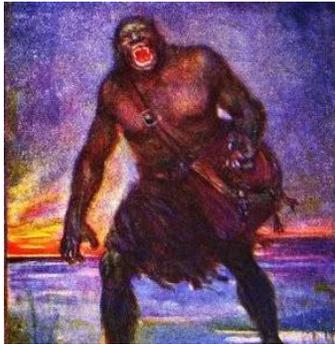




Ogre's Feather

Readers Theater Play Script and Performance Notes

AUTHORS: Elaine Lindy & C. Alvarado, COUNTRY: Italy, GENRE: Fairytales



CHARACTERS

NARRATOR

KING

2 BLUE CLOTH STAGEHANDS (non-speaking)

COURT ATTENDANT #1/VILLAGER #1 (non-speaking)

COURT ATTENDANT #2/VILLAGER #2 (non-speaking)

MEDICO (COURT PHYSICIAN)

COURT ADVISOR #1

COURT ADVISOR #2

EROE (YOUNG COURT ADVISOR)

INNKEEPER (female)

FERRYMAN

DUKE

DUCHESS

BELAFLORE (Ogre's Maid)

OGRE

If there are performance notes, they can be found on the pages following the script

Scene 1 – King’s Throne Room

[**Stage set:** The stage has two main sections – a KING’s throne room and an OGRE’s cave. There will be three additional areas set up at the very far front of the stage for future scene: (1) the outside of an Inn, (2) a river, and (3) the estate of a DUKE and DUCHESS. More later on these areas as the scenes take place.]

[The play opens in the KING’s throne room. A long blue cloth drapes over two white columns that flank either side of the throne. (See **Performance Notes** on how to simulate/construct the columns over KING’s throne.) *Note:* The same long blue cloth can double as the river in later scenes.]

NARRATOR:

Hello, everyone. Have you ever heard of “ogres”? I’m sure you must have heard of “zombies,” right? Well, ogres are like zombies and feed on human flesh, but they are bigger, smarter, and quicker than zombies. And an ogre usually carries a big club. Some ogres have feathers — the one in this play does, and that’s why the play is called “The Ogre’s Feather.” So, without further ado, here is the “The Ogre’s Feather,” brought to you by *Stories to Grow by*.

[NARRATOR steps forward.]

NARRATOR:

Our play begins on a big island near Italy called Sicily (pronounce: SIS-uh-lee). The king of Sicily was known far and wide as a fair and just ruler.

[The play opens to ATTENDANTS bringing blankets and food to KING. KING ignores their offerings and sits slumped in his throne. ATTENDANTS enter, bringing blankets and food to KING. KING ignores their offerings and sits slumped in his throne. COURT ADVISOR #1 and COURT ADVISOR #2 stand to one side of KING, occasionally stroking their long, distinguished beards or patting the swords at their sides while quietly conversing with one another.]

[On the other side of KING stands MEDICO, the court physician, who consults a large book. MEDICO pantomimes directing ATTENDANT #1 to mix together a potion and to offer it to KING.]

NARRATOR:a

As you can see, the king is sick...

[KING takes a sip of the potion, sputters and coughs.]

NARRATOR:

...in fact, the king is very, VERY sick...

[KING angrily shoves potion back at COURT ATTENDANT #1, who fumbles the cup and loses his balance. COURT ATTENDANT #2 scrambles in to help support ATTENDANT, then #1 as COURT ATTENDANT #1 pretends to lose his balance.]

NARRATOR:

...well, let's just say that when the King suffers, everyone around him feels the pain, too..

KING:

(spitters) What are you poisoning me with, Medico? And you, my doctor!

MEDICO:

But, Your Majesty! That was lungwort. The very best tincture in the land for a bad cough!

KING:

This SLIME?! I banish it from my land, forevermore! And I have half a mind to banish YOU as well...

[KING falls into another coughing fit. ATTENDANTS rush over to KING. MEDICO frantically flips through his book.]

MEDICO:

Sire, I am working on a cure, I assure you! *(to Court Advisor #1 and Court Advisor #2)* Does anyone know what the position of the moon will be tonight?

[COURT ADVISOR #1 and COURT ADVISOR #2 ignore MEDICO's question.]

COURT ADVISOR #1:

(to Court Advisor #2) In MY day we slayed goblins with a sword to protect the king! We didn't consult BOOKS on the position of the MOON.

COURT ADVISOR #2:

(draws his sword and waves it about) A goblin is nothing! In MY day, I battled a fire-breathing DRAGON. I would face another in a heartbeat to save my king! *(pantomimes battling the dragon with his sword and yells, "Abbasso!"* (pronounced ah-bah-SO)

[EROE, a young court advisor, walks onstage and cheerily greets COURT ADVISOR #1 and COURT ADVISOR #2. Smaller and younger than his cohorts, he seems to struggle a bit with the heavy sword that begins to slide off his belt.]

EROE(pronounced "arrow"):

Fellow Courtiers, how is our king today?

KING:

(to Medico) Do you let just ANYONE wander into this court? *(roars at Eroe)* Who ARE you?!

[COURT ADVISORS snicker at EROE for being reprimanded.]

COURT ADVISOR #1:

(to Eroe, in answer to his question) He's been better.

[MEDICO slams his book shut.]

MEDICO:

A new moon tonight! My almanac clearly states there should be no leeches or bloodletting until the moon is full!

KING:

Keep those bloodsuckers away from me! *(shivers)* Why am I so cold?

[COURT ADVISOR #1 puts a cape around KING's shoulders. KING shakes it off angrily.]

KING:

I don't need THAT! Oh! *(swoons)* Why am I so hot?

[COURT ADVISOR #2 puts a cloth on KING's forehead and tries to fan him. KING slaps away the cloth and falls into another coughing fit.]

EROE:

(worried, to Medico) Is there no remedy?

MEDICO:

(taps his chin in thought) You're Eroe, right? *(Eroe nods)* Well, Eroe, there's pretty much no remedy.

EROE:

"Pretty much"? There IS a remedy?

MEDICO:

Maybe. But it's so impossible, it hardly counts.

COURT ADVISOR #1:

Impossible? Allow me to remind you that you have the *(gestures to Court Advisor #2)* finest advisors in all of Sicily at your disposal.

COURT ADVISOR #2:

We laugh at "impossible!"

MEDICO:

Okay then, the cure requires a feather...

COURT ADVISOR #1:

That's IT?

[COURT ADVISOR #1 and COURT ADVISOR #2 laugh heartily together.]

MEDICO:

...from an ogre!

[COURT ADVISOR #1 and COURT ADVISOR #2 instantly freeze.]

COURT ADVISOR #2:

An OGRE?

COURT ADVISOR #1:

Medico, you know as well as anyone there's not a soul alive who will go near an ogre. They'll eat a human as quick as swat a fly!

MEDICO:

Yes, indeed. But, truly, a feather from an ogre can cure any sickness.

EROE:

Any sickness?

MEDICO:

Bene! (pronounced ben-AYE) Obviously there's no way an ogre is going to GIVE you one of his feathers. And you can forget about plucking one and surviving the adventure. That's why I said, there's pretty much no remedy.

EROE:

(suddenly) I will go!

[Entire court, other than KING, gasps.]

EROE:

I'll go find the Ogre, and bring back a feather!

COURT ADVISOR #1:

(quickly) I WOULD have gone!

