?

MARY: Very.

CLEM: Us facing a dragon, what was I thinking.

MARY: Kinda temporary insanity, huh?

CLEM: I'll just have to prepare myself for the wedding.

MARY: Now you're talking sense.

CLEM: And of course, if I marry a nobleman, he'll already have a household staff, so we won't need you.

MARY: No?

CLEM: No. You'll just return to the Queens service.

MARY: Say what?

CLEM: Well, I won't need a lady in waiting anymore, will I? What do you think we've been waiting for all these years? No, you'll go back to work for the Queen, dressing her, clipping her toenails, scrubbing her...

MARY: *(Interrupting)* Like I said, where's that dragon?

CLEM: Faithful Maid Mary. Where would I be without you?

MARY: Probably in a dragon's stomach. We better get some hardware, and quick if we want to be the first to the dragon.

CLEM: Now, let's go get Claudius. Will he be surprised!

MARY: You can say that again.

(Clem exits followed by Mary.)

End Act I Scene 2

(Curtain opens on the throne as Sue Ellen and Peg Enter).

PEG: Tell me again what we're doing?

SUE: If Clementine gets married, I get her room...the one with the balcony and it's own tower.

PEG: Okay. So what are we doing?

SUE: The only way for her to get married is if one of the knights kills the dragon.

PEG: Okay. So what are we doing?

SUE: Stop saying that; I'm trying to explain. Mary, dear. Which of our knights do you think knows how to kill a dragon?

PEG: Uh...I don't know. Which one?

SUE: None of them. They'd have trouble with a dragon fly.

PEG: So, what...

SUE: We are going to help them kill the dragon. We'll just make a stop by the powder room first...

PEG: At a time like this?

SUE: We'll need a cannon and gun powder to kill a dragon.

PEG: Oh, that powder room. But wait a minute. I thought the chivalric code required you face a dragon with a lance or something?

SUE: Well, dear, Lance isn't here, is he? *(Peg looks around a bit confused)* and besides, that rule only applies to knights. I'm a princess!

End Act I Scene 3

(Curtain opens to another part of the forest. There is a cave off to one side, the opening just onstage. There is a Beware of Dragon sign above the cave and a newspaper on the ground. From inside we hear banging and clanging. Sir Esterhaus and Sir Irwin enter)

SIR EST: Well, here we are.

IRWIN: *(Facing audience)* We're in luck. This looks like the perfect place to spot one of those sly dragon fellas. I think I hear one right now. Listen to that noise. This must be a giant of a dragon. From the sound it makes, I guess it's about thirty to forty feet long.

SIR EST: Who are you talking to?

IRWIN: *(Ignoring Esterhaus)* The dragons in this area are bright purple, with huge fangs, three horns, and a row of spikes down their backside. I wouldn't want to meet one of them in a dark alley.

SIR EST: Are you certain of your facts? I don't think they're quite that big.

(The noise stops.)

IRWIN: I think it's getting ready to attack. The best defense when faced by a dragon is to climb a tree as quickly as you can.

(There is a loud growl from the cave. Sir Esterhaus gets behind the tree.)

IRWIN: Of course, if no trees are available, or you can't climb, playing dead works even better.

(Another loud growl. Sir Irwin faints, right in the flower bed. Grunthos comes out of the cave, carrying a plunger. Grunthos is a small dragon, nothing like Irwin's description.)

GRUNTHOS: What's all the racket out here? How can I work with all that noise? *(Noticing Irwin)* Oh, are you the plumber?

EST: *(Leaping from behind tree, sword drawn.)* Back, vile beast, do not lay a hand on him.

GRUNTHOS: Oh, no. Not another Knight. Where do these guys keep coming from?

