

# **A Dragon is Coming!**

**A Full Length Play**

By Christine Williamson

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### **Synopsis**

Book Man and Creature of Few Words observe and experience traffic as travelers converge on the city of Eclesia to see the Art Dragon Kalliper perform. As the day progresses, they encounter Dragon groupies, peddlers, trackers, a scientist, a sword for hire, and a murder of Crows that descends upon the land, exploiting everything it touches. They befriend Kronos, a common man of uncommon wisdom, who begins to learn how they experience the world, and they perform an impromptu play with a passing Musician and Appolonius, (a young actor seeking to become Kalliper's disciple).

This play is an exploration of how we, (as individuals, groups, artists, and a society), interact, (or fail to interact), with art and other artists in our daily lives, especially when those artists and craftsmen are famous, widely revered, and/or held in high esteem. It's a call to re-examine our relationship with art, and to challenge our preconceptions about the people who make it.

All roles are either gender neutral or easily made so.

## Characters

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS: Kalliper, an Art Dragon

BOOK MAN: Man with a Huge Book, Kalliper's Companion, Keeper of Stories

KHRONOS: A Common Man with Uncommon Wisdom

GUARDIAN: A Sword for Hire seeking to Serve the Art Dragon

SCIENTIST: A Scientist seeking to Study the Art Dragon

LEAD CROW: (*x-cast with GUARDIAN*) The Darkness in Men's Hearts seeking to Feed  
on the Innocence and Ignorance of Dragon Seekers

MUSICIAN: (*x-cast with SCIENTIST*) A Musician seeking to perform with the Art  
Dragon

APOLLONIUS: An Actor seeking to Learn from the Art Dragon

TRAVELERS x 2: Travelers seeking to watch the Art Dragon perform

PEDDLERS x 3: Non-believers seeking to profit from Dragon Seekers

GROUPIES x 4: Dragon Fanatics seeking the Art Dragon

TRACKERS x variable: (*x-cast with TRAVELERS, PEDDLERS, GROUPIES.*)

Seekers seeking to Track the Art Dragon

CROWS x variable: (*x-cast with PEDDLERS, GROUPIES, and TRACKERS*)

See Lead Crow

## **Setting and Time**

**Setting:** A clearing along a well-traveled road, running thru an old forest. A scattering of decent-sized rocks and fallen logs are available for sitting, etc... Unless otherwise noted, all traffic flows the same way, towards the unseen city of Ecclesia.

**Time:** Any Time. Cell Phones exist, but no strict period continuity is meant to be implied by these props. The same goes for the Lute and the Sword.

## **Scenic Overview**

All scenes take place along the above-mentioned road.

Act I consists of a Prologue and seven scenes.

Act II consists of seven scenes and an Epilogue.

## Prologue

*Enter CREATURE OF FEW WORDS, masked, and BOOK MAN, with Book.*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Addresses Audience.)*

An act of Whimsy have I created  
For You, Dear friends, and Dreamers of your Part;  
Poesy Lovers, Listening Fated,  
Voices of Singers, Whisperers of Heart.  
Crafters of Fancies, trafficking Delights,  
Seekers of Knowledge, the Heavens to chart,  
All come at my Call, to show their Bright Lights  
And hie to their places, ere we may start;  
So open thine eyes, see this, my first play,  
Wand'ring in shadows of letters and Ink,  
Tangled in verbiage, a Word Smith's foray  
To reach thru the Eye and make Someone Think.  
Hark to my Voice now, and Listen True soft,  
A Story we'll tell, ere my Mask comes off.

**Act I**

**Scene i**

*Enter TRAVELERS*

BOOK MAN

Where go you with such hurry, Friends?

TRAVELER 1

Have you heard?

TRAVELER 2

Have you not heard?

BOOK MAN

Heard what?

TRAVELER 1

A Dragon is coming!

BOOK MAN

A Dragon?!

TRAVELER 2

A Dragon!

TRAVELER 1

A Majestic Beast of Great Fame!

BOOK MAN

Woe, Friends! Should you not hurry backward, then? From whence you came? Surely it's safer. If a Dragon comes—

TRAVELER 1

Not that sort of Dragon!

TRAVELER 2

Faith, No!

BOOK MAN

No?

TRAVELER 2

Not that sort at all.

BOOK MAN

Does it not shower the heavens, laying waste to Fell Darkness with Glorious Fire?

TRAVELER 1, 2

Indeed, Sir!

BOOK MAN

Does it not stop Men's Hearts, striking Dead with Awe all Eyes that dare gaze upon it?

TRAVELER 1, 2

Indeed, Sir!

BOOK MAN

And does it not rip Asunder the Foundations of State, Razing to Earth statute and farm alike, entombing Culture in the wreckage of its own making?

TRAVELER 1

No, I don't think so, Sir.

TRAVELER 2

Not really. Not at all.

BOOK MAN

Not at All? Not even a little?

TRAVELER 1, 2

No, Sir.

BOOK MAN

Well. Barring that last, it does the other two.

TRAVELER 1

Indeed.

TRAVELER 2

Indeed! And very well.

BOOK MAN

In very Deed. Well, too. Yet you're not affrighted. A Majestic Beast showers the Heavens with fire, striking Men dead who look on't, yet you fear it not. Wherefore harbor you this reckless abandon for your skins? This careless boldness to endanger your Life's Blood?

TRAVELER 1

We said, Sir. It's not that sort of Dragon.

TRAVELER 2

Not that sort at all.

BOOK MAN

What other sort is there?

TRAVELER 1

It's an Art Dragon.

BOOK MAN

Art Dragon?!

TRAVELER 1

Aye, a Dragon of the Artistic sort.

TRAVELER 2

A Thespian Serpent of great cleverness and wit; Famed from Sea to Shore for grand displays of Pageantry that Dazzle Kings and Strike Dumb the tongues of common men, that ever after they Fail to Speak their minds for wont of delivering Proper tidings. 'Cross the breadth of Land and Country, 'tis esteemed, Surely, the most Marvelous Creature ever to Grace Nature's bower.

BOOK MAN

Is it truly Exalted in such extreme excess?

TRAVELER 1

Nay. Verily, we fail to do its duty justice.

TRAVELER 2

Upon my Soul, 'tis true.

BOOK MAN

Well, it's impressed you lot, that's obvious. Where saw you this Marvelously Exalted Serpent?

TRAVELER 1

Not yet seen, Sir!

TRAVELER 2

By Heavens, no! Do I not still speak? Had we seen it—

BOOK MAN

You'd be struck Dumb with Wonder. Yes, I remember.

TRAVELER 2

We'll be struck Dumb soon enough.



TRAVELER 1

And you'll regret mocking, too. For no answer will we give when you ask after what we saw and how we gazed upon it.

BOOK MAN

My loss, I'm sure. So you don't know what it looks like?

TRAVELER 2

Not yet, Sir. But soon.

BOOK MAN

How will you know it when you see it, then?

TRAVELER 1

A better question would be, "How can we not know it?" It is a Dragon, after all.

BOOK MAN

True, true. And where is it coming? Where should I go, should I choose to gaze upon this Marvelous Dragon?

TRAVELER 2

It's alighting in the fair city of Ecclesia! Not half a day's journey hence.

BOOK MAN

So close! Were it aught but an Art Dragon, I'd fear for the countryside. How know you it alights there? Does it advertise?

TRAVELER 1

No! Not in the usual way.

TRAVELER 2

It doesn't need to. Everyone's talking about it already. "The Dragon is on the road to Ecclesia!" they say, "We must go see it!"

TRAVELER 1

So we up'd and off to see it, like everyone else. Surely you've noticed the traffic, Sir.

BOOK MAN

Not really. I assumed it was normal.

TRAVELER 2

He's not from around here.

TRAVELER 1

Well, it's not. This is usually a very quiet forest.

BOOK MAN

I see. No matter. How's this Dragon called, then? Surely you know that much.

TRAVELER 1

Indeed, that we DO know!

TRAVELER 2

It goes by the Grand, Divinely Bestowed title of Calliper.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Kalliper?

TRAVELER 1

Yes, Calliper.

TRAVELER 2

Where'd you come from?

BOOK MAN

Oh, that One's been here.

TRAVELER 1

This whole time? I don't believe it.

BOOK MAN

Believe it, Sirs.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Kalliper.

TRAVELER 1

Yes... Calliper. That's what I said.

TRAVELER 2

What's that Book you're holding, Sir?

BOOK MAN

This? A Mammoth tome of Marvelous, Exalted Esteem. Filled to bursting seams with Words, Words, and more Words. A veritable tedium of intricately woven linguistic enlightenment and distinguished rhetoric, guaranteed to expand the Commonest Mind of the Commonest Crowd. Care for a look?

TRAVELER 1

I think we'd best pass.

TRAVELER 2

Indeed, Sir. Even could I read, we'd miss the Dragon, stopping for such an epic length of study.

TRAVELER 1

Best be on our way, Sir.

TRAVELER 2

Aye, we dare not be late for the show.

BOOK MAN

A tragedy to miss, I'm sure. Perhaps another time?

TRAVELER 1

Perhaps.

TRAVELER 2

And so we take our leave, Sir.

BOOK MAN

A pleasant Journey.

*Exeunt TRAVELERS*

## Act I

### Scene ii

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Kalliper.

BOOK MAN

I dare say, that lot is unlikely to ever See their Exalted Dragon. They don't even know what it looks like...

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

They think they do.

BOOK MAN

Aye. And the not knowing of their Not Knowing will be their undoing. Mark my word. I'm always right in this.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Not always.

BOOK MAN

Mostly, always.

*Enter PEDDLERS*

BOOK MAN

Look here! Another bunch of merry TRAVELERS. Off to see the Dragon, friends?

PEDDLER 1

Oh, aye. Yes. Off to see the Dragon.  
*(Laughs)*

PEDDLER 2

Aye, indeed. Dragon, ho!  
*(Laughs)*

BOOK MAN

You're not hoping to see the Dragon, then.

PEDDLER 3

Don't be stupid. There's no such thing as Dragons.

BOOK MAN

No such thing as Dragons?!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Oh, dear.

*(Takes BOOK MAN's Book and wanders away)*

PEDDLER 1

Course not. Dragons are a myth. A Fairy Tale, invented to appease the weak-minded and ensnare the gullible.

BOOK MAN

And you're neither of those.

PEDDLER 2

Damn straight, we're not.

PEDDLER 3

No pish-tosh of hogswallop and Tom Foolery here. Our minds shall stay safely unrotted, thank you.

PEDDLER 1 and CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Hear, hear!

BOOK MAN

Well, if you're NOT going to see the Dragon, why are you headed to Ecclesia?

PEDDLER 2

For the Crowds!

BOOK MAN

The Crowds...?

PEDDLER 3

Aye, the Crowds. Where people think There Be Dragons, they gather in Large Number. And Large Number needs must eat a Large Sum of food.

PEDDLER 1

For a Large Sum of food, One needs must spend a Pretty Penny.

PEDDLER 2

And for a Pretty Penny, we hie us hither and thither as the clink and chime of Change calls. For Gold is the traffic of the World, Sir.

BOOK MAN

Gold.

PEDDLER 3

Aye. And Gold we like in Large Sum.

PEDDLER 1, 2

Hear, hear.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

I dislike Gold in Large Sum.

BOOK MAN

I dislike Gold on principle.

PEDDLER 3

I warrant, Sir, that's merely because you haven't any.

PEDDLER 2

Aye, those who want Gold, oft scorn the Fortune of others.

PEDDLER 1

They profess dislike only to hide their craving.

BOOK MAN

Well, that may be—

PEDDLER 1

Oh, it's true, Sir.

BOOK MAN

But I count Fortunate my Blood is not yet diseased with this Craving of yours. Though I dare say its hooks are deep in your Hearts.

PEDDLER 3

Aye. And Deeply welcomed.

PEDDLER 1

That they are.

PEDDLER 2

You must be poor, Sir, to speak so ill of Society's Blood. For where would we be—

BOOK MAN

Society's Blood?! Such Conceit!

PEDDLER 2

Where would any of us Be without Gold?

BOOK MAN

I imagine, I'd be standing right here, like I am now.

PEDDLER 1

Oh, that's Lack of imagination on your part, Sir.

PEDDLER 2

Aye, there're many less expensive places to stand.

BOOK MAN

A public Road in a public Forest? Faith, if there's a cheaper place, I charge you, show me.

PEDDLER 3

For a coin, I will. For how did this Public road in this Public forest come to be built, if not thru the spending of Gold by the people it connects? Pay me a Penny, Sir, and I'll show you a cheaper place to sit.

PEDDLER 1

He doesn't have a Penny. Pretty or otherwise.

PEDDLER 2

No, I dare say he's flat broke.

BOOK MAN

Oh, I have Gold.

PEDDLER 1

Tsk, I'm sure you do.

BOOK MAN

But I'm not a Fool. Were I to give the vaunted Penny you profess I lack, you'd hie hither, and set yourself here, like this. For Trees and Grass—

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

And Rocks.

BOOK MAN

—were here long before this Public road was built. And Men can sit upon them for Free as long as they wish, even up until the Ending of the Earth. And when the World Ends, Friends, all the Gold in Men's treasuries won't stay Nature's hand.

PEDDLER 3

That may be. But at least we'll die in comfort.

PEDDLER 2

Not sitting on a rock.

PEDDLER 1

Cluttering a Public road.

BOOK MAN

Oh, I've upset you. Your Craving dislikes thwarting. I apologize. Here: A Penny for your troubles. Split it as you wish.

PEDDLER 3

You mock us, Sir.

BOOK MAN

All the more reason to relieve me.

PEDDLER 2

There's a catch.

BOOK MAN

No.

PEDDLER 1

There's always a Catch.