COURT ADVISOR #2:

(just as quickly) I would have gone before YOU would have gone!

KING:

Silence, both of you! *(to Eroë)* Very well, whatever your name is. Just go get the feather. if you CAN'T get it, don't bother coming back!

EROE:

(bows) Yes, Your Majesty. *(to Medico)* Uh, where do I start?

MEDICO:

You don't have the slightest notion what you're doing, do you?

EROE:

Not really..

MEDICO:

Never mind. *(takes Eros by the shoulder and points to the mountains offstage)* Do you see those mountains? *(Eroë nods)* Go to the 7th peak, the one furthest from us. Near the top of that mountain there's a forest, and in the forest there is a path to a cave. Follow that to the Ogre's lair.

EROE:

Okay, thanks. I'll be off, then!

[EROE exits.]

MEDICO:

(to audience) Not a clue.

Scene 2 – Door to an Inn

[Stage set: Stage shows the outside door entrance of an Inn. Painted or free-standing bushes and flowers are on either side of the door. The scene is staged at the very front, closer to the audience than KING’s throne room but not hiding it. (See **Performance Notes** on how to place this scene and options on how to create or suggest a door, including stage hands that can hold up a door.)

[Early morning sounds, such as the chirping of birds and friendly forest chatter. INNKEEPER enters around or through the door, depending if the door is painted or a free-standing prop, and starts sweeping the entryway.]

NARRATOR:

Eroe walked and walked. By the end of the day, he was mighty glad to come across an Inn, and he decided to stay the night. (*gestures to Inn*) This is the Innkeeper. (*Innkeeper gives a quick wave to audience*) I expect Eroe will wake up soon and start his day.

[EROE enters around or through the door. He stretches, yawns, and smiles at INNKEEPER.]

INNKEEPER:

Good morning, Signore (pronounced sig-NOR-ee). I hope you slept well.

EROE:

I did, indeed. But Innkeeper, don’t you sleep? You were sweeping this very step late last night when I arrived.

INNKEEPER:

(*stops sweeping and rests her chin on her hands, both clasped on top of the broom*) Ah, the truth is I have not slept a wink since my daughter, Belaflore, went missing three years ago. That is why I bought this Inn. It keeps me busy and helps still my grief. (*sighs and returns to sweeping*)

EROE:

I am so sorry to hear that.

INNKEEPER:

What can you do? But tell me. What brings you out here, to this mountain?

EROE:

The King is sick, so I’ve come to fetch a magic feather from the Ogre.

[INNKEEPER grasps EROE’s arm with fear.]

INNKEEPER:

People don't "fetch" a feather from the Ogre, no matter how important the mission.

EROE:

I know what I'm doing.

INNKEEPER:

Really? Then you've heard of the hundreds of villagers the Ogre has eaten? About the dragons and trolls he can slay with ONE swing (*swings her broom and Eroë pulls back— be careful not to hit the actor playing Eroë!*)?

EROE:

Well, not exactly, but... (*emphatically*) I will do whatever it takes to save our King!

INNKEEPER:

I understand! (*shakes head with a touch of fondness*) Ah, foolish youth! (*turns to audience, brightens when she has an idea*) As you are determined to go anyway...

EROE:

I am.

INNKEEPER:

They say the Ogre knows many things. Do you think you could ask him if he knows the whereabouts of my daughter?

EROE:

(*nods and sympathetically pats Innkeeper's arm*) If the Ogre is in any mood to answer questions, I'll ask about your daughter.

INNKEEPER:

Or if not, how about bringing back an extra feather for me, so I may mend my broken heart?

EROE:

Okay, I'll try.

INNKEEPER:

Thank you, young man. May you stay well. (*to audience*) That means, "stay alive." (*back to Eroë*) I wish you every success.

[INNKEEPER exits.]

Scene 3 – River

[STAGE HANDS bring on blue fabric and hold it waist high, waving it from each end like a flowing river. From offstage, a recorded sound of stagehands or actors offstage can produce “whooshing” sounds of rushing water, or the audience can help.]

[EROE stops abruptly and cups his hands over his eyes to watch. FERRYMAN enters. He wears a boat costume that hangs from his shoulders. FERRYMAN rows (*simulates rowing by moving his arms*) across the river toward EROE and stops directly in front of him. (See **Performance Notes** for boat costume instructions.)]

FERRYMAN:

(*eager*) Does Signore (pronounced sig-NOR-ee) need a ride across the river?

EROE:

Yes I do, Ferryman. Thanks!

[EROE joins FERRYMAN on the boat by walking beside him. The two “row” slowly across the river while the lonely FERRYMAN speaks rapidly and without thinking.]

FERRYMAN:

I am very glad to have your company, Signore. I’ve been back and forth on this ferry for so long, looking for someone to take across. Why, one day I even took a rat across. He didn’t bring any coins to pay his fare- lousy rat! It could have paid with a nub of cheese, at least. That would have been all right. Ah, provolone! (pronounced prah-vah-LONE). Or parmesan (pronounced par-meh-ZHAN). Mmh!

[FERRYMAN pauses for a moment and looks EROE up and down.]

FERRYMAN:

I’m curious – what’s your business in crossing to the other side of the river?

EROE:

I need to get to the Ogre’s cave.

FERRYMAN:

(*pretends to twist a finger in his ear, as if trying to hear*) I’m sorry...I THOUGHT you said you were going to the OGRE’S CAVE?

EROE:

I know, I know! But it’s the only way to get a feather from the Ogre. (*leans forward*) It’s for our King, who’s sick.

[FERRYMAN frantically begins to “row” them in the opposite direction. EROE and FERRYMAN comically shuffle backwards.]

EROE:

Wait! Stop! What are you doing?

FERRYMAN:

This is a fool’s mission, and I won’t be a part of it! The moment you come anywhere near his cave, the Ogre will smell you. Just like that (*snaps fingers*) you’re a goner!

[EROE gently places a hand on FERRYMAN’s shoulder. FERRYMAN stops to look at him.]

EROE:

Brav’uomo (pronounced brr-AH-vu-oh-moh), I appreciate your concern. But I AM doing this.

FERRYMAN:

(*shakes his head sadly*) Fine! But only because you insist.

[FERRYMAN reluctantly rows EROE back across the river. When they stop, EROE leaps ashore and pays his fare to the FERRYMAN.]

FERRYMAN:

I wish you a safe, eh...encounter with the Ogre, Signore. (*sighs and stretches his arms*) Ahi (pronounced AH-hee)! How my arms ache from so many years of rowing!

EROE:

I don’t know if I’ll get any feathers, but if I can, how about if bring one back for your arms?

FERRYMAN:

You would do that? And there’s something else.

EROE:

What?

FERRYMAN:

For years, I’ve been stuck running this ferry without a single break. The Ogre knows many things. Can you ask him why I can’t leave the boat?

EROE:

Why not?

FERRYMAN:

Brav’uomo (pronounced brr-AH-vu-oh-moh)!

Scene 4 – Path by the Duke and Duchess’s estate

[Stage Set: This is one of the areas set up in the far front area of the stage. A portable path is laid down. Along the path is a large “rock” on which EROE sits. (See **Performance Notes** on how to make the path and the rock).]

[EROE sits on the rock, pulls a piece of bread from his cloak and begins to chew on the food.]

[DUKE and DUCHESS enter and walk toward EROE. DUKE hobbles with a crutch to avoid putting any weight on an injured leg.

DUKE:

Disgraceful, my dear, that we should be reduced to such low circumstances. Walking this road like common peasants. How our lives have changed!

DUCHESS:

I do miss our carriage. (*pats her hair.*) And my coiffure (pronounced kwa-FOOR) must look dreadful. What am I to do without my hand-maid to tuck in the frizzy spots in the back?

DUKE:

You are as lovely as ever, Amore Mio (pronounced ah-mor-MEE-Oh). A true duchess in every sense.

DUCHESS:

As you will always be my very own duke. Despite what’s happened to us.

[DUKE and DUCHESS clasp hands. Just then DUCHESS drops DUKE’s hand and lets out a squeal when she sees EROE. DUKE draws his sword and points it at EROE. EROE, caught by surprise, at first points his bread at DUKE. After realizing he’s holding out his bread instead of a weapon, EROE drops the roll and pulls out his sword in defense.]

DUKE:

Who are you?! And why are you sitting on our fountain?

[EROE confusedly looks at the rock where he was sitting.]

EROE:

This is a...? I mean...what?

DUKE:

If you are a robber, you might as well be on your way. (*to Duchess*) If there’s one good thing in being left with nothing, at least we don’t have to worry about robbers anymore.

DUCHESS:

There is THAT.

EROE:

I am sorry, Your Grace. I had no idea I was on your (*looks down at rock*) ...fountain? I was just resting a bit on my journey.

DUCHESS:

(*places her hand on Duke's to lower his sword*) He doesn't seem dangerous, my dear. (*to Eroe*) And what is the nature of your journey, pray tell?

EROE:

I am headed to see the Ogre.

[DUKE and DUCHESS gasp.]

EROE:

I know already! But I need a feather to cure the King.

[DUKE sheathes his sword.]

DUKE:

I beg your pardon, Signore. Your mission is noble. I had no idea our King was sick.

DUCHESS:

(*smiles sadly*) And I'm sure you had no idea you were sitting at a fountain. For it dried up a fortnight ago.

DUKE:

(*grim*) Only two weeks. Along with our fortune.

EROE:

(*points to rock*) So this was your fountain?

[DUKE and DUCHESS nod.]

EROE:

Maybe...

DUCHESS:

What?

EROE:

It's just that people keep telling me the Ogre knows many things.

DUKE:

Indeed, it is known.

EROE:

Why don't I ask him why your fortune has vanished? (*nods at Duke's leg*) And who knows? If I'm really lucky, maybe I can bring back a feather to heal that leg.

DUKE:

You would do that for us? You don't even know us.

[DUKE and DUCHESS exchange glances.]

DUCHESS:

(*to Eroe*) Tell us what you know about the Ogre.

EROE:

I know that he lives in a cave at the last of seven peaks.

DUKE:

If that's all you know, you are surely doomed! Listen carefully to my wife, for she knows a lot about the Ogre.

DUCHESS:

Come closer, young man. (*Eroe draws nearer*) You must wait till after sundown, when it's fully dark. Only then do you approach the Ogre's cave. He'll still be out.

EROE:

Don't I want the Ogre to be at home? I mean, so I can get the feather?

DUCHESS:

Oh my dear! Is that what you think? (*arms up in a gesture of despair*) Where do I begin? The early evening is the only time when the Ogre's senses are not as sharp.

[DUCHESS pulls a candle from her purse and hands it to EROE.]

DUCHESS:

First, you will need this candle. The Ogre's forest at night is so dark you will not be able to see a thing, even with a full moon. Knock at the cave door – if you are lucky, the Ogre's maid will open it.

EROE:

And if the Ogre opens the door?

[DUKE and DUCHESS exchange glances.]

DUCHESS:

Hopefully, that won't happen.

DUKE:

As long as the Ogre's maid opens the door, you have a chance.

EROE:

(looks about) It's almost sundown now. I'd better be off! Thank you!

[EROE exits.]

DUKE:

(to Duchess) He'll need all the help he can get.

[DUKE and DUCHESS exit.]

Scene 5 – Ogre’s cave

[Stage set: The Ogre’s cave is a stone cave painted to show a dark forest of brambles and thick vines. A rough-hewn table and chair with one place setting sits on to the side of the cave beside a fireplace, and in the fireplace is a three-legged pot and ladle (real or painted). Drape the same blue cloth you used for the river like a blanket over a massive bed. A broom rests against the bed. **(See Performance Notes** on suggestions for cave design and furnishings.)]

[EROE holds his candle as he cautiously makes his way through the forest and stops in front of the cave entrance. The candle can have a simulated flame, such as an orange cut-out. Or it can be a flashlight. EROE trips on something. He shines the candle on the ground.]

EROE:

(gasps) A pile of bones!

[Howling echoes through the forest. STAGE HANDS or actors offstage can do the howlings]

EROE:

What was THAT? Something tells me I must be close! *(shines the light in front of him, steps forward and sees the cave door)* That’s it!

[With a shaky hand, EROE raps at the cave entrance.]

[A dark, hooded figure, BELAFLORE the maid, *(face not revealed yet to audience)* enters onstage from “inside” the cave and creeps toward the cave entrance. She opens the door.]

[BELAFLORE throws off her hood and EROE jumps back with fearful anticipation. But when he sees the maiden, he looks at her with surprise.]

BELAFLORE:

Signore! What brings you to this fearful place?

EROE:

Please, Signorina (pronounced seen-or-EEN-a), I am here on a mission. For our King.

BELAFLORE:

Why would the King send you here, to your death? When my master comes home, he’ll eat you alive!

EROE:

I must bring back a feather from the Ogre to cure our king. Then there’s a matter of three other feathers I’ve offered to bring back, too.

[BELAFLORE grabs EROE and yanks him inside the cave before he can finish. There is a loud crash just outside the cave.]

BELAFLORE:

Ahi (pronounced AH-hee)! Why have you taken on the problems of the whole world? Quick! You must move someplace where he cannot smell you.

[As the crashing gets louder and more frequent, BELAFLORE and EROE comically scuttle around the cave to try and find a hiding place. BELAFLORE grabs a fur off the bed and wraps it around EROE, who then lies flat on the floor in front of the fireplace and opens his mouth as if he's a bear rug.]

BELAFLORE:

(observes her handiwork) Fiercer!

[EROE opens his mouth even wider making growling sounds and spreads his fingers like claws.]

BELAFLORE:

Hmm, no.

[BELAFLORE escorts EROE off the floor and ushers him under the bed, draping the blue cloth over top.]

BELAFLORE:

With any luck, this blanket may disguise your scent.

EROE:

"May"?!

[Crashes become even louder. BELAFLORE grabs a pillow from the bed and fans the air. Then she dashes over to the pot above the fire. She vigorously stirs the stew and waves her hands about to spread its aroma. Then she scrambles back to the bed and lifts the blanket to reassure EROE.]

BELAFLORE:

I'll do what I can, because I've been waiting for a chance to escape for a long time. But if he senses you're here, we're both doomed.

EROE:

Don't worry. I'll—

BELAFLORE:

SHH! When I signal, WHISPER your questions to me. I will do my best to get them answered.

EROE:

(loudly whispers) What kind of signal will you—

[OGRE suddenly appears in the forest. BELAFLORE drops the blanket and jumps over to the pot just before OGRE thunders into the cave and looks around.]