BOOK MAN

Not this time. On mine Honor, I swear there's none.

PEDDLER 3

Honor.

*(Laughs)*

If Dragons did exist, they'd laugh at the idea of such absurdity. Gold knows no such thing. Good day, Sir.

PEDDLER 2

Good day.

PEDDLER 1

Pleasant rock-sitting.

BOOK MAN

Good Luck. Your Crowds await.

*Exeunt PEDDLERS*

BOOK MAN

Vultures. Scavengers.



CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Shame on you.

BOOK MAN

I'm all upset now.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

It's your own fault.

BOOK MAN

Can I have that back? I don't want this.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Gives Book back. Takes penny.)*

BOOK MAN

Why are they like that? Society's Blood; As if Men would die should currency's river stop flowing, eating itself to death like a Great Beast devouring the Tale that Birthed it. It's an artificial edifice. Why should we cease to breath upon the destruction of an imaginary construct? We lived before Trade. Shall we Die upon its Doom?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Shhhhhh.....

BOOK MAN

I apologize.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

There are Others coming.

BOOK MAN

Better, or Worse?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Depends on your Perspective.

BOOK MAN

I'll look for Better, then.

**Act I**

**Scene iii**

*Enter GROUPIES*

*(GROUPIES chatter obliviously and excitedly, sharing and exclaiming over their cameras and cellphones.)*

GROUPIE 1

*(Spots BOOK MAN. Squeals loudly)*

You! Have you seen it!?

GROUPIE 2, 3, 4

Have you seen it?! Have you seen it?!

BOOK MAN

Seen what?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Hides behind BOOK MAN)*

GROUPIES ALL

The Dragon! The Dragon!

GROUPIE 1

It's coming to Ecclesia!

BOOK MAN

Is it?

GROUPIES ALL

YES!

BOOK MAN

Are you sure?

GROUPIES ALL

YES!

BOOK MAN

Which Dragon?

GROUPIES ALL

*(Look at BOOK MAN and each other, confused)*

GROUPIE 2

There's more than one?

BOOK MAN

I would assume so.

GROUPIE 3

I'd've thought we'd've 'eard it if there was.

BOOK MAN

Well, maybe there isn't.

GROUPIE 4

Doesn't matter. What matters is if you've seen it?!

GROUPIES ALL

Have you?! Have you?!

GROUPIE 1

I want to take its picture!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Peeks out from behind BOOK MAN.)*

GROUPIES ALL

*(Squeal loudly)*

Oh, look! It's so cute!

GROUPIE 1

Can I take your picture?

GROUPIE 2

What is it?

BOOK MAN

A Creature of Few Words.

GROUPIE 3

What's 'at then?

BOOK MAN

Just what I said.

GROUPIE 4

Can it speak?

BOOK MAN

When it feels like it.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Examines GROUPIES' cameras while they take photos.)*

GROUPIE 1

Have you seen the Dragon?

GROUPIE 2

I want its signature.

BOOK MAN

Why would you want that?

GROUPIE 2

To prove I met it, of course.

BOOK MAN

But won't the pictures prove your acquaintanceship?

GROUPIE 3

Don't be silly. Nobody believes pictures 'ese days.

BOOK MAN

But signatures are believed?

GROUPIE 4

Not really, no.

BOOK MAN

Then why—

GROUPIE 3

I want one o' its scales. Can't deny those. I'll frame it an' stick it on me wall. Wear it in me 'air. Tuck it in me—

BOOK MAN

Okayyyyyyy!! That's quite enough, thank you.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Hides behind BOOK MAN again.)*

GROUPIE 4

Oh, look. It's shy.

GROUPIE 1

I think we're scaring it.

GROUPIES ALL

*(Squeal.)*

Cute!!

BOOK MAN

Oh my. Soft, Friends! Would you hear a story?

GROUPIE 2

Is that what's in your book? Stories?

BOOK MAN

Yes, indeed. A plethora of Fabulous tales, designed to Sate Appetite and Delight the Senses. A Sensual Feast of Words, wherein our Secret'st Desires are given Shape and Form, tangling Hearts within dark miasmas of Passionate—

GROUPIE 4

But are they Dragon stories?

GROUPIES 1, 2, 3

*(Squeal)*

Dragon stories! Dragon stories! Passionate Dragon stories!

BOOK MAN

No. I'm afraid not.

GROUPIES 1, 2, 3

Awwwwwww.

BOOK MAN

Not the sort you want, anyway.

GROUPIE 3

An' what's 'at mean? Do you 'ave Dragon stories, or not?

BOOK MAN

Well. It's like this—

GROUPIE 4

You're distracting us.

BOOK MAN

I beg your pardon?

GROUPIE 4

You are, you are! He's distracting us.

GROUPIE 1

He is?

GROUPIE 4

He is! He knows where the Dragon is! He's keeping it from us!

GROUPIE 2

No, that can't be right...

GROUPIE 4

No, it's not right! Greedy bastard. He's keeping it for himself!

BOOK MAN

I assure you, that is not the case.

GROUPIE 3

'En what is the case? Where is it?

GROUPIE 4

Yeah, where is it? If you're not keeping it, Prove it!

BOOK MAN

Prove it?! You can't Keep a Dragon!

GROUPIE 4

But you are. You Are. You ARE!

GROUPIE 1, 2, 3

He is! He IS! Dragon!! Dragon!! Show us the Dragon!!!

BOOK MAN

It's on the Road to Ecclesia!

GROUPIE 4

Everyone knows that! Everyone! Prove you're not keeping it!

GROUPIE 1, 2, 3

Prove it!! Prove it!!

BOOK MAN

How?!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS  
*(Moves in front of BOOK MAN. Tries to shield him.)*

GROUPIES ALL  
PROVE IT!! PROVE IT!! PROVE IT!! GIVE US THE DRAGON!!!

*Enter GUARDIAN*

*(A sheathed Sword hangs upon GUARDIAN's belt.)*

GUARDIAN  
What happens here? Mark me! I charge you: Desist and Cease! Wherefore create you this Disgusting Scene upon a public road?

GROUPIES ALL  
He's keeping the Dragon from us!

BOOK MAN  
I assure you, Sir, that's the Farthest thing from my mind!

GUARDIAN  
Back off! Off, I say!

GROUPIE 1, 2, 3  
Prove it! Prove it!

GROUPIE 4  
He's a Dragon hog!

GUARDIAN  
There's no such thing! Get you gone!

GROUPIE 4  
You'll be sorry! We'll tell our friends about you!

GROUPIE 1  
You'll never keep it!

GROUPIE 2  
Never!

GROUPIE 3  
It's ours!

GROUPIES ALL  
OURS!!! OURS!!! OURS!!!

GUARDIAN

Get you gone! Or I'll whet my Sword on you!

GROUPIE 4

We'll tell about you too!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Embraces BOOK MAN with back to GROUPIES)*

GROUPIES ALL

*(GROUPIES take numerous photos of GUARDIAN, BOOK MAN, and CREATURE OF FEW WORD's back.)*

GROUPIE 4

You'll regret this!

*Exeunt GROUPIES*



## Act I

### Scene iv

GUARDIAN

Are you all right?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Are you all right?

BOOK MAN

I'm all right.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

We're all right. And your Perspective?

BOOK MAN

Believe it or no... Still looking for the Better.

GUARDIAN

I apologize for my late arrival. I hastened at the Disturbance, but I'm afeard, I was a ways back for the Hearing of it.

BOOK MAN

Our Deep Gratitude necessitates no apology. Most welcome came your aide; And all the more for being unexpected. A minute longer would've seen me devoured.

GUARDIAN

Unlikely. Though they've Claws to Tear, truly they're Sad, Toothless creatures. Surpassing Cowardly. Mere glint of Steel staves them, and these present weren't the first I've sent packing. Nor the twentieth. For Tears they live, and the Pathless trails their Pathless Souls tread are flooded with salt water. Truly, Sir. I pity the lot.

BOOK MAN

Pity them? Why?

GUARDIAN

Even if they did, somehow, by the Grace of Gods, manage to lay their blind eyes on their beloved Dragon... I dare say it would profess ignorance and hide itself.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Why say you this?

GUARDIAN

Were I a Dragon, and of the gentle sort, as is the Thespian Serpent which supposedly Graces this Road, I would fear to feel the scratches of Blind Hate upon my Gentle Heart.

(Continued-GUARDIAN)

For an Artist bares his Soul to those who would See; And a Great Artist needs must bare his Soul more Nakedly than the Newest babe.

BOOK MAN

You are a philosopher.

GUARDIAN

Nay. I am an Art Lover. And a Shield.

BOOK MAN

Yet I see none. You bear a Sword.

GUARDIAN

Nay, I am a Shield. But sometimes such unprotected creatures need Swords to protect them, too. And thus I bear one.

BOOK MAN

And wield it well.

GUARDIAN

Flattery. You've not seen me wield it, Sir.

BOOK MAN

That's precisely whence my praise comes. The best Sword needs not spill Blood to Show its effect. The Averting of such Fountains is more valuable.

GUARDIAN

I would more saw as you do.

BOOK MAN

We are like-minded, then. Tell us, what brings you here? Aside from diverting Flooded Streams of Tears.

GUARDIAN

Ah. I seek employment.

BOOK MAN

Employment?

GUARDIAN

As said, I am an Art Lover. I would Bare myself, yet regrettably my Talents lie elsewhere. A hard Truth to hold.

BOOK MAN

I imagine 'tis.

GUARDIAN

But if I may not Bare myself without subjection to the harsh Blush of Ridicule, I would Bear my Sword for the Safe Baring of Others. For my Talent in Blade is no small thing. Thus do I Seek the Art Dragon, that I may Humbly bend my Knee and offer Fair Service.

BOOK MAN

And what is your fee, O' Fair and Talented Sword?

GUARDIAN

Naught save to Eat and Sleep and watch it Perform.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Offers GUARDIAN penny)*

GUARDIAN

Nay, truly I seek no payment.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Even freely offered?

GUARDIAN

Even freely. For ever freely do I offer. And thus I must take my leave. There are Crows about, and I Fear they will 'light upon others like yourselves.

BOOK MAN

Crows?

GUARDIAN

Aye. A Dark cloud, Murdering along the Streets and Byways, whence I came. Their goal is Ecclesia, for there the Dragon goes. And Ever look they to Feast upon the trappings of its Passage. Their Beaks are Sharp for the Preying.

BOOK MAN

Are we in Danger?

GUARDIAN

Nay. Your Eyes are warned. And I dare say, your wits are Sharper than their Beaks. Their Approach, thus known, may be Avoided. Look to the skies, Friends, for the Darkness that Heralds their Coming. Hide you, upon the Seeing of it.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

I dislike hiding.

BOOK MAN

I dislike Preying.

GUARDIAN

And I dislike seeing Dead those I liked Living. But ordering Others is not in my Nature. Take my Advice as it was given; Freely and without Expectation. Now Farewell.

BOOK MAN

Farewell, worthy Shield. Our Thanks again.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Bows.)*

*Exeunt GUARDIAN*

BOOK MAN

When Darkness comes...

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

We look to Light.

BOOK MAN

And the Sharp Beaks?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Ever Look we to the Light.

BOOK MAN

Ever Look we to Light. Very well. A worthy creature, that. Well met. Nobler and more Generous of Heart than all the Pilgrims of the World. Were its Shield half its Heart's size, all the Dragons in the World could shelter 'neath it. Faith, I hope our Art Lover lives to Shield us again.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Need we Shielding?

BOOK MAN

Circumstance would suggest so, from Time to Time.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Haven't you a Sword?

BOOK MAN

*(Frowns, rummages in pocket. Pulls out Quill.)*

I have this...

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

A Shield?

BOOK MAN

*(Looks around, then holds up Book.)*

I dare say this Tome's weighty enough to Masquerade as such.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Shakes head.)*

BOOK MAN

You're right. This better plays a Sword, than a Shield; Should a Crow 'light on me, I'd be more like to Bash its Brain in than be Pecked, for such is the massive Heft and girth of my Exalted burthen that a single, well-momentumed swing would decapitate the hardest assailant. Mark these arms. Surely they're as strong as any Sword's, for they wield a weightier weapon, and are like to greater dexterity for its lack of Balance. Such is the Power of Words that their Bearer strengthens simply by the Fact of their existence. All Hark and Hail unto the Power of Recorded Language! Hail the Written Word! Book Binders, flock ye to the world's Armories! Swords are obsolete! Your services are needed. Mark you me?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

...

BOOK MAN

Not even a mock? Lo! I stand ready to defend!

## Act I

### Scene v

*Enter TRACKERS*

BOOK MAN

Stay! Have at you!

*(Eyes on the ground, TRACKERS part like a sea, ignoring BOOK MAN and continuing onwards, traveling twice as fast as previous groups. Every so often they touch the ground and examine their fingers. None look up.)*

BOOK MAN

Surely this is the strangest phenomenon we've encountered yet.

*(TRACKERS slowly close ranks until BOOK MAN has to dodge a bit.)*

BOOK MAN

*(Puts away Quill.)*

Do you not see me? Am I still standing here? Do I not yet Occupy space upon this Road, that you walk thusly past me? What are you looking for?

*(TRACKERS continue streaming by without acknowledging anyone's presence.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Dodges, follows, and examines various TRACKERS.)*

BOOK MAN

They See me Not. My very Existence is being called to question.

*(TRACKERS close ranks again, starting to bump BOOK MAN, CREATURE OF FEW WORDS, and each other.)*

BOOK MAN

Give me space, curse you! Wherefore am I subjected to such Rude jostling by Anchor-Eyed Earth Eaters?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Joins BOOK MAN so they don't get separated.)*

BOOK MAN

This is passing Peculiar.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Perhaps you should Record it.

BOOK MAN

An excellent thought.

*(Pulls out a small bottle of ink. Opens book to a page in the back. Reaches for Quill and drops ink as a TRACKER bumps him. Ink rolls into a TRACKER's view.)*

TRACKER

HA!!! A CLUE!!!

*(Snatches ink triumphantly and hastens on, examining it with extremely animated enthusiasm.)*

BOOK MAN

That's mine!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Not anymore.

BOOK MAN

Luckily, I have others.

*(Closes book again.)*

What on Earth is going on?

*Enter KHRONOS*

KHRONOS

*(Notices BOOK MAN's confusion.)*

They're Tracking the Dragon.

BOOK MAN

Tracking the Dragon?

KHRONOS

It leaves a Trail, you see. Or so they say. A Trail none but the Sharpest Eyes can view. Therefore they hone their Vision to the utmost and look to Spot it; To the exclusion of All Else.

BOOK MAN

I See. Is it their Habit to Pilfer Trifles off people?

KHRONOS

Pilfer? Nay. Why?

BOOK MAN

I dropped my ink—

KHRONOS

And One Spotted it. Yes, that would lead to Pilfering. Though I suspect the Pilferer didn't perceive it as such.

BOOK MAN

Yes, well, the Pilferer did perceive it so.

KHRONOS

Oh, I doubt not the offense, Sir. Yet, sadly, there's naught to be done. Your Ink is long gone.

BOOK MAN

Aye. And quickly, too. But tell me, Learned Sir, seeing as your Eyes lift above the level of my boots; What is your Part in this Singularly Focused Pursuit? Why venture Forth accompanied by such Blatant Obliviousness?

*(TRACKERS part at KHRONOS' approach. The space around him grows to include Bookman and CREATURE OF FEW WORDS when he's near them.)*

KHRONOS

Oh, I've no Real Part in this.

*(A TRACKER breaks off and circles KHRONOS a few times before continuing on.)*

BOOK MAN

Really? Their behavior suggests otherwise.

KHRONOS

An inaccurate assessment, I assure you.

*(TRACKERS continue breaking off to circle KHRONOS.)*

BOOK MAN

Forgive my skepticism, but I'm finding You very hard to believe.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Calms Bookman.)*

What is your name?

KHRONOS

Friends call me Khronos.



CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Khronos.

BOOK MAN

Khronos. Do They address you as such?

KHRONOS

No, Sir, they do not.

BOOK MAN

How, then?

KHRONOS

They do not address me at all.

BOOK MAN

Truly?

KHRONOS

Truly. We have yet to exchange a single word.

BOOK MAN

Yet they Part for you like streams before Rocks, eddying 'bout your feet as windwhirl eddies leaves. Fine. You profess disassociation. What, then, is your Relation, for lack of a better word, to these Tracking Pilferers?

KHRONOS

None, Sir, save for the slight, overstated Honor named: They Recognize me.

BOOK MAN

They Recognize you?

KHRONOS

Aye. My boots, actually.

*(One of the circling TRACKERS pauses and pokes KHRONOS' boot before continuing.)*

BOOK MAN

Your boots...

KHRONOS

Aye. I walk slowly, see? I have this bizarre preference for gazing at my surroundings. I like Knowing where I am. So I walk slowly. And I Look at things, and when I See something that Interests me, I head towards it. This lot is Always heading Towards something. Thus it follows that our Paths tend to Cross. And when our Paths Cross, my

(Continued-KHRONOS)

boots get trod upon, and people Trip. Encountering the same obstacle often enough, even the most Obliviously down-trained Eye will eventually make connections, and so it follows my much-stumbled-upon footwear gained renown.

BOOK MAN

Renown for being an obstacle.

KHRONOS

Nay. For being an obstacle encountered when One is on, 'The Right Track.' For, seeing as I Look where I'm going, and thus usually walk towards things of Interest, my boots tend to be encountered near such Curiosities.

BOOK MAN

I've changed my mind. I like you. I wasn't sure initially, but you've quite convinced me. I apologize for being overly brusque before.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Touches Bookman approvingly.)*

KHRONOS

Thank you. I prefer being 'Seen and Liked' to being 'Unseen but Acknowledged.'

BOOK MAN

What about being 'Seen and Disliked?'

KHRONOS

I've mixed opinions there. It depends on the form the 'Dislike' takes.

BOOK MAN

Most Understandable. So tell me, Khronos. What Object of Interest are your boots walking towards today? A Dragon, perhaps?

KHRONOS

If I see the Dragon, I'll walk towards it, make no mistake there. But for now mine eyes are occupied with this Road, with the ultimate goal of gazing upon Ecclesia.

BOOK MAN

But not because the Dragon goes there?

KHRONOS

Does it? It's on the Road to Ecclesia. So everyone says. But is it actually going there? What does that mean, even? Which road? This Road continues beyond the city, yet any Road leaving Ecclesia heads towards it as well. It's a very ambiguous statement upon which to base One's travel itinerary.

BOOK MAN

Yet I've seen many today who'd disagree.

KHRONOS

And will see many more, I'm sure. Practicality, I'm sad to say, is a dying Art.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Practicality is over-rated.

KHRONOS

I agree. Yet, ironically, it's understated as well. Hence my labeling it an Art.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Drifts towards KHRONOS and begins examining him.)*

*(Density of TRACKER traffic starts to diminish)*

BOOK MAN

You're quite an Interesting Object yourself, KHRONOS. I'd walk towards you, but you're already here. Will you tarry with us?

KHRONOS

Gladly. Most gladly. My boots have been Treading and Tripping all day, and this seems as relaxing a spot as any I've passed.

BOOK MAN

And the conversation more stimulating.

KHRONOS

That too.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Do you Read?

KHRONOS

I do.

BOOK MAN

Often?

KHRONOS

In moderation.

BOOK MAN

Oh? How does one Read in Moderation?

KHRONOS

The same way One does Anything in moderation. When occasion Calls, but no longer.  
When Health demands, but up to a Point. When Required for Work, but not Replacing.  
And with interest Piqued, but not Obsessing.

BOOK MAN

Amazing! Were I the Obsessing sort, I'd follow you with a blank book solely for the  
purpose of recording your Glorious Wit.

KHRONOS

What? No! You jest at my expense.

BOOK MAN

Faith, I do not.

KHRONOS

Yes, you do.

BOOK MAN

I assure you, no.

KHRONOS

And I assure you—

BOOK MAN

On mine Honor, I swear earnest appreciation.

KHRONOS

—nothing which falls from my tongue merits Placement upon Posterity's Pedestal. I am  
a Man, like any other.

BOOK MAN

Yet you Walk unlike the Majority.

KHRONOS

Because I prefer to see Where I walk.

BOOK MAN

The Majority Care not.

KHRONOS

They would, if they realized what they miss.

BOOK MAN

Yet they don't. But you do. Therein you find yourself Apart, and not a Man, like any  
other.

KHRONOS

Well, I breathe and bleed like one. That's certain.

BOOK MAN

Don't we all?

KHRONOS

Sometimes I wonder. What's in that Book, anyway?

BOOK MAN

You want a Look? Here—

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Shhhhhh. Can you sense it?

KHRONOS

Sense what?

BOOK MAN

Someone is coming...

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

No... SomeThing...

*Exeunt last TRACKER*

**Act I**

**Scene vi**

*Enter SCIENTIST*

SCIENTIST

*(mumbling under breath)*

*...mumble... Draconis Tarthecarpis! ...mumble... Draconis Porsicus ...mumble  
mumble... Draconis Carthosycillius ...mumble... Draconis Thespiciarius! ...yes, that's  
it... definitely, most definitely...*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Examines SCIENTIST warily from behind BOOK MAN.)*

SCIENTIST

*(Stops and examines the ground, like a TRACKER.)*

Hmmmmmm....

*(Stands and looks around. Sees KHRONOS.)*

Ah! You! I should have known.

KHRONOS

Me?

SCIENTIST

Yes. The Man with the Boots. I've heard a lot about you.

KHRONOS

You mean, about my Boots.

SCIENTIST

Same thing.

BOOK MAN

Not in the Slightest.

SCIENTIST

You're always in the Right Place, at the Right Time.

KHRONOS

I like to think so.

SCIENTIST

Tell me, Mr. Boots. Where is Calliper?

KHRONOS

Calliper? Who's Calliper?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(whispering)*

Kalliper...

SCIENTIST

Not 'Who.' 'What.' The Dragon. Draconis Thespicious, to be exact. Where is it?

KHRONOS

I don't know.

SCIENTIST

Now, don't be Coy, Mr. Boots—

KHRONOS

That's not my name.

SCIENTIST

—You're always in the Thick of Things. I know you've been Walking towards the Dragon. It's on the Road to Eclesia, and here you are, on that very road. Why bother hiding your Intent? You Know I'll sniff it out.

KHRONOS

I'm sorry. Have we met?

BOOK MAN

My money is on 'No.'

SCIENTIST

Whether we've met personally before is irrelevant, Mr. Boots. I Know you, you see. I've studied your 'Comings' and 'Goings'. I Know what you Like and what you Avoid. Your very Nature dictates that you can't Not walk towards a Dragon.

KHRONOS

If I don't know where one is, I can. Not walk towards it, that is.

BOOK MAN

Oh, I love double negatives.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

SomeThing is coming...

SCIENTIST

You're wrong there, Mr. Boots. Your Knowhow is as irrelevant as our lack of previous acquaintanceship. Your boots Go where they will. I Know that Will. I've Studied it. What Attracts it. What Turns it. Whether you're Aware of it or not, I Know What they go Towards. And being an Expert on Dragons—

BOOK MAN

What is it?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Can't you Feel it?

SCIENTIST

I can say, beyond a shadow of Doubt, that the Primary Characteristics of Dragons Attract your boots like Sweet Flowers attract Bees, or Carrion Carcasses attract Flies. Your boots can Detect Dragons a hundred miles off.

KHRONOS

My boots? You can't be serious.

SCIENTIST

I'm Dead serious.

BOOK MAN

Not yet. Is it far?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Coming closer...

SCIENTIST

My Methods are sound. And Logic Dictates my results may be extrapolated from to Predict your Future Destinations.

KHRONOS

My Future Destinations?! But—

SCIENTIST

Yes. And Your Presence Here on This road, the Chosen Path of a Known Dragon, proves my Theory is Correct.

BOOK MAN

Are we Safe?

KHRONOS

And that theory is... what, Exactly?



SCIENTIST

That your boots Follow Dragons.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Perhaps... Perhaps not...

KHRONOS

I'm sorry. I'm finding this very hard to believe.

SCIENTIST

Oh, that's quite all right, Mr. Boots. It's Science. You don't Have to believe it. It just Is. Accept that, as I have, and everything makes Perfect sense. The entire World can be explained by Simple Mathematical Constructs and Precisional Logic.

BOOK MAN

*(Shielding CREATURE OF FEW WORDS from SCIENTIST's view.)*

More like Provisional Logic.

SCIENTIST

And you are?

BOOK MAN

Nobody of Interest to Science.

SCIENTIST

I'll be the judge of that. What's in that book?

BOOK MAN

A Portrait of Humanity, carefully entwined with all the Data, Numbers, or Information you could ever want. A Precise melding of History with Embellishment and Poetry with Practicality, perfect for Informing the Ignorant Masses as to how their World works. A Meeting of Minds. The perfect marriage of Fact with Fiction—

SCIENTIST

Fiction. Useless rubbish. I've heard enough. Mr. Boots—

KHRONOS

That's not my name.

SCIENTIST

Tell me where you were headed before you stopped.

KHRONOS

I beg your Pardon?

SCIENTIST

The structure of this Scene suggests you're taking a break. If you'd be so Kind as to tell me Where you were going, that would save me the trouble of Following you. Your boots have been Known to Meander, after all. I'd rather cut to the end.

KHRONOS

Wait. You're planning on Following me?

SCIENTIST

Only if Absolutely Necessary.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Approaches SCIENTIST.)*

Cutting to the End is Sad.

KHRONOS

Sad?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Terribly Sad.

SCIENTIST

No, it's not. It's Time-Saving.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

But you Miss Things.

SCIENTIST

Nothing of Import. The Final Result is all that Matters.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

No. No, it's not. Can't you feel it coming? If you leave now, you'll Miss it. You'll Miss it all.

SCIENTIST

Miss what?

*(SCIENTIST looks around in confusion.)*

BOOK MAN

You're right. SomeThing is Coming...

SCIENTIST

I don't see anything.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

You can't See it with Eyes.

SCIENTIST

I don't hear anything.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

You can't Hear it with Ears.

SCIENTIST

Am I supposed to taste it, then?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

You can't Taste it, or Touch it, or Smell it—

SCIENTIST

Well, then, obviously it doesn't actually Exist. Mr. Boots, I'm afraid your Friend here is a bit delusional. I can recommend a good Physician, if you like?

KHRONOS

That won't be necessary. I was headed That Way, before I decided to rest.

*(Points towards Ecclesia.)*

SCIENTIST

Oh, Thank You, SO Much for your cooperation! It's been Delightful meeting you, Mr. Boots. Just Delightful. You're So helpful! But, should you chance to feel a Sudden Urge to go another way, do give me a Call. I'd rather Stay on Track, if you get my meaning?

*(Gives KHRONOS business card.)*

KHRONOS

I think I do.

SCIENTIST

Excellent! 'Til next time, Mr. Boots. Draconis Thespicularious is within my Grasp!

*Exeunt SCIENTIST*

## Act I

### Scene vii

*(Throughout the first half of this scene, the lighting diminishes, subtly constricting the main acting areas. If desired, this effect can be begun at the end of scene v, when CREATURE OF FEW WORDS first claims SomeThing is approaching.)*

KHRONOS

That's not my name...