OGRE:

Maid! I think I smell a human. *(pleased at the prospect and rubs his belly)* Mmmh!

[BELAFLORE ladles stew into a bowl. OGRE sniffs different parts of the cave.]

BELAFLORE:

Oh, Master, what human would come here? You're so hungry you must be imagining things. Here, have some stew.

OGRE:

I know the smell of humans!

[Just as OGRE is about to sniff under the bed, BELAFLORE places a bowl of stew under his nose and leads him to the table.]

BELAFLORE:

(soothingly) You must be terribly hungry after a hard day of running about. Take a moment to taste my homemade stew.

[OGRE sits at the table and devours the stew.]

BELAFLORE:

There. Don't you feel better?

OGRE:

(stops looking around and frowns) I still smell it.

[BELAFLORE cleans up OGRE's bowl and leads him to bed.]

BELAFLORE:

You must be very tired. You're starting to dream about humans, and you are just THINKING you smell them. Lie down.

[OGRE climbs into bed.]

OGRE:

(yawns) I must be dreaming because the smell of a human seems stronger than ever, as if one were right under this bed. *(tries to scratch his back)* These feathers are so itchy!

BELAFLORE:

I know what will help!

[BELAFLORE grabs the broom and uses it to scratch OGRE's back. When OGRE begins to snore, BELAFLORE lifts the cover to reveal EROE, who whispers in her ear. BELAFLORE plucks a feather off of OGRE's back. She drops the feather to the ground, and EROE quickly grabs it.]

OGRE:

Ouch! What are you doing?

BELAFLORE:

Master, did I pluck you by mistake? I must have fallen asleep while I was scratching with this broom. Then I had the strangest dream.

OGRE:

What was it?

BELAFLORE:

I dreamt of a duke and duchess, not far from here, who lost their fortune overnight. And something about a fountain.

OGRE:

Your dream is a fact. A duke and duchess nearby lost their fortune. If only they knew all they'd have to do is reach under the fountain and pull out a snake that's plugging the hole. Then, the fountain would spew forth gold and silver! But they have no idea. *(laughs)*

BELAFLORE:

Ah! That's it, then. Good night.

[As soon as OGRE starts snoring again, EROE whispers the second question to BELAFLORE. She plucks another feather and hands it to EROE. OGRE growls awake and rubs his back.]

OGRE:

That hurt!

BELAFLORE:

(sweetly) I am so sorry, Master. Scratching with the broom must put me into a trance. I was having another dream, and this one's even stranger.

OGRE:

What is it this time?

BELAFLORE:

I dreamt of a ferryman who's unable to leave his ferry. He has been stuck going back and forth for years.

OGRE:

Your dreams are true enough tonight! The only way that ferryman can escape is if he carries a customer across the river and jumps out before he is paid. Then the one left on the ferry will be the new ferryman. Or woman.

BELAFLORE:

Ah, is that right? Well, no matter. Good night then.

OGRE:

You'd best stay awake this time, or I'll be having maid stew for breakfast!

[BELAFLORE scratches OGRE's back with the broom until he begins snoring again. She lifts the covers so EROE can whisper the last question but, fearing for her safety, EROE refuses.]

[A silent disagreement ensues between the two, until EROE finally consents and whispers his last question to BELAFLORE. She plucks two feathers from OGRE's back this time and throws them at EROE.]

[OGRE jumps out of bed and snarls at BELAFLORE.]

OGRE:

By thunder! You will make a tasty pie!

BELAFLORE:

(arms akimbo) And who will bake it for you? There is no one who will make you a flakier crust – or any crust, for that matter!

OGRE:

Fine! But what is your problem tonight? Another dream?

BELAFLORE:

If you must know, yes. I dreamt of an innkeeper. She wonders the whereabouts of her daughter who's been missing for years.

OGRE:

(scoffs "Ha!") That's an easy one. Her daughter is you!

[Before OGRE crawls back into bed he points for BELAFLORE to go away. BELAFLORE lies down on the floor by the fireplace and waits for OGRE to fall asleep.]

[As soon as OGRE begins to snore, BELAFLORE gestures at EROE to come out from under the bed. EROE scurries out clutching his feathers. OGER sleeps restlessly. EROE and BELAFLORE sneak out the door practically jumping out of their skin each time OGRE moves in his sleep or stops snoring for a moment.]

[When they reach the outside of the cave, EROE grabs BELAFLORE's hand.]

EROE:

Come. It's time for me to help YOU now.

[They run offstage. NARRATOR enters front stage.]

NARRATOR:

Luckily, the Ogre slept till dawn.

[OGRE stops snoring, jumps out of bed and sniffs the air.]

OGRE:

I swear that I still smell a human. And I'm not hungry or tired either. So it must be HERE! (*looks under the bed*) Maid! Maid! (*looks about*) Where is my maid? MAAIID!

[OGRE realizes BELAFLORE is missing and lets out a loud roar. He stomps through the cave and into the forest offstage.]

Scene 6 – Duke and Duchess' fountain

[EROE and BELAFLORE run down the path from the top of the mountain and stop to greet DUKE and DUCHESS who sit glumly by the broken fountain. They rise in shock to see EROE again, accompanied by BELAFLORE.]

DUCHESS:

Santa Cielo (pronounced san-tah-CHEL-oh)! You have returned safely!

DUKE:

Did you truly see the Ogre, Signore? Or did you (*gestures at Belaflore*) get distracted by a new interest? Not that I blame you (*bows slightly*). Good day, Signorina.

EROE:

(*smiles at Belaflore*) This is the Ogre's maid...

BELAFLORE:

Well, not anymore!

EROE:

That's right! This – is Belaflore.

[EROE and BELAFLORE smile at each other. DUKE and DUCHESS share knowing glances.]

EROE:

(*to Duke*) Thanks to Belaflore, I have something special for you.

[He pulls a feather from his pocket and hands it to DUKE.]

DUKE:

Well, I never!

[DUCHESS snatches the feather out of the DUKE's hand. She rubs it along his bad leg. DUKE shakes his leg with amazement, then jumps to his feet and pulls off the cloth that was still wrapped around it.]

DUKE:

It's a miracle! (*hops on the leg that had been bound*) My leg is perfect! Thanks to you, my brave boy. (*to Belaflore*) To you both, of course

BELAFLORE:

Glad to see some good come of that Ogre. (*to Eroe*) We'd better hurry! That monster is sure to be right behind us.

[NARRATOR steps forward.]

NARRATOR:

(to audience) Good idea. He is – and he's out for BLOOD!

[NARRATOR steps back.]

EROE:

(nods at Belaflore, then quickly to Duke) By the way, the Ogre said if you remove the snake that's plugging the bottom of that up that fountain, it will spew silver and gold, and your fortune will be restored.

[EROE and BELAFLORE wave as they speedily follow the road offstage. DUKE and DUCHESS stare at the fountain dumbfounded.]

DUKE:

A snake plugging up the fountain! Why, that's absurd.

DUCHESS:

Stuff and nonsense! Say, what's that?

[DUCHESS, seeing something at the base of the fountain, reaches below, yanks hard, and suddenly falls to the ground clutching a snake in one hand.]

[One STAGEHAND grabs the blue cloth and waves it above the fountain to depict water while another STAGEHAND throws coins in the air above it.]

DUKE:

Well, I'll be!