BOOK MAN

Shhhhhhhhhhh... You're not Delusional.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

I know. I know. But—

BOOK MAN

It hurts.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Yes...

BOOK MAN

Soft. It's okay... They don't Understand.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

I know. They never do...

KHRONOS

Perhaps if you tried Explaining? To me? I don't know what's going on, but I'm willing to Listen. Listening is the first step. Listening and Watching, with an Open Mind, Suspending all Preconception and Assumption.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Such beautiful sentiment...

BOOK MAN

And with yet another breath, our Friend sets himself Apart from Man! Your previous protestations of Humanity were in vain.

KHRONOS

I am Human, I swear.

BOOK MAN

Swear not Brotherhood with the Majority upon giving Voice to such Flamboyant Radicalism. Understanding the intangible is NOT in Vogue.

KHRONOS

Perhaps it should be.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

It was once. Once Upon a Time... Once Upon a Time it was the Purest Art a Heart could Strive to Master. It informs every Art that's ever been and ever will be. The Intangible is the Stuff Dreams are made of. Hopes and Fears, and Joys and Tears, Wishes and Laughter, Light... And Darkness.

*(Lighting: A still subtle, but slightly more noticeable diminishing)*

BOOK MAN

Darkness. That's what it is.

KHRONOS

Darkness?

BOOK MAN

What's Coming. It's the Darkness. Isn't it?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Darkness...!

KHRONOS

What's coming? What Darkness?

BOOK MAN

The SomeThing that Approaches. That's what we're feeling. What we've Been feeling. The ice Creeping in my veins, prickling hairs on my arms, Cloying at the warmth of my Heart. The Intangible.

KHRONOS

I don't understand.

BOOK MAN

Not everyone can.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Not true. But willingness to Learn...

BOOK MAN

That's Hardest to find.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Yet most Essential...

KHRONOS

I want to Learn.

BOOK MAN

You want to Learn?

KHRONOS

Teach me. Please?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Nods.)*

BOOK MAN

Right.

*(Gives Book to CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

Close your eyes.

KHRONOS

My eyes?

BOOK MAN

Seeing the Intangible means learning to ignore your Sight. Our Eyes can Mislead as quickly as Liars' Tongues.

KHRONOS

*(Closes eyes.)*

What now?

BOOK MAN

Listen.

KHRONOS

I hear you.

BOOK MAN

Ignore me. Listen to the Silence. It's a Symphony inside, playing everything we Don't know we Know.

*(Lighting: As KHRONOS begins to Listen, Darkness begins to creep in, flooding the stage, confining the Actors to an ever-shrinking space.)*

KHRONOS

I don't—

BOOK MAN

Are you Colder than temperature warrants?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Warmer than the Breeze Suggests?

KHRONOS

I feel like I'm moving.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Yet you're Standing Still.

BOOK MAN

It's the Intangible moving. The Untouchable Touching you on its way past.

KHRONOS

That doesn't make sense!

BOOK MAN

Nothing Intangible does. Keep your Eyes closed.

KHRONOS

But SomeThing's there! Surely I can See it—

BOOK MAN

Not yet. Listen Harder.

KHRONOS

To the Silence?

BOOK MAN

To the Symphony. There's a Voice Singing with it. When you've Listened Hard enough, you'll Hear it Speak as clearly as you or I.

KHRONOS

But that's—

BOOK MAN

Crazy? Delusional? A few Screws short of a Cantaloupe?

KHRONOS

I was going to say, 'Ridiculous.'

BOOK MAN

Well don't. Just Listen.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Listen...

BOOK MAN

What do you Hear?

KHRONOS

I Hear... I Hear...

*(Sound: The sound of a huge Murder of CROWS Cawing and Flapping slowly permeates the theater as KHRONOS begins to Hear.)*

*(Lighting: The fluttering Flicker of Wings begins obscuring the remaining lit areas of the stage, especially around the edges. Depending on the space, it can be spattered across the audience as well.)*

BOOK MAN

What does the Voice say?

KHRONOS

Not a Voice. No Voice. Rather... I Hear... Birds. Hundreds of Birds. Calling... Cawing to each other.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Cawing...

KHRONOS

It's so Loud. Why couldn't I Hear them before?

BOOK MAN

You hadn't thought to try.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Cawing! The Darkness is Cawing! Open your Eyes!

KHRONOS

*(Opens eyes. Stares about in horror.)*

*(Lighting and Sound: Most of the stage now is in shadow. Fluttering, Flapping, and Cawing begin swelling towards a crescendo.)*

BOOK MAN

What do you see?

KHRONOS

Oh, God. Crows. So many Crows! Why is it so Dark? They're just birds!?



BOOK MAN

No, not Just birds. Nothing is ever Just something. Not Here. Not Now. Not Ever.  
Their Beaks Gleam with Greed's Blood, and their Wings reflect the Darkness in Men's  
Hearts. How can we Hope to survive such Blackness?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

When Darkness Comes...

BOOK MAN

We Look to Light. But the Beaks! So Sharp. Dripping...

*(Lighting and Sound: Dramatic shift, creating a psychological space  
around CREATURE OF FEW WORDS that staves the Darkness off. Cawing and  
Flapping reduce similarly, becoming muffled and smothered sounding.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS:

When Darkness Comes we Look to Light  
And Steel our Hearts against the Cloud,  
Which Quick descends to Blind our Sight  
And Deafen Ears with Cawing Loud;  
When Dark Descends we Turn to Cheer  
And Grip the Things we Cherish Most  
Against the Pull of Dark Revere,  
Which Festers Pride and Lingers Ghost;  
When Darkness Comes, Look we to Light  
Shielding our Hearts against the Noise,  
Which Blocks our Sense while Teaching Sight  
To Scorn the Things it Most Employs;  
Look we to Light when Darkness Looms,  
Ever the Light will Stave our Dooms!

*(Lighting: Psychological Space vanishes, making the Darkness seem  
more oppressive than before.)*

*(Sound: Cawing and Flapping come back up, but not as abruptly as the  
lighting. They resume swelling towards a crescendo.)*

KHRONOS

What Light? Where is it?

BOOK MAN

It's part of the Symphony!

KHRONOS

All I Hear now are Crows!

BOOK MAN

Shield your Heart! Look to the Light!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Ever the Light will Stave our Dooms!

KHRONOS

I Can't See it!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Opens Book, creating a small sanctuary of brilliance in the midst of a Sea of Darkness.)*

Ever Look we to the Light!

*(Lighting and Sound: The sound of Flapping and Cawing swells to a Deafening Cacophony, then cuts abruptly in time with a sudden Black-Out.)*

**End Act I**

*Intermission*

## Act II

### Scene i

*(Lighting and Sound: Black-Out. The sound of Flapping wings permeates the theater, swelling in volume before being joined by the Cawing from Act I's end. As the Cacophonous Crescendo peaks, the lights fade up, recreating the fluttering shadows and Small Sanctuary of Brilliance from the Book.)*

*(KHRONOS, BOOK MAN, and CREATURE OF FEW WORDS are taking refuge in that Sanctuary. CREATURE OF FEW WORDS still holds the Open Book. BOOK MAN stands alert and protectively, facing Ecclesia, one hand on Creature of Few Word's shoulder. KHRONOS, not touching, faces away from Ecclesia, looking decidedly less confident.)*

*(Sound: Cacophony drops subtly, underscoring dialogue.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Looking up, into the Light, over the Audience.)*

Ever Look we to the Light. Ever Look we to the Light.

CROWS

*(Unseen. Soft chanting, growing louder.)*

When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes

BOOK MAN

*(Looking towards Ecclesia.)*

We Look to Light!

CROWS

*(Unseen. Soft chanting, growing louder.)*

When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes

BOOK MAN

*(Looks to the Light with CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

We Look to Light!

CROWS

*(Unseen. Soft chanting, growing louder.)*

When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes

(Continued-CROWS)

When Darkness Comes

BOOK MAN

Ever Look we to the Light!!

CROWS

*(Unseen. Soft chanting, growing louder.)*

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

BOOK MAN

We Look to Light!

*(Looks quickly to KHRONOS, who's staring into the encroaching shadows with horror.)*

KHRONOS!

CROWS

*(Unseen. Soft chanting, growing louder.)*

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

KHRONOS

*(Looks at BOOK MAN.)*

BOOK MAN

*(Offers KHRONOS his free hand.)*

CROWS

*(Unseen. Soft chanting, growing louder.)*

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

KHRONOS

We Look to Light!

*(Takes BOOK MAN's hand.)*

Ever Look we to the Light!

CROWS

*(Unseen. Soft chanting, growing louder.)*

When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes

KHRONOS and BOOK MAN

*(Both Look to Light with CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

Ever Look we to the Light!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

We Look to Light!

*(Enter CROWS from all directions, including thru the Audience and from above, if possible. CROWS do NOT enter from below.)*

CROWS

*(Slowly converging on Brilliant sanctuary. Soft chanting, louder and growing.)*

When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

We Look to Light!

BOOK MAN

We Look to Light!

KHRONOS

We Look to Light!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

We Look to Light!

CROWS

*(Still converging while growing louder.)*

When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

We Look to Light!

KHRONOS

What are they?! They can't be Birds!

BOOK MAN

Not Birds! Crows!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

We Look to Light!

CROWS

*(Still converging while growing louder.)*

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS, BOOK MAN, KHRONOS

We Look to Light!

We Look to Light!

We Look to Light!

We Look to Light!

*(Lighting: As they chant, the Pool of Brilliance slowly expands, pushing back any CROWS that have gotten too close.)*

CROWS

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS, BOOK MAN, KHRONOS

We Look to Light!

We Look to Light!

CROWS

When Darkness Comes

When Darkness Comes

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS, BOOK MAN, KHRONOS

We Look to Light!

We Look to Light!

CROWS

When Darkness Comes

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS, BOOK MAN, KHRONOS

We Look to Light!

CROWS

When Darkness Comes

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS, BOOK MAN, KHRONOS

We Look to Light!

CROWS

When Darkness Comes

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS, BOOK MAN, KHRONOS

We Look to Light!

We Look to Light!

We Look to Light!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Ever the Light will Stave our Dooms!

*(Lighting: With a Flash of Brilliance, the Sanctuary expands abruptly and stabilizes, successfully reclaiming a third of the stage.)*

*(Sound: A Deep, resonating Gong accompanies the Flash, silencing the Cawing and Flapping sounds in the background.)*

CROWS

*(Hiss and Caw circling the light.)*

KHRONOS

They can't Touch us.

BOOK MAN

The Light Staves them.

KHRONOS

Will they leave?

BOOK MAN

Not without Loss.

KHRONOS

Whose Loss?

BOOK MAN

Ours.

CROWS

*(Chant slowly begins again.)*

When Darkness Comes

(Continued-CROWS)

When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes

BOOK MAN

Be Gone! Our Hearts are Not for You!

CROWS

*(Laugh as Chant continues to regain strength.)*

When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes

*Enter LEAD CROW*

*(Lighting and Sound: The Flapping Wings slowly return as LEAD CROW approaches, and Fluttering shadow effects become more stylized, showcasing the Entrance.)*

CROWS

*(Laugh as Chant strengthens and LEAD CROW approaches.)*

When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes

KHRONOS

Is that a Crow?!

BOOK MAN

Aye. The Worst Sort.

CROWS

*(Laugh and Preen as LEAD CROW passes. Loud Chanting.)*

When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes  
When Darkness Comes

LEAD CROW

*(Reaches Edge of Light and stops.)*

CROWS

*(Chanting Silences abruptly.)*



LEAD CROW

*(Pacing around the edges of the Sanctuary.)*

When Darkness Comes we Lift our Wings  
And Welcome Shadows in our Hearts,  
Which Beat for Death and Caw for Things  
To Peck and Claw and Tear Apart;  
When Dark Descends, we Rip our Hearts  
Asunder from our Bloody Breasts  
And Kill all Thought of Hope and Love  
And Welcome Greed within our Chests;  
When Darkness Calls, Look we to Light  
To Feast upon its Shattered Dreams,  
And Drown all Sense of Caring Sight  
Within the Scorn that From Us Streams;  
We Are the Dark and When we Call,  
Ever the Light will Fear our Fall!

*(Stops directly in front of CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

CROWS

*(Excited and Anticipating.)*

When Darkness Calls  
When Darkness Calls  
When Darkness Calls  
When Darkness Calls

LEAD CROW

*(Turns to face CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

CROWS

*(Louder and more Excitedly.)*

When Darkness Calls  
When Darkness Calls  
When Darkness Calls  
When Darkness Calls

LEAD CROW

*(Steps into Sanctuary. Paces towards CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

CROWS

*(Call Excitedly as LEAD CROW paces.)*

When Darkness Calls  
When Darkness Calls  
When Darkness Calls  
When Darkness Calls

LEAD CROW

*(Stops close to CREATURE OF FEW WORDS, staring confrontationally.)*

CROWS

*(Silence abruptly as LEAD CROW stops, watching intently.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Ignores LEAD CROW, still looking up to the Light.)*

LEAD CROW

Ever the Light will Fear our Fall.

BOOK MAN

We Fear you not. Keep your Claws down.

KHRONOS

We have no Quarrel with you, Friend.

LEAD CROW

Friend? Amusing Creatures. What business have you on the Road to Eclesia?

BOOK MAN

None concerning You or Yours.

LEAD CROW

Oh, I prefer to judge Mine own Concerns.

BOOK MAN

Judge them Elsewhere.

LEAD CROW

I like it Here.

BOOK MAN

We were Here first.

LEAD CROW

And We over-Took you. I apologize if you find that Disturbing.

BOOK MAN

It's not the over-taking I Dislike.

LEAD CROW

Oh?

BOOK MAN

It's the Staying.

LEAD CROW

Ah. But this road is Public. I may stay as Long as I Wish.

KHRONOS

Well, maybe we'll be going, then.

LEAD CROW

Stay. You've yet to Share your Purpose. What's in this Book?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Stories and Light.

LEAD CROW

Stories and Light.

*(Caresses Book.)*

BOOK MAN

Keep your Claws off!

LEAD CROW

Temper, temper. I like Stories. We all Like Stories, don't we Friends?

CROWS

*(Call and laugh in agreement.)*

LEAD CROW

Perhaps, if you let us Hear one?

*(Caresses Book, then tries to Take it.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Snaps Book shut and looks at LEAD CROW for the first time.)*

*(Lighting and Sound: Gong sounds as Book closes. Brilliant Sanctuary remains.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Please leave my Friends and me alone.

We wished Simply to stop and rest;

LEAD CROW

I Fear your wish and Mine collide.

I like this Spot, so Here we'll Stay,

Until Mine Eyes are Satisfied

(Continued-LEAD CROW)

Perusing o'er your Restful Way.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

If you don't mind, a Farther Stone  
Would be a better place to Jest;

LEAD CROW

But I do Mind. Don't be so Cold.  
You'll wound my Heart with this Protest.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

I cannot Wound what you have Claimed  
So willingly to Rip away.  
Please, hie yourselves, ere you've Defamed  
The Polite face you turn our Way.

LEAD CROW

You Speak, dear Friend, surpassing Bold,  
Insinuating such a test—

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Of Patience? No. That's not the Word  
For which your Tongue doth Truly Reach.

LEAD CROW

Presume you thus, to Know my Tongue,  
Risking the Strike of Viper's Ire?  
For so, it Seems, you Say I've Sung,  
With Sugared words o'er masking Fire.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

A Net of Lies, Sharp as a Sword,  
Is Woven thru your Tangled Speech.  
I Call it Thus, and Call it Out,  
To Save Others this Trial of Doubt.

LEAD CROW

Oh, dear Friend, you Think Quite poorly,  
Of this Soul, who Stands before ye.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

No. That is where you're very Wrong.  
I only wish you Heard my Song.

LEAD CROW

Who are you?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

A Creature of Few Words.

LEAD CROW

For a Creature of Few Words, you Speak quite a lot. Stand down.

CROWS

*(Call in protest.)*

LEAD CROW

These three are Mine for the Spoiling.

BOOK MAN

We'd rather not be Spoiled, Thank You.

LEAD CROW

You say that now. But one day soon, you'll change your minds.

*(Lighting and Sound: Fluttering shadows diminish, withdrawing to the edges of the Stage, Brilliant Sanctuary dims and expands, reconnecting with rest of the Stage.)*

CROWS

*(Slowly begin to venture into the light, watching greedily and exploring, but not actively threatening anyone.)*

LEAD CROW

*(Stares at CREATURE OF FEW WORDS as CROWS explore, apparently fascinated.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Stays with LEAD CROW, but watches other CROWS.)*

BOOK MAN

*(Watches LEAD CROW warily, but doesn't interfere.)*

KHRONOS

I must say, this is not what I expected to see when I ventured Forth today.

CROW 1

What did you expect to See, Sir?

KHRONOS  
Eclesia.  
CROWS 1, 2, 3  
Eclesia! Eclesia!

CROW 1  
Seek you Dragons?

CROW 2  
We have some Scales.

CROW 1  
We have some Scales.

CROW 3  
We'll sell you some.

CROWS 1, 2, 3  
*(Produce box and open it, revealing an array of large, brightly glittering  
Blue and Gold 'Dragon Scales.')*

KHRONOS  
These are Dragon Scales? Are you sure?

CROW 1  
Yes, they're Calliper's.

CROW 2  
Calliper's.

CROW 3  
Calliper's Scales.

CROWS 1, 2, 3  
The Thespian Serpent of Fame!

KHRONOS  
But they can't be Calliper's Scales.

CROW 1  
Why not?

CROW 2  
Why not?

CROW 3

Say you we Lie?

KHRONOS

Oh, I'm sure it's just a mistake. Only...

CROW 1

Only?

CROW 2

What?

CROW 3

We charge you, Speak!

KHRONOS

I could've sworn I once heard it proclaimed that Calliper's scales were Red.

CROWS 1, 2, 3

*(Exchange glances. Then Spirit box away, replacing it with another. The new box is filled with Brightly glittering Red and Silver 'Dragon Scales.')*

KHRONOS

Oh dear. Why am I not surprised...?

BOOK MAN

Did you really expect aught else?

KHRONOS

A hair more subtlety, perhaps?

BOOK MAN

Subtlety is in the Eye of the Beholder. And your Eyes are Wide Open now.

CROW 1

Is something wrong?

CROW 2

The Color's right.

CROW 3

These Scales are highest Quality.

Other CROWS

*(Seeing 1, 2, and 3 harking their wares, Other CROWS converge and begin circling the action. As they do, it becomes apparent that every CROW in the group*

*is laden with either Fake Dragon Merchandise, a large Money Pouch, or a plethora of Scavenged or Swindled Objects. The majority of these Objects should suggest either sentimental Value or the Creation of Art in some Form. All should be either visibly defaced or exhibit signs of poor/ignorant maintenance.)*

BOOK MAN and KHRONOS

*(Bunch together as the Press of CROWS starts to become overwhelming.)*

LEAD CROW

*(Still looking at CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

Put those Away. These three Need no Glitt'ring Trinkets.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Glitt'ring Trinkets have a Place in a Darkened World.

LEAD CROW

Perhaps. But that Place isn't Here.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Isn't it?

LEAD CROW

No. Now... Who are you?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Why do you wish to Know so much?

LEAD CROW

*(Laughs)*

Curiosity, I suppose.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Reaches for LEAD CROW, but stops.)*

Tragic, the Sundered Heart, which Lies unto Itself,  
Staunching its Muted Wounds with Scornful Mockery.

LEAD CROW

That's not an answer.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Isn't it?

LEAD CROW

*(Visibly shaken)*

...



CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

If I tell you, will you leave us?

LEAD CROW

If I like the Answer. We'll see.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Reaches slowly for mask, intending to remove it.)*

BOOK MAN

*(Moves instinctively to intervene, but stops.)*

KHRONOS

*(Watches with interest, visibly skeptical as to the wisdom of the unmasking.)*

CROWS

*(Watch in Frozen silence, sensing something of import occurring.)*

LEAD CROW

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhh...

*(Stops CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

That isn't needed, Friend. I wouldn't want to Spoil the Illusion.

*(Doesn't let go of CREATURE OF FEW WORDS' hand.)*

We are Leaving! The Crowds Await!

CROWS

*(Look to each other in Confusion for a moment, then begin exiting. As with their entrance, they leave in all directions, the exceptions being down or away from Ecclesia.)*

*Exeunt CROWS*

LEAD CROW

We take our Leave. But Know this, Friend. My sundered Heart Loves as Deeply as you and your two companions. In its Own Way.

*(Kisses CREATURE OF FEW WORDS' palm. Lingerling...)*

Shield your Stories from our Darkness. Ever we Feed upon the Light, which they bring Forth.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

You could Tell your Own.

LEAD CROW

Nay. My Muse is Dead. And my Faith in Dragons died with it.

*(Kisses palm once more, then lets go.)*

*Exeunt LEAD CROW*

*(Lighting and Sound: Darkness and fluttering Shadows fade as CROWS and LEAD CROW exit. The Flapping sounds fade gradually as the next scene begins.)*

## Act II

### Scene ii

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

So Sad...

KHRONOS

What?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

The Saddest sort of Creature our World can ever See, tearing its Heart apart to hide its Loneliness.

*(Cries.)*

BOOK MAN

*(Comforts CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

It's your own fault for scorning to run.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Say not Scorn. Never can I Scorn.

BOOK MAN

Shhhh. I'm sorry. I'm unsettled.

KHRONOS

As am I. I'm not sure I understand your Tears, but that Creatures like that exist in this World is absolutely terrifying.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

No. Not terrifying. Sad...

KHRONOS

Sad? I fear my Sight doesn't reach that Far yet.

BOOK MAN

To spend a Life feeding upon the Light of Others, unable to find the Strength to shed a Light of One's Own.

*(Touching Book, still Held by CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

To Feed on Light while existing in Perpetual Fear, defining One's Own Worth by measuring the Darkness that spreads in the Wake of One's passage. Is that not a Tragic way to Live?

KHRONOS

When put that way, it sounds so. But I'm afraid understanding words with Ears is different from Understanding them here. *Touches chest.* This is not ready to agree with you.

BOOK MAN

That you Understand the distinction speaks Volumes for your future Comprehension. We'll make a Book Binder of you yet.

KHRONOS

What? No! Literature is not my Strength.

BOOK MAN

*(Reclaims Book.)*

Have you some Other Trade that Precludes you plying another?

KHRONOS

No, but—

BOOK MAN

Then Always consider new options. You can't walk Towards Things of Interest forever. Eventually the Knees wear out.

KHRONOS

Or the boots. The latter more likely in my case.

BOOK MAN

Exactly.

KHRONOS

Still— Someone approaches.

BOOK MAN

More Crows?

KHRONOS

I think not...

*Enter TRAVELERS*

*(Fake Dragon Merchandise and other Recognizable CROW Objects are visibly and Proudly worn by All TRAVELERS, GROUPIES, and PEDDLERS in Act II.)*

TRAVELER 1

Hail Friends!

BOOK MAN

Hail and well met!

TRAVELER 2

Well met, indeed!

BOOK MAN

Off to see the Dragon, I see?

TRAVELER 1

We are, we are.

TRAVELER 2

Oh, yes! We are. How did you guess?

BOOK MAN

All the Traffic to Ecclesia Looks to the Dragon, these days.

TRAVELER 2

Oh, Truly it does, Sir. Truly it does.

BOOK MAN

But what are these Fine Souvenirs I see Gracing your persons?

TRAVELER 1

Clever are they not?

TRAVELER 2

And most fetching.

KHRONOS

Fetching, yes.

*(Aside)*

That's one way to put it.

TRAVELER 1

The Dragon is advertising.

BOOK MAN

Advertising?

TRAVELER 2

Yes, Sir. Its Agents rove o'er the Land, Extolling its Worth and Praising its Talent. Posting Flyers and posters, purveying all manner of relevant trappings, the sporting whereof, with which we may Show our Support.

BOOK MAN

I thought Dragons didn't need to advertise?

TRAVELER 2

Oh, Sir. Everyone Advertises.

TRAVELER 1

They're Selling tickets, too.

BOOK MAN

Tickets?!

TRAVELER 1

And we have ours!

*(Reveals a pair of extremely gaudy, glittering tickets, one Blue and Gold, the other Silver and Red.)*

KHRONOS

Does one need tickets to see a Dragon perform?

BOOK MAN

Not usually, no.

KHRONOS

I See.

*(Looks shaken.)*

TRAVELER 2

Is something the matter?

TRAVELER 1

Don't be put off by the color, Sirs. It's merely different types of seats. They had Yellow and Purple as well.

BOOK MAN

No Green?

TRAVELER 2

They were out of Green.

KHRONOS

Everyone will be out of Green at this rate. You realize those are Fake, right?

TRAVELER 1

What?

KHRONOS

Fake? Forgeries?

TRAVELER 2

How dare you?

KHRONOS

You've been the victims of Deception. The Crows that sold you these are Vile, despicable Creatures looking to exploit Less-informed Dragon Seekers, like yourselves. I dare say, when you get to Eclesia you'll find Calliper doesn't charge admission.

TRAVELER 2

How Dare you!

BOOK MAN

Now you've done it.

TRAVELER 1

I'll have you know, No Crow sold us these Tickets, Sir. It was a nice young man, very polite, well-spoken, and of exceptional breeding. He was quite knowledgeable about Dragons, and knew exactly which direction to point us in to find one. How an unlearned bird might manage such a thing, I can only guess. Crows, indeed! Good day, Sirs.

TRAVELER 2

Crows! Hmph!

*Exeunt TRAVELERS*

KHRONOS

Not a Crow?

BOOK MAN

A young Man.

KHRONOS

How is that possible?

BOOK MAN

The Price of Seeing and Hearing the True Nature of Things has ever been the burthen of realizing how much Others don't See. Crows themselves fail to glean their Own Nature.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Poor creatures...

BOOK MAN

But happy ones.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Not all of them...

KHRONOS

I still don't understand.

BOOK MAN

The Crows that Know what they Are, yet remain Crows, for Fear and want of hopeful Sight. Despair.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

And Loss... Fearing the Pain of Love.

BOOK MAN

You're still upset.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

I'm sorry. It hurts...

KHRONOS

Are you unwell?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

No. I'm sorry...

BOOK MAN

My companion is exceptionally Empathic. Yet ne'er chooses to Flee from the Exceptionally Painful.

KHRONOS

Why?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Others come. Keep your temper.

BOOK MAN

Me?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Puts a finger to BOOK MAN's lips.)*

Shhhh...



## Act II

### Scene iii

*Enter PEDDLERS*

*(Like TRAVELERS, PEDDLERS sport Gaudy Dragon merchandise, but in a far more Flamboyant manner. PEDDLER 3 carries a flag or banner.)*

BOOK MAN

Gold worshipers. In the Trappings of Crow Droppings—

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Shhhhhh...

BOOK MAN

I apologize.

*(Visibly reins in temper.)*

KHRONOS

Gold worshipers?

PEDDLER 1

Good day, Friends!

PEDDLER 2

Traveling to see the Dragon?

PEDDLER 3

We are its enthusiastic supporters!

*(Gestures proudly displaying Dragon banner.)*

PEDDLER 1

And, (more importantly), Authorized Distributors.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Oh, dear...