[DUKE holds out his arm to DUCHESS and the two do a jig around the fountain that has come to life.]

[OGRE trounces onstage from the mountain pass. He growls when he sees DUKE and DUCHESS dancing around the fountain disgorging silver and gold. He shakes his fists and calls out, "Aughh!"]

[The two remain blissfully unaware of OGRE as he continues on his way to apprehend BELAFLORE and EROE. OGRE exits. DUKE and DUCHESS skip offstage.]

Scene 7– The river

[STAGEHANDS wave the blue cloth from each end, and actors offstage make the sounds of a river, as before.]

[FERRYMAN dozes in his boat on the river. He is startled at seeing EROE and BELAFLORE breathlessly approach.]

FERRYMAN:

(joyful) Signore! You are back! And with a new friend.

EROE:

Yes, we are well, Ferryman. And look what we've brought back for you. *(hands feather to Ferryman)*

FERRYMAN:

Bravo, Signore! My arms feel better already. Would you and your lady friend care for a ride?

[EROE and BELAFLORE enter the ferry.]

EROE:

We would indeed. But please make it speedy.

[FERRYMAN rubs the feather along his arms, stretches them with newfound comfort, and says "Ahhh!" He pretends to row the ferry as fast as he can to the other side of the river.]

FERRYMAN:

I don't mean to be ungrateful, really I don't. But is it possible you also have an answer to that little question I asked you?

[EROE shares a look with BELAFLORE.]

EROE:

As a matter of fact, yes! Just...uh...drop us off on the other side first, all right?

BELAFLORE:

Then we will share it with you.

FERRYMAN:

(shrugs) Okay. We're almost there. Ah, my arms! I feel I could paddle to the skies. All the pain is gone! Why I'll zip back and forth across this river in no time. And think about olives. Yes olives and olive oil. Olive oil and fresh bread. Fresh bread and cannoli's (pronounce can-OH-leez). Ah, cannoli's! *(lifts one arm in the air)* Come to Mama!

[They reach the other side of the river. EROE and BELAFLORE jump off the boat and immediately pay FERRYMAN his fee.]

FERRYMAN:

So what is it then? What's the answer to me getting off this ferry?

EROE:

Make sure that when you take your next customer across the river, you jump off the ferry before he pays you. Then HE will be stuck as the new ferryman and you will be free.

FERRYMAN:

Ah. (*wags a finger at them*) Ah yes! So that's why you wouldn't tell me until you jumped off the ferry.

[Just then OGRE appears on the other side of the river. He sees BELAFLORE and EROE and lets out a loud roar. EROE nods at FERRYMAN in OGRE's direction.]

EROE:

Looks like you have a new customer now.

[BELAFLORE sticks her tongue out at OGRE before she and EROE run down the road and exit offstage.]

OGRE:

Ferryman! Give me a ride!

FERRYMAN:

(*smiles*) No problem, Signore Ogre. I'll be right there! (*turns to audience and winks*)

[FERRYMAN paddles back to OGRE. STAGE HANDS turn fabric wide, so it hides them as they exit.]

Scene 8 – Inn

[Stage set: STAGE HANDS bring on Inn door. INNKEEPER wearily sweeps the outside of the Inn.]

[EROE and BELAFLORE walk onstage and head toward INNKEEPER, who moves to greet them. INNKEEPER smiles warmly at EROE, but then realization hits when she gets a closer look at BELAFLORE.]

INNKEEPER:

(shocked disbelief) Belaflore?

BELAFLORE:

Mama?

INNKEEPER:

My baby girl!

[Mother and daughter embrace with joy.]

INNKEEPER:

Belaflore, look at you! You have grown so beautiful.

BELAFLORE:

I am so happy to see you, Mother!

EROE:

I almost forgot! Your feather, Signora *(pronounced seen-YOR-ah)*.

[EROE pulls out a feather and hands it to INNKEEPER.]

[INNKEEPER shakes her head and returns the feather to EROE.]

INNKEEPER:

Keep it! My heart is no longer broken. Now that my daughter is home safe, I will sleep tonight for the first time in three years! *(yawns heavily)* I mean later tonight, of course. *(instantly falls asleep and starts to fall)*

[EROE and BELAFLORE catch her before she slides to the floor. They lay INNKEEPER gently on the stoop of the Inn and cover her with the blue cloth, putting a pile of cloth behind her head as a pillow. INNKEEPER snores.]

BELAFLORE:

Go ahead and sleep, Mama. We must go to the King. But we'll be back as soon as we can.

INNKEEPER:

(drowsy) Back soon, baby girl... My baby's home... *(snores again loudly)*

[BELAFLORE kisses her mother on the forehead. She and EROE hurry in the direction of the castle offstage.]

[INNKEEPER slowly gets up and exits.]

Scene 9 – King’s throne room

[Stage set: Same as in Scene 1.]

NARRATOR:

And so Eroë and Belaflore made haste to the King.

[Pantomimed scene behind NARRATOR. COURT ADVISORS greet EROE with astonishment, then enthusiastically pat him on the back when he produces the Ogre’s feather.]

NARRATOR:

But are they too late?

[COURT ADVISORS immediately lead EROE to MEDICO. MEDICO sadly shakes his head as he stands beside KING lying prone and unresponsive, a blanket covering him.]

[EROE pulls out a feather and shows it to MEDICO.]

MEDICO:

A feather! From an ogre?

EROE:

Indeed!

[EROE hands the feather to MEDICO. MEDICO gestures “No,” insisting instead that EROE be the one to do the honors.]

[ATTENDANTS gather around as EROE and brushes the feather against KING’s heaving chest.]

[All watch KING expectantly. KING opens his eyes. Rises. And smiles.]

KING:

(clasps Medico’s arm) I can feel the sickness washing away. *(breathes deeply)* Everything is coming back! *(stands and exclaims loudly to everyone)* I am cured!

[Everyone cheers “Viva!” (pronounced VEE-vah) and “Evviva!” (pronounced ee-VEE-vah).]

KING:

(to Medico) It took long enough. *(to Eroë)* You did it!

[EROE bows to KING, then rises and gestures at BELAFLORE, who stands by his side.]

EROE:

Actually, Sire, Belaflore is the one who did the impossible.

[KING raises his eyebrows when he sees how EROE and BELAFLORE smile and interact with each other.]

KING:

You and Belaflore? Indeed! Well then you are both to be commended!

[NARRATOR steps to the front of the stage.]

NARRATOR:

With the King's health restored, he was once again on his very best behavior.

KING:

Attenti (pronounced ah-TEN-tee)! Now that I am well, I can pick up where I left off ruling the kingdom. I am sure there are many disputes awaiting my just and impartial rulings. Let's go!

[Enter VILLAGER #1 and VILLAGER #2 in the midst of a pantomimed argument. VILLAGER #1 has an arrow through his head and points angrily at VILLAGER #2, who holds an empty bow. When they see KING, they stop arguing and bow to him.]

NARRATOR:

And so the King presided over disputes and set the kingdom to rights, as before. And Medico...

[MEDICO tries to take the arrow out of the head of VILLAGER #1.]

NARRATOR:

...Eroe and Belaflore...

[EROE and BELAFLORE smile at each other and hold hands.]