BOOK MAN

Let me Guess. Believing in Dragons is not a prerequisite for Serpentine Distribution.

KHRONOS

They don't believe in Dragons?

PEDDLER 3

'Course we do.

PEDDLER 2

Don't bother. They're not buying anything.

PEDDLER 3

*(Lowers banner.)*

PEDDLER 1

Luckily, you're right. Load a' Horse Pucky, Pish-Tosh, and Blarney Clap, Dragons. Tales to ensnare the Gullible. But they draw Big Crowds. And Big Crowds draw Big Lines.

PEDDLER 2

And Big Lines line Big Money Bags.

PEDDLER 3

And Big Money Bags hold much Gold.

PEDDLER 1

And Gold we Like in Large Sum.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Moves as if to Speak, then turns away.)*

BOOK MAN

Pardon me, Sirs. I'm basking in déjà vu. All right, I'm better.

KHRONOS

You sell to Crowds?

PEDDLER 2

Indeed, we do. But, Sadly, some Dragon Crowds require Permits these days.

PEDDLER 3

And Some Permits require Conditions be met.

PEDDLER 1

And Some Conditions require Displays of Official Advertising. Which we needs must then Purchase.

PEDDLER 2

An annoyance, for sure.

PEDDLER 3

But not a dissuasion.

PEDDLER 2

In the end it lightens our Bags by but little.

BOOK MAN

May we see these Dearly Purchased Permits?

PEDDLER 3

Of course! That's what they're for! To be Seen.

*(Produces 3 gaudy, glittering 'Dragon Permits.' One Blue and Gold, one Red and Silver, and one Yellow and Silver.)*

BOOK MAN, KHRONOS, CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Each takes a Permit and examines it. CREATURE OF FEW WORDS chooses first, always taking Blue.)*

KHRONOS

Let me guess. A Young Man of exceptional Politeness and breeding sold you these.

PEDDLER 1

A Young Woman, actually. Very pretty and well-spoken.

KHRONOS

And well-informed?

PEDDLER 2

Exceptionally so! Quite knowledgeable.

BOOK MAN

What does the Color mean?

PEDDLER 3

It's for Selling to Different Parts of the Crowd.

KHRONOS

No Green?

PEDDLER 1

*(Collects Permits back and gives them to PEDDLER 3.)*

They were out of Green.

PEDDLER 2

But they had Purple.

PEDDLER 3

Purple was poorly placed.

KHRONOS

And you're Sure those are Authentic?

PEDDLER 1

What do you take us for, Fools? Look.

*(Points out on Permits.)*

Authorized by the Fair City of Ecclesia.

PEDDLER 3

Signed by Stamp and Seal.

PEDDLER 2

With the Approval of the Serpent Calliper.

*(Laughs.)*

That part's Window-Dressing. For the Spectators.

BOOK MAN

Of course.

PEDDLER 2

Care for a Dragon Spritzer?

BOOK MAN

I'll pass. I've a Penny to my name, which I Fear needs must be Reserved for Admission.

PEDDLER 3

*(Puts Permits away.)*

Oh, you'll need more than a Penny, Sir.

PEDDLER 1, 2, 3

*(Exchange knowing, 'Poor broke Schmuck' glances.)*

PEDDLER 1

Well, if you're not Buying... We'll be off. The Crowd Awaits!

PEDDLER 2, 3

Good day, Sirs!

BOOK MAN

Pleasant Peddling!

KHRONOS

Enjoy the Show!

PEDDLERS 1, 2, 3

*(Laugh heartily.)*

What Show?! There're no such things as Dragons!

*Exeunt PEDDLERS*

KHRONOS

Gold worshipers. Huh. Skeptics...

BOOK MAN

I held my Tongue, for the most part. Did you see?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Kisses BOOK MAN on cheek.)*

I'm Proud.

BOOK MAN

Yes, I deserved a Mock for that.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Produces Penny from Act I. Offers it.)*

BOOK MAN

Ugh. I still don't want it.

KHRONOS

Does Ecclesia Truly require Permits?

BOOK MAN

Honestly? I have no idea.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

They didn't Last Time...

KHRONOS

Clever Birds... I'm not sure whether to be Afeard or Amused by our Feathered acquaintances' apparent ingenuity.

BOOK MAN

Oh. Be both, for they warrant both.

KHRONOS

You didn't seem to Like them much.

BOOK MAN

The Crows?

KHRONOS

The Peddlers.

BOOK MAN

Ah. Observant, Khronos. Eternally is the mercantile mind at odds with mine own Philosophy. I'd say the flow of oil and water epitomized our encounters, save we can't help but slide past each other without igniting a Conflagration of simmering Contempt and mutual Loathing. We're quite Venomous.

KHRONOS

Is that why you failed to point out the Permit forgeries?

BOOK MAN

Speaking technically, we don't know they're forgeries.

KHRONOS

...

BOOK MAN

All right. I'll be honest, Khronos. My violent disdain, well-known to my companion, for the money-grubbing, Penny-pinching tendencies of Gold worshipers, such as we just met, was over-ridden in this case solely by the delicious swell of morbid satisfaction I experienced at the thought of Seeing them Preyed upon in, an admittedly not identical, yet similar way to the way they Prey upon others. This alone stayed the Cutting Barbs of my Tongue, which I unleashed earlier today in a similar encounter, before you and I were acquainted. Hence, the cause of my well-deserved mocking. Therefore, I must Plead an apologetic inability to answer your question based on a Lamentable, yet decisive, Lack of Impartiality.

KHRONOS

Oh. What about the pair that came before? Have you something against tourists?

BOOK MAN

I've learned to pick my battles.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

For the most part...

BOOK MAN

For the most part.

*(Snatches and hugs CREATURE OF FEW WORDS awkwardly with the arm not holding the book.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Struggles a moment, then gives up, somehow managing to look both dignified and put out.)*

BOOK MAN

*(Loses interest, releasing CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Feel better now?

BOOK MAN

Yes, much. Thank you.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Good. Brace yourself.

BOOK MAN

Again?!

KHRONOS

More Merchants?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Drifts off, distracted, Listening.)*

I Hear Music...

BOOK MAN

What am I bracing for?

## Act II

### Scene iv

*Enter GROUPIES amidst a flurry of clicking camera flashes.*

*(GROUPIES are dripping in so much fake Dragon merchandise, they're almost unrecognizable. Each one sports merchandize of a particular color theme: Blue and Gold, Red and Silver, Yellow and Silver, and Purple and Gold. Each GROUPIE wears a large Dragon Scale necklace with a portrait of the 'Dragon' on it, painted in that GROUPIE's chosen color theme.)*

GROUPIES All

*(Squeal loudly!)*

BOOK MAN

*(Freezes with back to GROUPIES.)*

GROUPIE 1

Look! It's the Animal that Can't Speak!

GROUPIES 2, 3, 4

*(Squeal loudly.)*

Cute!!!

GROUPIES All

*(Converge on CREATURE OF FEW WORDS in a renewed flurry of excited squeals and camera flashes.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Starts to hide behind BOOK MAN, thinks better of it, and takes shelter behind KHRONOS.)*

KHRONOS

Oh my. Space, please.

GROUPIE 2

Are you Mute?

GROUPIE 3

Is your Tongue gone?

GROUPIE 4

Can it really Not Speak?



KHRONOS

Of course it Speaks.

GROUPIE 2

Make it Speak!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Moves closer to KHRONOS.)*

GROUPIE 1

Look! It's shy! They were right!

GROUPIES 2, 3, 4

*(Squeal Loudly.)*

Cute!!!

*(More camera flashing.)*

KHRONOS

Quiet, Friends! Please. What are these lovely pictures you're all wearing?

GROUPIE 3

They're Dragon Tokens!

KHRONOS

Dragon Tokens?

GROUPIE 2

Yes! Tokens of Affection.

GROUPIE 4

Scales, shed for its most beloved Supporters.

KHRONOS

The Dragon gave them to you personally?

GROUPIE 3

No, they were Delivered on Behalf.

GROUPIE 2

But see?

*(Turns portrait over to show KHRONOS.)*

They're addressed by Name!

GROUPIE 1

It knows who we are!

GROUPIES All  
*(Squeal and giggle.)*

KHRONOS  
If that's true, and these really are Dragon Scales—

GROUPIE 4  
'Course they are!

KHRONOS  
—why are they all different?

GROUPIE 3  
Beg your Pardon?

KHRONOS  
The colors, I mean?

GROUPIE 4  
Dragons can Change Color! Everyone knows that!

GROUPIES 1, 2, 3  
Everyone!

KHRONOS  
I meant no offense! I'm curious. I don't know much about the Dragon.

GROUPIE 4  
Obviously.

GROUPIES 1, 2, 3  
*(Exchange glances, then smile.)*  
We'll teach you!

KHRONOS  
I'm all Ears.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS  
*(Watches GROUPIES with interest.)*

GROUPIE 1  
The Dragon loves Dancing.

GROUPIE 2  
The Dragon loves Singing.

GROUPIE 3

The Dragon loves Acting and putting on Shows.

GROUPIE 1

The Dragon loves Playing.

GROUPIE 2

The Dragon loves Loving.

GROUPIE 3

The Dragon loves Eating, and Drinking, and Glows.

GROUPIE 1

It doesn't Glow.

GROUPIE 2

No, No.

GROUPIE 3

It does!

GROUPIE 2

It does?

GROUPIE 1

It does?

GROUPIE 3

It does!

GROUPIE 1, 2, 3

It Glows.

GROUPIE 4

*(Loses interest and starts looking about. Spots BOOK MAN.)*

BOOK MAN

*(Having edged slowly away from the group during the exchange, attempts to surreptitiously sidle away, shielding his face from view.)*

GROUPIE 1

The Dragon is Passion.

GROUPIE 2

The Dragon is Perfect.

GROUPIE 3

The Dragon is Everything Dragons can Be.

GROUPIE 1

The Dragon is Funny.

GROUPIE 2

The Dragon is Sober.

GROUPIE 3

The Dragon is Scrumptious and Loves only Me.

GROUPIE 1

And me!

GROUPIE 2

And me!

GROUPIES 1, 2

It loves us both, too!

KHRONOS

It does?

GROUPIE 3

It does.

KHRONOS

How can that be? Have you met it?

GROUPIES 1, 2, 3

*(Sigh wistfully.)*

No.

GROUPIE 4

*(Leaves Group, going to investigate BOOK MAN.)*

KHRONOS

How can it Love you if it's never met you?

GROUPIE 1

It feels our Love. In defiance of Space and Time.

GROUPIE 2

It'll recognize us. I'm sure of it!

GROUPIE 3

And when it does, it'll take us away, to its Nest, and we'll live in happy Luxury for the rest of our lives.

BOOK MAN

*(Attempts to avoid GROUPIE 4 without drawing attention.)*

KHRONOS

You realize that makes no sense, right?

GROUPIE 1

'Course it does!

KHRONOS

The person who Delivered the Tokens—

GROUPIE 2

People.

GROUPIE 3

Very nice people.

GROUPIE 2

With tons of Dragon Souvenirs!

GROUPIE 3

They were saving them for the show.

GROUPIE 1

But we asked SO nicely.

GROUPIE 2

Begged.

GROUPIE 3

We begged them.

GROUPIE 1

They agreed to sell them to us instead.

GROUPIE 1, 2, 3

We were SO Grateful!

GROUPIE 4

*(Follows BOOK MAN, checking camera suspiciously. Eventually grabs the Book to stop the escape. Sees BOOK MAN's face.)*

GROUPIE 4

You're the Dragon Hog!

GROUPIE 1, 2, 3

*(Freeze, then simultaneously redirect Focus from KHRONOS to BOOK MAN, all traces of gratitude gone.)*

BOOK MAN

Oh, dear.

GROUPIE 1, 2, 3

*(Check their cameras.)*

GROUPIE 1

You're right! It's the same Book!

GROUPIES 1, 2, 3

*(Move away from KHRONOS, slowly converging on BOOK MAN.)*

GROUPIE 2

You're the one trying to keep the Dragon from us!

GROUPIE 3

It won't work. We know All About You.

GROUPIE 4

Yeah. Your picture's everywhere!

BOOK MAN

I thought no one believed pictures these days?

GROUPIE 1

You'll never Keep it, you know.

GROUPIE 2

It Loves us.

GROUPIE 3

It's ours.

GROUPIE 1, 2, 3

*(Low and dangerous, holding up Tokens like warding Talismans.)*

Ours. Ours. Ours...

GROUPIE 4

We'll set it Free and take it away.

GROUPIES All  
*(Surround BOOK MAN threateningly, slowly pressing forward.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS  
*(Slips into circle and guards BOOK MAN's back.)*

KHRONOS  
Excuse me? How does One Keep a Dragon?

BOOK MAN  
An Impossibility, I assure you.

GROUPIE 4  
*(Stops GROUPIES, looking around warily.)*  
Wait. Where's your Bully friend? The one with the sword?

GROUPIES 1, 2, 3  
*(Check cameras, then look around nervously.)*

BOOK MAN  
Walkabout. Due back any minute.

GROUPIE 4  
Are you lying?

BOOK MAN  
Would you believe me if I said, "Yes?"

GROUPIES 1, 2, 3  
*(Clutching Tokens like protective Talismans.)*  
The sword, the sword... Where's the sword...?

GROUPIE 4  
We'll let you off. But show your face near the Dragon...

BOOK MAN  
I stand warned.

GROUPIE 4  
*(Takes KHRONOS' picture.)*  
You were nice. I like you. We won't Tell about you yet. But if you keep hangin' about with Dragon Hogs...

KHRONOS  
I'll bear that in Mind.

GROUPIE 4

Right. See that you do.

GROUPIES All

*(Exit warily towards Ecclesia, still looking nervously about, Talisman Tokens raised to ward off the Unseen sword.)*

*Exeunt GROUPIES*

KHRONOS

What on Earth was that?

BOOK MAN

Delusion Incarnate.

KHRONOS

An aspect of the Intangible?

BOOK MAN

Unfortunately, no. But a Richer Feeding Ground you'll ne'er find.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Are you all right?

BOOK MAN

I'm all right.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Hugs BOOK MAN.)*

Liar.

BOOK MAN

I'm all right.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Looks at BOOK MAN intently, then lets go.)*

There's a Musician coming.

BOOK MAN

Oh, I like those. I could use a lively song. How far is it?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Smiles.)*

Not far.



**Act II**

**Scene v**

A Musician? KHRONOS

A Musician. BOOK MAN

*Enter and Exeunt TRAVELER*

I don't Hear it. BOOK MAN

Patience... CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*Enter and Exeunt TRAVELER*

We like Musicians, then? KHRONOS

Very much so. They create Ripples— BOOK MAN

Ripples... CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

—everywhere. In the wake of their Passing. Ripples in the Hearts of Men. In the Minds of Dragons. BOOK MAN

Dragons... CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Dragons? Wait, are you— KHRONOS

*Enter MUSICIAN, traveling away from Ecclesia, conspicuously devoid of Dragon Merchandise. Carries a Lute.*

Ah! Hear we are! A Musician! CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*Enter and Exeunt TRAVELER*

BOOK MAN

The Musician! Well met, Sir! Well met!

MUSICIAN

Good day, Sirs!

KHRONOS

Good day.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Approaches and begins examining MUSICIAN with interest.)*

MUSICIAN

*(Examines CREATURE OF FEW WORDS' examining.)*

BOOK MAN

Is that a Lute you're carrying?

MUSICIAN

Is that a Book you're carrying?

BOOK MAN

Indeed 'tis.

MUSICIAN

And so is this. And many deeds have I performed on't.

BOOK MAN

Perhaps you'll tarry a span, perform for us?

MUSICIAN

Such unplanned tarrance would normally please me no end, but sadly...

*(Takes Lute off shoulder, revealing that it lacks strings.)*

KHRONOS

That Lute has no strings...

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Examines Lute.)*

Poor creature...

BOOK MAN

Travesty. What prompted this acoustical poverty?

MUSICIAN

A Crow, I'm afraid.

KHRONOS

A Crow?!

MUSICIAN

Aye. A whole Murder of Feathered Scavengers.

BOOK MAN

Why?

MUSICIAN

Verily, I don't know. Usually my Muse staves the Vult'rous flock with a Happy tale of gallant Knights vanquishing Evil Dragons. An unspoken Toll of passage, if you will. But not this day. This day it's Hateful Caw stayed my song and rained Discordant scorn upon my subject. "Dragons are Light, and Knights Death," quoth the infuriate fiend, "Your Song is Wrong, to Sing such tragedy with Happy Airs. Hold you in Silence 'til your Muse Sings True." So saying, it plucked the Sweet Strings from my Love's Heart and left me Bereft upon the Road to consider my Trespass.

BOOK MAN

And did you? Consider thus?

MUSICIAN

With a full Heart. For such was the untoward sincerity of its black Eye, that the weight of Fate's Hand pressed hard upon my Soul, bidding me delve without delay into the deepest depths of Dark night.

KHRONOS

Delving? I'm sorry. Being a common Man, unversed in the Arts, I'm afraid the tripping dexterity of your Musical tongue is such that its meaning escapes me.

MUSICIAN

*(Laughs.)*

My apologies, Common Man—

KHRONOS

Khronos.

MUSICIAN

My apologies, Khronos. I've written a Song.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

A Song...!

BOOK MAN

A Song? Of Dark night?

MUSICIAN

Aye. 'When Darkness Falls' I've titled it.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Passionately intent.)*

Show me...!

MUSICIAN

*(Considers CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Watches MUSICIAN intently.)*

MUSICIAN

As you wish.

*(Removes scroll case from belt, opens, and removes a paper. Gives it to CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Takes paper with reverence and reads.)*

BOOK MAN

*(Reads over Creature of Few Word's shoulder.)*

Oh, my...

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

...Beautiful! So beautiful!

MUSICIAN

You think so?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

May I copy this?

MUSICIAN

*(Considers CREATURE OF FEW WORDS intently.)*

...Yes. Yes, you may.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Kisses MUSICIAN on cheek.)*

Thank you.

*(Gives paper to BOOK MAN.)*

Copy this. Every word. Every note. Be perfect.

BOOK MAN

Am I ever not?

BOOK MAN

*(Gets out Quill and Ink and proceeds to copy Song onto a blank page in the back of the Book.)*

KHRONOS

That's very generous. Do you always spread Music thus?

MUSICIAN

If occasion warrants, and Muse suggests. But generally... No.

KHRONOS

Oh. Then why...?

MUSICIAN

Muse suggests.

KHRONOS

I see. What brings you to this spot?

MUSICIAN

Ah! I Quest to meet the Art Dragon, Kalliper.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Kalliper.

*(Goes to MUSICIAN, kisses other cheek, then returns to BOOK MAN.)*

MUSICIAN

...Why?

KHRONOS

Unknown. But the Art Dragon?

MUSICIAN

Yes! I wish to play Music and perform for it. With it, if possible. Oh, the Stories we could tell. Together. Performing on One's own is wonderful, Spiritually fulfilling, but there's a pleasure found in making Art with Others that no solitary triumph or individual glory can replace. Growing's hard without it.

KHRONOS

I don't know much about Art, but in my experience, meaningful conversation is difficult to come by without Others.

MUSICIAN

Oh, Sir. Music and Art are conversation. A Different sort of conversation, but conversation, nonetheless.

KHRONOS

I thought as much... But, if it's a Dragon you seek, why turn your back to Eclesia?  
Everyone hies thusly to see it.

MUSICIAN

It's not there.

KHRONOS

What?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Make two.

*(Leafs thru Book. Stops at a page near the front.)*

And this...

BOOK MAN

As you wish.

*(Makes a second copy of Song. Copies other page.)*

MUSICIAN

Aye. Or nay, rather. Not yet arrived. Or departed. I hail from Beyond, Eclesia, you see.  
Since it's not passed that way, it must still Approach. And of its Choices for  
Approaching, this road seemed most promising.

KHRONOS

Truly? What about it suggested so? It's no different from other Roads.

MUSICIAN

Unwhisper'd secrets...

KHRONOS

What?

MUSICIAN

On the surface it looked commonplace, yet it pulled me to turn thusly...

KHRONOS

The Intangible...

MUSICIAN

What? My apologies. The traffic looked a shade deeper than others. An overabundance  
of Crows, perhaps. And Crows follow Dragons...

KHRONOS

Follow the Crows, find the Dragon. Sounds logical.

MUSICIAN

Yet Music is seldom logical. And the Murder passed me o'er...

KHRONOS

Well, I've not passed the Creature myself, but I walk purposely, and with steady pace. It may yet be behind me.

MUSICIAN

Have you waited long?

KHRONOS

Not overly so, but long enough. The Murder passed us o'er, too.

MUSICIAN

Oh? I'm sorry. What did it take?

KHRONOS

Nothing.

MUSICIAN

Nothing?

KHRONOS

Save some Peace of Mind.

MUSICIAN

But—

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Gives other paper to MUSICIAN.)*

Here. An exchange.

MUSICIAN

Ah, you didn't have to...

*(Reads paper.)*

Oh... Beautiful... This? You...?

BOOK MAN

Yes.

MUSICIAN

I can Hear it already...

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

I know.

MUSICIAN

I'm Enraptured...

*(Engrossed with paper.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Watches MUSICIAN intently.)*

I'm Entranced...

KHRONOS

And I'm entirely confused. But I'm getting used to it.

BOOK MAN

Quite enjoyable, is it not?

KHRONOS

...?



## Act II

### Scene vi

*Enter APPOLONIUS*

*(APPOLONIUS is traveling towards Ecclesia, also conspicuously devoid of Dragon merchandise. Drifts erratically along the road, apparently attracted and repelled by an assortment of extremely interesting visible and invisible objects.)*

BOOK MAN and KHRONOS  
*(Notice APPOLONIUS and watch.)*

KHRONOS  
This is not helping my confusion...

BOOK MAN  
I don't think that's its Intent.

KHRONOS  
Oh, there's an Intent, is there?

BOOK MAN  
Not sure yet...

APPOLONIUS  
*(Makes it almost off stage before noticing everyone.)*  
Ah! Merry TRAVELERS! Have you seen the Dragon? I'm looking for it, you See—  
AH!!!

*(Beelines for BOOK MAN.)*  
That Book's Huge! A Mammothly Colossal Tome!  
*(Invades BOOK MAN's personal space and begins examining Book.)*

BOOK MAN  
*(Tolerates Invasion uncertainly.)*

APPOLONIUS  
What's in it? I must know!

BOOK MAN  
Well—

KHRONOS  
Why?

APPOLONIUS  
Beg y' Pardon?

KHRONOS  
Why must you know?

APPOLONIUS  
Aren't you curious?

KHRONOS  
Well. Yes, but—

APPOLONIUS  
There you are!

KHRONOS  
Shouldn't you at least introduce yourself?

APPOLONIUS  
...Oh, most Tragical Oversight! My Humblest Apologies!  
*(Backs off and bows in utter sincerity.)*

I am APPOLONIUS!  
*(Reinvades.)*

Now, about this Book...?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS  
*(Notices APPOLONIUS during Bow.)*

BOOK MAN  
Well, as I was—

APPOLONIUS  
*(Pries Book open, knocking BOOK MAN off balance slightly.)*  
Oh! Stories! Stories, and More Stories! I want One! Where'd you get it?!

KHRONOS  
Now, Appolonius! You can't just—

APPOLONIUS  
*(Utterly Crestfallen.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS  
You Can...  
*(Closes Book, and gently pulls APPOLONIUS away.)*  
But there is Etiquette.

APPOLONIUS

*(Looks utterly mortified and chastised.)*

My Apologies.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Why do you Seek Dragons, Appolonius?

APPOLONIUS

Not Dragons. One Dragon. Just One. Kalliper!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Kalliper.

*(Touches APPOLONIUS's cheek approvingly.)*

APPOLONIUS

Yes. Kalliper.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Why?

APPOLONIUS

I want...

*(Profoundly moved.)*

I want to Learn from It.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

You want to Learn?

APPOLONIUS

Yes. From Kalliper.

*(Moved to silent Tears.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Shhhh... Show me.

APPOLONIUS

Show you...?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Yes. Show me who you are.

APPOLONIUS

Ahhhhh... As you wish.

KHRONOS

How does One go about that?

BOOK MAN

Shhh... Watch and Learn.

KHRONOS

My Eternal Pastime.

BOOK MAN

A worthwhile one.

APPOLONIUS

Look!

*(Transfixed by invisible flying object.)*

A Butterfly!

*(Begins chasing butterfly across stage.)*

MUSICIAN

*(Looks up from paper, finally noticing APPOLONIUS. Watches intently.)*

KHRONOS

Is there a butterfly? I don't see a butterfly.

BOOK MAN

Can all butterflies be Seen?

MUSICIAN

All but the Unseen ones...

KHRONOS

...

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

No, I See a butterfly! An exquisite Twirler with pastel wings of ephemeral lavender, periwinkle, and gold.

*(Joins APPOLONIUS chasing butterfly.)*

KHRONOS

I've yet to see a butterfly.

BOOK MAN

Look harder, KHRONOS. Look here.

*(Touches chest.)*

MUSICIAN

They're very good...

*(Entranced.)*

I could Play that butterfly, if I had Strings. I can Hear it. Clear as Crystal day...

KHRONOS

The Intangible?

*(Touches chest.)*

An Intangible butterfly?

BOOK MAN

Yes.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

And Look! A Bird! There, upon the Hill!

APPOLONIUS

I See it! A big, beautiful Bird of regal bearing and noble stature. Such a large Bird, to be Seen from so far away. And such Majestic Plumage!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Exchanges a Look with BOOK MAN.)*

BOOK MAN

*(Nods and opens Book. Begins copying a page near the middle.)*

APPOLONIUS

A Rainbow Bird spreading Waterfalls of color every time it flourishes its Wings. Ahhhhh! To stand upon that Hill and Bask in its Presence!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Returns original paper to MUSICIAN. Whispers to MUSICIAN.)*

MUSICIAN

*(Nods excitedly and pulls out Lute, as if to play.)*

APPOLONIUS

Hark! It turns and Looks at Me! It Sees Me...!

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Whispers to BOOK MAN.)*

BOOK MAN

*(Nods and continues copying.)*

APPOLONIUS

My Life is Complete.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Touches KHRONOS' chest.)*

You have Questions, yet. Watch and Listen.

KHRONOS

An Intangible Bird?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Perhaps...

*(Gives second copy of MUSICIAN's paper to APPOLONIUS.)*

Hear. We're doing this. Now.

APPOLONIUS

What? But the Bird...?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

This...

APPOLONIUS

*(Reads paper intently.)*

Oh. Oh, yes! Yes... Tell me.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS and APPOLONIUS

*(Whisper intently for a few moments.)*

APPOLONIUS

Here! Watch Here!

*(Puts KHRONOS and BOOK MAN in an 'Audience' spot.)*

KHRONOS and BOOK MAN

*(Sit where requested. BOOK MAN finishes copying.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Hark! We begin!