NARRATOR:

...and all of Sicily lived happily ever after. Well, almost all... You see, when taking the Ogre across the river –

[STAGEHANDS pull the blue cloth off the thrown and wave it from each end like a flowing river. Recorded sound of rushing water plays from offstage.]

[OGRE angrily walks out on stage by the river wearing FERRYMAN's boat.]

NARRATOR:

-the Ferryman remembered what Eroe had told him. He jumped ashore before the Ogre could pay him. And guess who was left behind on the boat as the new Ferryman...

OGRE:

Ferryman! Maid! I'm hungry! I want pie!

[OGRE faces the Audience and shakes his fist.]

OGRE:

Say! Would any of you like a ride across this river? (*to one member of the audience*) It's really fun! (*points to another member of the audience*) How about you? I'll get you across quicker than you think. (*to entire audience*) Come on, ANYONE? (*shakes both fists in the air*) AUGHH!

[If you have a curtain, close it now. If you do not, fade the lights. If you have no stage lights, all actors come on stage and bow to the audience.]



Performance Notes for The Ogre's Feathers

THREE WAYS THAT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS CAN UTILIZE THIS PLAY

1. Students can read the play aloud while sitting in the classroom. Ask the readers to skip all bracketed stage directions. You may prefer to rotate your actors to give all students a chance to read the speaking parts.
2. Students can perform the play in the classroom. Clear an area that can be used as the stage. Have the audience sit on the floor in front of the stage. Students in the play can make simple costumes and/or sets as described below. When the scene change, the characters "on stage" simply walk to the back of the room where they wait until their next appearance "on stage."
3. Students can perform the play on stage. Refer to the production notes that follow. Ask the actors to enter from the back of the room and move through the audience as they approach the stage.



COSTUMES

- NARRATOR– Simple, nice clothing.
- KING– Black pants, dark-colored long sleeved shirt, long red or purple robe, and a beret or brimmed hat with a feather. Feather can be attached to hat with hot glue, tape, or thread. Black boots or shoes.



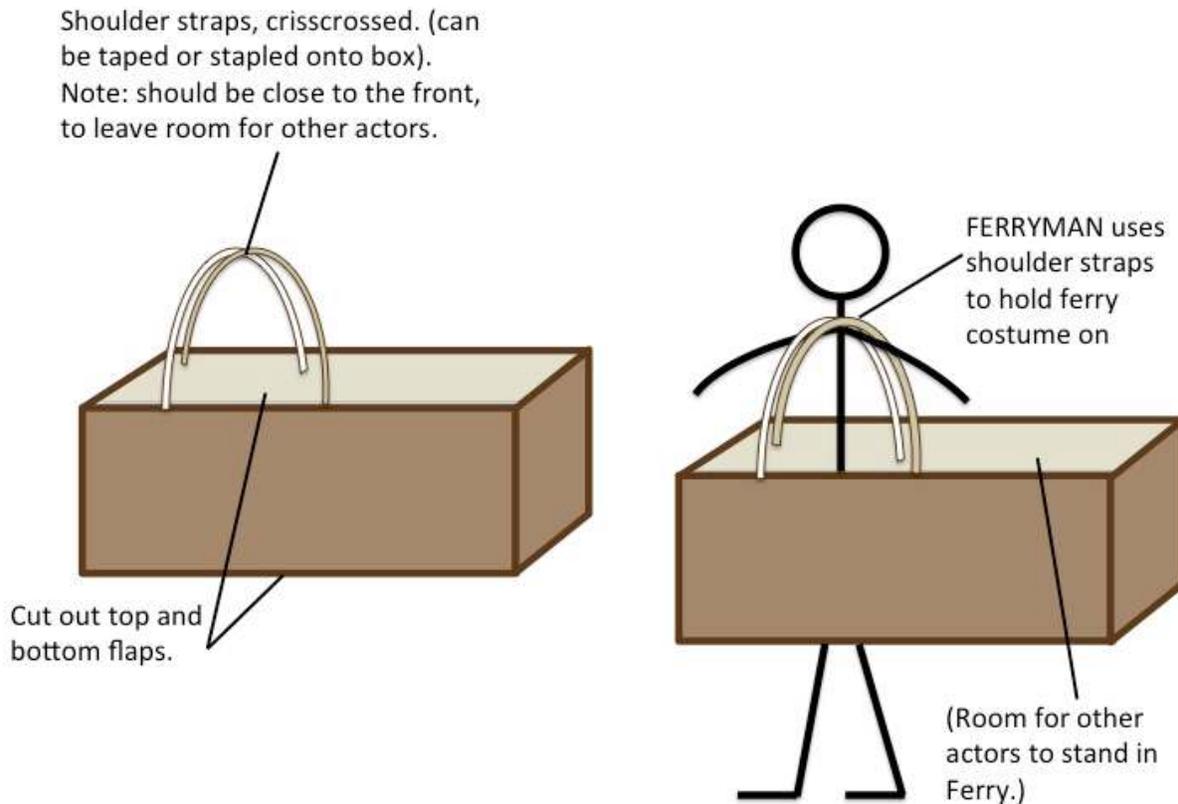
- COURT ATTENDANT #1 and #2/VILLAGER #1 and #2— Tan or brown pants, a long-sleeved light-colored buttoned shirt. Brown boots or shoes. Note: for COURT ATTENDANT character, add a tan or brown buttoned vest and a beret or brimmed hat with a feather.
- MEDICO— Black pants, dark-colored long sleeved shirt, a long black robe or cape and a beret or brimmed hat with a feather. Black boots or shoes.
- COURT ADVISOR #1— Black pants, a long-sleeved light colored buttoned shirt, and dark buttoned vest, black boots or shoes. He wears a sword at his waist, which can be tucked into a belt or sash. Sword can be plastic or made from cardboard and painted. A fake beard is optional.
- COURT ADVISOR #2— Black pants, a long-sleeved light colored buttoned shirt, and dark buttoned vest, black boots or shoes. He wears a sword at his waist, which can be tucked into a belt or sash. Sword can be plastic or made from cardboard and painted. A fake beard is optional.
- EROE— Black pants, a long-sleeved light colored shirt, and dark buttoned vest, black boots or shoes. He wears a sword at his waist, which can be tucked into a belt or sash. Sword can be plastic or made from cardboard and painted.
- INNKEEPER— A long light-colored dress, apron, and black or brown boots or shoes.
- FERRYMAN— Tan or brown pants, a long-sleeved light-colored buttoned shirt. Brown boots or shoes.

FERRYMAN wears a ferry costume as well. This can be constructed from a wide cardboard box painted brown. The top and bottom lids can be cut off, so that there is a long opening in which the FERRYMAN can stand.

The box can be held onto his shoulders with two straps. Straps can be made from strips of cloth or rope, which can be attached to the cardboard box by pushing through holes cut into the side and knotted into place.

Note: When EROE and BELLAFORE get into the ferry, there are two ways it can happen. They can either duck underneath or FERRYMAN can crouch down and they can step into it.

See images:



- **DUKE**— Black pants, long-sleeved richly colored (to match **DUTCHESS**) shirt, a dark buttoned vest, black boots or shoes, and a beret or brimmed hat with a feather.
- **DUCHESS**—Long richly colored (to match **DUKE**) gown or dress with long sleeves, and black flat shoes. Another option is to wear a long-sleeved light colored blouse and a sleeveless dress over top. A smaller beret or brimmed hat with a feather.
- **BELAFLORE**— A long dress, an apron, a hooded cloak, and black or brown boots or shoes. A hooded cloak can be simulated by taking a blanket, sheet, or long piece of fabric, hanging it over the actor's head, and safety-pinning it together at the collar. This creates a "hood" and allows the piece to be worn as a cloak.



- **OGRE**— All brown clothing and covered in feathers. You can either sew feathers to brown clothes or attach with hot glue. Another option is to cover a long cloak with feathers and the **OGRE** can wear the cloak over the brown clothes.

Note: Three feathers have to be loose, so that **BELLAFORE** can “pluck” them. These three feathers can be attached with Velcro, so they are easy to detach.

Optional: **OGRE** can also have any or all of the following to look scary: painted green face, a mane, fangs, claws (these can be made by attaching triangular pieces of cardboard to gloves).



PROPS

Scene 1

- Optional: A map of Italy for **NARRATOR** to hold up. Students can draw a map with markers or cut one out of construction paper.
- Large old-looking book for **MEDICO**.
- Swords for **COURT ATTENDANT #1**, **COURT ATTENDANT #2** and **EROE**. These can be made from cardboard.
- A bowl and a few plastic jars/cups/vials on the table.
- Plastic cup or vial that holds potion for **KING**.
- A cape or blanket for **COURT ADVISOR #1** to put around **KING**'s shoulders.
- Cloth for **COURT ADVISOR #2** to put on **KING**'S forehead.

Scene 2

- Broom for **INNKEEPER**.

Scene 3

- Blue cloth or fabric for **STAGE HANDS** to hold up.



Scene 4

- A long roll for EROE.
- Crutch or long walking stick for DUKE. This can be real or made from cardboard, as the actor won't actually need to lean on it.
- Sword for DUKE. This can be made from cardboard.
- Candle for DUCHESS to give to EROE. To provide actual light, you can use a battery-operated plastic candle, or a flashlight covered in paper, to look like a candle. Another option is to make a candle out of cardboard and paper, with a paper flame.

Scene 5

- Pot and ladle for BELAFORE.
- Bowl and spoon for BELAFORE to give to OGRE.
- Broom for BELAFORE (can be the same broom used by INNKEEPER).
- Feathers for BELAFORE to take from OGRE. These can be attached to OGRE'S costumes with Velcro (see costume notes.)
- Pillow for BELAFLORE.
- Club, or large stick, for OGRE.

Scene 6

- Feather for EROE to give to DUKE (This can be one of the feathers that BELAFORE handed to EROE).
- Rubber or stuffed snake for DUKE to pull from fountain.
- Large gold and silver coins for STAGE HAND to toss in air. These can be plastic coins, or circles cut from cardboard and painted yellow and gray, or spray painted to look metallic.
- Piece of blue fabric for STAGE HAND to wave around the fountain.

Scene 7

- Blue cloth or fabric for STAGE HANDS to hold up.
- Feather for EROE to give to FERRYMAN (This can be one of the feathers that BELAFORE handed to EROE).

Scene 8

- Broom for INNKEEPER (same as before).
- Feather for EROE to give to INNKEEPER (This can be one of the feathers that BELAFORE handed to EROE).
- Pillow/cloth for INNKEEPER to rest her head on.



Scene 9

- Feather for EROE to give to KING (The same one that INNKEEPER gave back to EROE).
- A bow for VILLAGER #2.
- An arrow through a hat for VILLAGER #1.
- Blue cloth or fabric for STAGE HANDS to hold up.



SETS

The stage is divided into two fixed locations- The King's throne room and the Ogre's home. If you want to make a backdrop or backdrops, you can paint it/them to show these two locations.

There are three other locations, which will be "pop-up" locations. Set pieces will be brought on and action takes place at the front of the stage, in front of everything else. If you have enough STAGE HANDS, you can make transitions more seamless, by bringing the next "pop-up" scene on as the previous one is being taken off.

See below for more details on each scene.

Note: This is a "journey" play, where EROE travels through each location to the OGRE'S house, and then travels back the same way. See images at the end of this section for suggestions on how to set the stage.

- **Scene 1**— The King's throne room. If you have a backdrop, this section can show a stone wall, large windows, and tapestries. On stage there is a throne and a table. The table can be small, but should be large enough to hold the various jars and vials. There is also a throne, which can be a regular wooden chairs covered in nice fabric, which can be any bright royal color, such as red, purple, or gold. The table can be covered in a nice fabric, as well.

Optional: If you want to add a little more flare to this set, you can make two tall columns to place behind the throne and table. Columns can be cut from cardboard or foam board. Draw the shape of the column onto the surface and cut it out. Paint the middle white, and you can use a gold



or yellow for the top and the base. If you want to create a look of indentations, use a light gray to paint lines down the length of the column.

Tape or tie the columns to chairs, stools, milk crates, or other sturdy objects to act as bases. The column should stand freely, leaning against the base.

See image for examples of different types of columns:

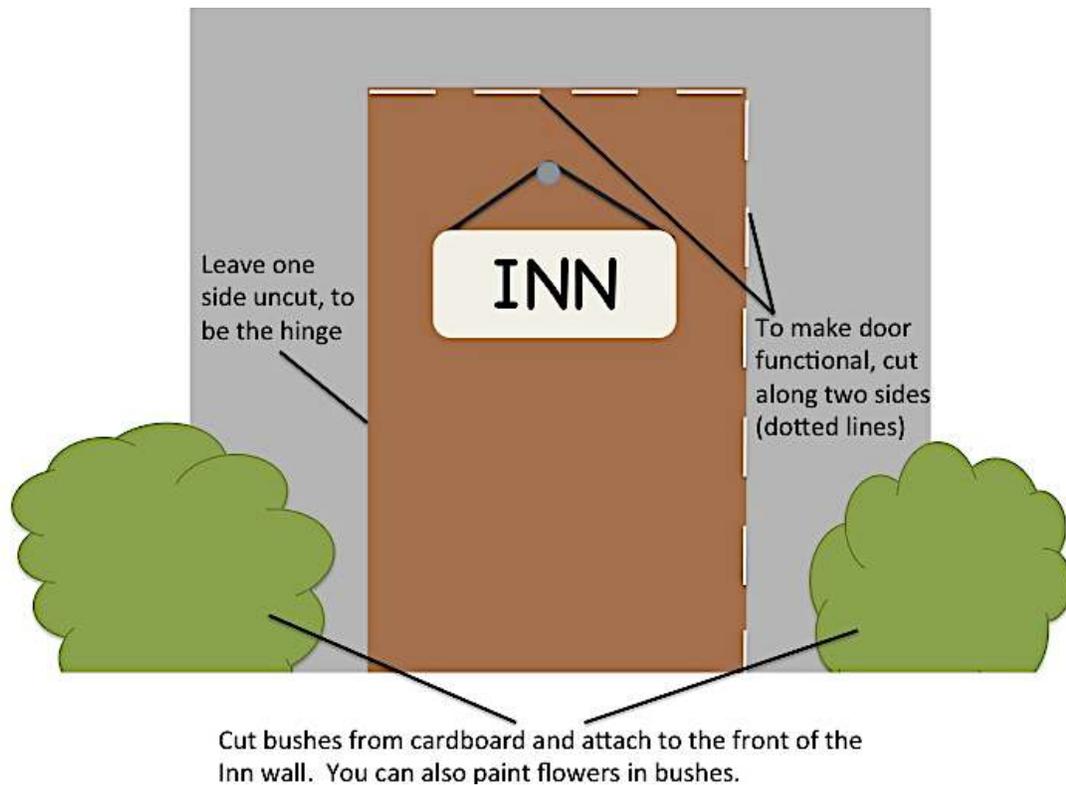


- **Scene 2**— Outside of the Inn. For this scene, STAGE HANDS will bring on the Inn door. This can be made from cardboard. Start with a large piece of square cardboard. Paint the cardboard to be the outside of the inn- maybe a tan or light gray.