*(CREATURE OF FEW WORDS, MUSICIAN, and APPOLONIUS bow and take places.)*

MUSICIAN

This piece is entitled, '**When Darkness Falls**'

*(Plays upon Stringless Lute and begins Dramatic recitation while CREATURE OF FEW WORDS and APPOLONIUS perform a Pantomime.)*

*(APPOLONIUS: Plays part of Gallant Knight)*

*(CREATURE OF FEW WORDS: Plays part of Dragon/Sword)*

Scarce had the Sun ris'n o'er the lofty cliff,  
Spilling its light across the tum'ltous Sea,  
When gallant Knight, encharg'd by tariff,  
Did mount the crag where vild'st Dragon Be;

(Continued-MUSICIAN)

The dew did dream like diamonds in the grass  
As with 'ware step Knight quietly approached,  
To spy the Beast, sprawled out like bonny lass  
Within the throes of Morpheus enpoached;

Enheartened thus at so easy a kill,  
Good Knight, with smile, surveyed impotent prey  
And raised up Sword, intending quick to spill  
A Heart's warm blood, and blessen thus the day;

Sharp bit the wind as Lethal Blade did rise,  
Then Darkened cloud as Silent Steel bore down,  
Yet at the last a gleaming Light did prise  
And sweep aside, turning Knight's smile to frown;

The Dragon's Sword was Bright as shatter'd glass  
And fast as Hermes' wings to stop each blow,  
With massive Will, the Knight was forced to pass  
Unto the brink, high o'er Sea's foaming Woe;

They teetered thus, a mile o'er Neptune's Cove  
As storming gales rose violently around,  
Then Lo! Fate's blinding flash Fell Sharp and Dove,  
Jove's Lightning smiting 'part asunder'd ground;

With horrid cry, the Dragon leapt in Fear,  
Grasping at air where once its Sword was Seen,  
With grievous wail, it spun upon a Tear  
And found the Knight, Blade Sharp and waiting Keen;

*(CREATURE OF FEW WORDS: After dying as Dragon, becomes Sword.)*  
*(APPOLONIUS: Becomes Dead Dragon as Sword climbs rocks.)*

Long hours pass'd by; Slowly the Clouds did part,  
As painful moved a Sword upon the rocks,  
To climb a cliff and find its Charge's Heart  
Run thru with iron 'midst once unbloodied locks;

Long lay the Sword upon beloved breast,  
Wishing for Death that failed to venture near,  
Until a Crow alighted 'pon its chest,  
And lifted Wings, the Shadows to Revere;

*(Sound and Lighting: Dim Echo of fluttering shadows and murder cawing softly permeates theater as the CROW alights and lifts wings.)*

(Continued-MUSICIAN)

Ne'er can a Sword exist without its Charge;  
When Love is Dead, naught stays Despair's Sharp claws.

*(Sound and Lighting: Dim Echo of fluttering shadows and murder cawing fades as MUSICIAN finishes soundless playing.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS and APPOLONIUS

*(Revive and join MUSICIAN.)*

*(CREATURE OF FEW WORDS, APPOLONIUS, and MUSICIAN bow.)*

BOOK MAN and KHRONOS

*(Applaud.)*

BOOK MAN

*(Crying.)*

KHRONOS

That was... Amazing.

APPOLONIUS

*(Hugs CREATURE OF FEW WORDS and MUSICIAN.)*

I Love you both!

MUSICIAN

You're Welcome.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Breaks loose and goes to BOOK MAN.)*

BOOK MAN

*(Gives copy to CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

Must I always cry to please you?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Kisses BOOK MAN's cheek.)*

Only if moved to it.

BOOK MAN

Am I ever UnMoved?

KHRONOS

I'm surprised. You didn't strike me as the Moving sort.



BOOK MAN

Would I carry this excessive burthen Otherwise? Oh, Khronos. I Live for the Moving.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Gives paper to APPOLONIUS.)*

Learn this. Share it.

APPOLONIUS

Whom with?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Everyone. Anyone.

MUSICIAN

Or No One.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Them too.

APPOLONIUS

*(Reads paper.)*

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

My Gratitude...

*(Kisses MUSICIAN's cheek as MUSICIAN puts away Lute.)*

MUSICIAN

And Mine.

*(Takes Creature of Few Word's hand and kisses it.)*

Along with my fondest wish to Play with you again, Someday.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Offers MUSICIAN Infamous penny.)*

MUSICIAN

Oh, no Fee. I'm Enamored quite.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Offers again.)*

BOOK MAN

Please, we don't want it. We've failed at giving it away twice.

MUSICIAN

Truly? Well, let it not be said I ever refused the price of Strings.

*(Takes penny.)*

(Continued-MUSICIAN)

My Thanks.

BOOK MAN

You're Most Welcome. But Strings cost more than Pennies...

*(Rummages in pouch and pulls out a Gold coin. Gives to MUSICIAN.)*

Name one for the Dragon.

MUSICIAN

This? But, I... Sir—

BOOK MAN

We would Hear your Playing, next time.

MUSICIAN

*(Bows deeply.)*

And so you shall.

*(Begins to leave.)*

APPOLONIUS

Brilliant! Astonishing! Moving! Inspiring!

*(Entranced with paper.)*

MUSICIAN

*(Stops, watching APPOLONIUS.)*

APPOLONIUS

Yet so Sad.

*(Moved to Tears.)*

It must be Done Properly. Perfectly.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Watching intently.)*

APPOLONIUS

So Beautiful. I'll do it.

*(Hugs CREATURE OF FEW WORDS.)*

I will. I'll Do it.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

I know...

APPOLONIUS

I'll be Perfect...

*(Transfixed by paper, Exits towards Ecclesia without looking up.)*

So beautiful...

*Exeunt APPOLONIUS.*

MUSICIAN

That One could be Great one day.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

I know...

MUSICIAN

...With the right Teachers.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Yes.

MUSICIAN

I...

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Shhhh... Next time.

MUSICIAN

*(Frowns and turns away.)*

*Exeunt MUSICIAN*

**Act II**

**Scene vii**

BOOK MAN

Did you Feel it?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Throughout the Entirety of my Being...

KHRONOS

Feel what?

BOOK MAN

Fate's Web, weaving its Strings amongst our Lives. Drawing together whilst pulling apart, Spreading Paths before our Wand'ring Feet.

KHRONOS

The Intangible.

BOOK MAN

Aye... We'll be Seeing those Two again.

KHRONOS

Will we?

BOOK MAN

Sooner rather than later, I imagine.

KHRONOS

How can you be Sure?

BOOK MAN

A Book Binder's Instinct.

KHRONOS

Really? Not the Look of Gratitude and Impending Obligation to Repay, which your much disdainéd Gold for Strings produced?

BOOK MAN

Ugh. It's not Gold, I disdain. It's the myopically destructive pursuit thereof.

KHRONOS

And I dare say Appolonius will want to show our Friend what he does with that paper. It's only natural, considering the paper's source.

BOOK MAN

Killjoy. Would you take the Magic from everything?

KHRONOS

Common Sense. And no. I would take Magic from where there's not Magic, thus opening wide the eyes of onlookers that they might See Crows for what they are and Hear Lies for what they are, that thereby no Man may be taken advantage of for what they wish to See by those who'd construct Falsities to Beguile them. So stripping False Magic from the World, I would thus lay the Paths of Fate unbarred, that the Intangible's True Touch might be Felt and Seen and Heard, and Whatever, without hindrance by the confusing miasma of Lies and Doubt, which currently entangles it. For so I feel it entangled within my breast, despite yours and your companion's Heartfelt Belief. Freeing it thus from the ensnaring Fear of Preying... I do believe Learning its Practice will be much easier.

BOOK MAN

You are a Turtle, Sir, whose Tortosiean Wisdom far exceeds the creeping Ocean of your breath. You'll age and die, ere you've shared a quarter of it.

KHRONOS

Better to Share a quarter than spend a life chasing Pennies.

BOOK MAN

How so?

KHRONOS

Were I to follow as Majority do, I'd wear Mine Eyes on the ground and find my purse empty when I finally looked upon it. For so Appears the current Murd'rous State of the World, that to Not be Preyed Upon I must be constantly on Guard. A most wearisome Prospect, indeed.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

It will all work out.

BOOK MAN

It's disillusioning, I know. Seeing the Extent of the Darkness. But the Light is just as Bright, though harder to See sometimes. And they can be One and the Same.

KHRONOS

...Is that what the Song was about? The transformation of Light to Darkness? It was terribly Sad.

BOOK MAN

Yet the Reverse can be equally Joyous.

KHRONOS

It goes both ways?

BOOK MAN

It can, yes.

KHRONOS

That's Heartening, I suppose... I can't go back, you know. To Walking with closed eyes, ignoring the Unseen. Seeing People where Crows land, and blank pages where Symphonies Play. What have you done to me?

BOOK MAN

Nothing you didn't ask for.

KHRONOS

Ahhh... I know. I asked to Learn.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Do you regret?

KHRONOS

No. Not really... I'd rather Know what I miss than walk in willful ignorance. But it's going to be Hard maintaining a Cheery Outlook after this.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Practical Khronos... You'll find a Way.

KHRONOS

Such Certainty and Faith.

BOOK MAN

An Eternal Fount.

KHRONOS

What are you?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Do you really wish to know?

KHRONOS

Wish? ...Yes, I think. But need? ...No. I don't need that.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Kisses KHRONOS' cheek.)*

Practical Khronos... Beautiful, Wise Tortoise. You'll Know, one day.

KHRONOS

Perhaps...

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

You Will.

KHRONOS

That may be. But for now, it's Time I was on my Way. Thanks to your Welcome Companionship, my Mind is well Nourished, and my Boots well rested. I've much to think upon, and I do my best Thinking while Walking.

BOOK MAN

Then by all means, Khronos, Walk on. With Fate's blessing and a bit of Luck our Paths will cross again.

KHRONOS

*(Shakes BOOK MAN's free hand.)*

I would enjoy that immensely.

BOOK MAN

Fare thee well.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Waves.)*

KHRONOS

And you. Ecclesia awaits.

*(Aside)*

I'll be having a word with their permit offices.

*(Begins to leave.)*

*Enter APPOLONIUS*

*(APPOLONIUS comes from direction of Ecclesia this time.)*

*(KHRONOS and APPOLONIUS pause, acknowledging each other.*

*APPOLONIUS, in apparent distress, looks to KHRONOS pleadingly. KHRONOS frowns, then steps aside, gesturing for APPOLONIUS to approach BOOK MAN and CREATURE OF FEW WORDS. KHRONOS watches APPOLONIUS go by for a moment before continuing on his way.)*

*Exeunt KHRONOS*

APPOLONIUS

*(Stops before BOOK MAN and CREATURE OF FEW WORDS, Utterly Stricken.)*

BOOK MAN

What's the matter?

*Enter GUARDIAN*

*(GUARDIAN also enters from Ecclesia. Approaches quietly while APPOLONIUS is speaking.)*

APPOLONIUS

*(Crying.)*

There was no Dragon in Ecclesia. The Crowds were Massive, waiting. No Where or When. I asked, but None Knew. So I... I told them. About the Bird. And the Butterflies. And the Sword and the Crow. And this—

*(Holds up paper)*

—Even though it's not ready. Not even Close, barely memorized, even. I Told it All, and More. And they hailed me with the Dragon's name. Lauding my Brilliance with wild applause and undeserved Esteem. But I am no such thing. I am an Actor. I could never be a Dragon. But you could. It is you, isn't it?

*(Holding out paper.)*

This is yours.

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

Brave creature, finding in their Heart the courage to ask.

APPOLONIUS

Is it you?

CREATURE OF FEW WORDS

*(Removes mask, revealing features of a Dragon. Blue and Gold.)*

APPOLONIUS

Kalliper!

*(Weeping, embraces CREATURE OF FEW WORDS/KALLIPER)*

I'm so sorry I didn't recognize you!

KALLIPER

Hush... You Know me now.

APPOLONIUS

Yes, yes I do. And I'll never forget. Thank you so much for Performing with me.

GUARDIAN

*(Approaches Kalliper and kneels, offering Sword.)*



KALLIPER

*(Releases APPOLONIUS, Surveying GUARDIAN.)*

Such obeisance is unnecessary.

*(Looks to BOOK MAN.)*

I need no Sword.

GUARDIAN

As said when last we Spoke, I am a Shield.

KALLIPER

*(Studies GUARDIAN. Accepts Sword.)*

Then Guard well, Worthy Shield.

*(Returns blade to GUARDIAN.)*

*Enter MUSICIAN*

*(MUSICIAN is heading towards Ecclesia this time. Holds Lute, conspicuously strung with new Strings.)*

GUARDIAN

*(Sheaths Sword, taking up an alert, watchful position.)*

MUSICIAN

You're Kalliper...

KALLIPER

*(Smiles.)*

Yes.

MUSICIAN

I Knew it.

APPOLONIUS

Will you tell me a story?

KALLIPER

*(Laughs)*

Of course...

BOOK MAN

*(Gets out Quill and Ink, opening Book to a page in the back. Prepares to write.)*

I Love Stories...

## Epilogue

*(KALLIPER steps forward, holding Mask, addressing Audience as well as Actors.)*

KALLIPER

A Dragon I Stand; My Mask thus comes off,  
I Look at the World and See where it's Lost,  
To shine a bright Path, my Pride do I doff  
And bow to my Art, my Life at Life's Cost;  
A Dragon I Stand; My Heart bared for Tears,  
To share the Joy that Lights within my Care,  
Illuminating thus, Lost Hopes and Fears,  
Whilst Learning soft, the broken Dreams of Ne'er;  
Ne'er can I Stand and Watch as Ne'er doth Play;  
A Dragon Stands here; This World is my Stage,  
Mine Audience Thou, so please, with Me Stay;  
Look not with Eyes, but Hear mine Art to Gauge;  
I'm not the only Dragon that there Be;  
Open thy Heart and See how Dragons See.

*Exeunt All*

***Finis***