In the middle of the cardboard wall, paint a door in a different color. On the door paint a sign for the Inn. You can just write “INN” or you can name the Inn or let the kids name the Inn.

The door does not have to be functional. INNKEEPER can just enter around the cardboard and stand in front of it. But, if you want the INNKEEPER to step through the door, you can make it to open: Cut around the frame of the door on one side and along the top. Leave the other side attached. This will be the hinge, allowing the door to swing open. See image below for example.

You can brace the wall with a sturdy object so it can stand freely, or have STAGE HANDS hold it up for the short scene.



- **Scene 3**— The river. This scene happens at the front of the stage. Two STAGE HANDS being on a long piece of blue fabric, and hold it up about waist high, and wave it back and forth. FERRYMAN and EROE will walk slowly in front of the fabric.

- **Scene 4**— The estate of the Duke and Duchess. STAGE HANDS will bring on the fountain for the scene. The fountain can be made from urethane or Styrofoam blocks carved, painted, and glued together, to resemble a cascade rock fountain.

Another option is to paint a stone fountain onto cardboard. Cut the fountain out and tape or tie it to two chairs, stool, or other sturdy objects to act as braces.

Note: When EROE sits “on” the fountain, he can sit on a small stool covered in gray paper to resemble a rock. The stool can sit in front of the fountain, right up against it.

- **Scene 5**— The Ogre’s home. If you have a backdrop, this section can be painted to show gray cave walls. On stage there is a bed, a fireplace, a



table, and a chair. On the table is a bowl and a spoon.

The fireplace can be painted onto a cardboard box. Use sponges to create the effect of stone, leaving a square in the middle where you can paint the fire on. A black pot, much like a witch's cauldron, can sit on a tripod of three sticks tied together in front of the painted fireplace.

To make the bed: Start by putting two sturdy chair side by side. In front of the chairs you will need to place an ottoman, or something to act as an ottoman. You can use a short bench, or milk crates, or small stools.

Cover the two chairs and the ottoman(s) with a large gray sheet or blanket (to resemble stone). If you want, you can gather the extra fabric and tape or tie it up under the "bed".

Place two pillows against the backs of the chairs. On top of the first sheet or blanket, place another blanket, any color. There should also be a fur or a fuzzy blanket on the bed for BELAFORE to throw over EROE.

OGRE will sit in the chair, with his legs stretched out onto the ottoman, on top of the first blanket and under the second. BELLAFORE can sit next to him, and arrange herself however works best for the action.

- **Scene 6**— The estate of the Duke and Duchess. Same as Scene 2, except in this scene the fountain will be unplugged and water will spring.

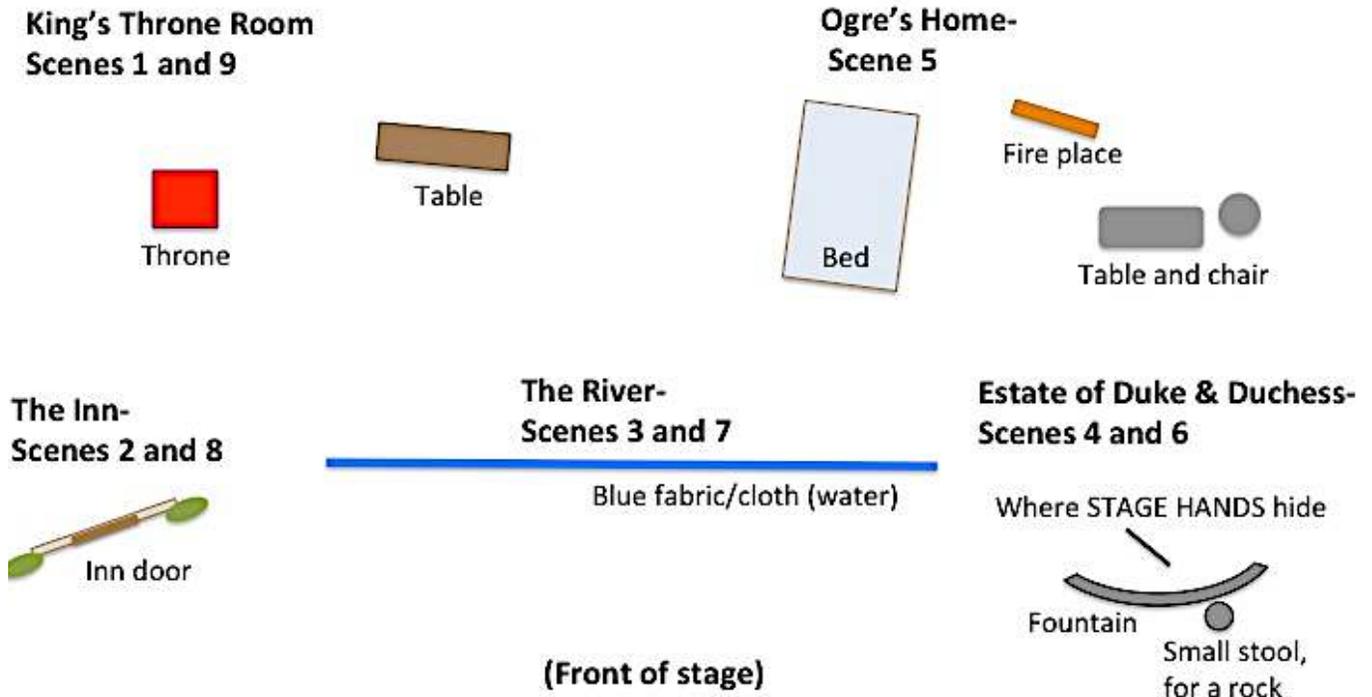
To "unplug" the fountain: When STAGE HANDS being on the fountain they also bring on a toy or stuffed snake. STAGE HANDS hide behind the fountain and place snake near the side of the fountain. DUKE will pull the snake from behind the fountain.

When the snake is removed, water and coins begin to flow from the fountain. One STAGE HAND throws coins (see Prop notes) into the air while the other STAGE HAND waves the blue fabric around and then places it onto the fountain, so that it hangs down in front.

- **Scene 7**— The river. Same as Scene 3.
- **Scene 8**— Outside of the Inn. Same as Scene 2.
- **Scene 9**— The King's throne room. Same as Scene 1.



Example stage set, aerial view:



OTHER STAGING NOTES

- **Sound FX** – This play offers an opportunity for Audience Participation. Audience can make sounds, such as rushing water for the river and fountain, stomping for the OGRE, howling in the cave, etc, and you can even have them create an “epic journey song” for EROE, which they can hum as he moved from one location to another. These sound can be directed by NARRATOR, who either holds up signs or takes the lead in making the noises. When OGRE challenges Audience at the end of the play, Audience can even respond by heckling him or booing.