

THE BERSERKER OF OZ

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ABSTRACT

Beginning with an introduction to dramatic works and technical theatre, my Sufficiency course work concluded with an advanced analysis of the defining works of modern drama. To augment the drama courses, I have experienced several theatrical performances from both the audience, the stage and backstage. I wrote *The Berserker of Oz* by combining my creativity with my theatrical experiences. Parody, farce, absurdism. No comedic stone is left unturned in this original dramatic work.

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INTRODUCTION

There are two types of stories. A hero goes on a quest, or a stranger comes to town. Everything boils down to one of those two plots. The Berserker of Oz is the ultimate quest narrative. Ultimate in that while it contains a quest, multiple quests in fact, it also holds action, suspense, drama, comedy, romance, tragedy, noble heroes, dastardly villains, charming sidekicks, ugly toadies, a crushing defeat and a happy ending. There is something for everyone.

The play was written over the course of twenty years. A long time for a simple plot? Well, yes and no. First came the desire to write, then the desire to write a play. From there vague details began to emerge. A quest narrative. The desire for true love. The search for home. Minor details in and of themselves, but combined with a quirky sense of humor and very little self restraint a vision arose in my mind. After kicking the idea around for some years, I decided to pursue a course of study that would better prepare me to write this play. And so it began, and by the end I had a small toolbox with which to hang substance upon the frame of an idea that has been building since birth.

My inspiration for the content play itself came from many sources. The Wizard of Oz provided much of the plot structure. Movies such as Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail, Mystery Science Theatre 3000, and Titanic provided jokes, gags and scenes. The banter of my friends fed a lot of the dialog. The overall creative process was controlled entirely by my brain. The inspiration to write the play itself has come from another thing entirely. The desire to write this play sprang from some innate desire to be funny. As long as I can remember I've wanted to be funny. And what's more I have been funny, at least according to people I know.

The desire to be funny, and the apparent ability to achieve it, has driven me to express myself in new ways. And one of those ways is this dramatic work. It's my hope that as you begin a journey with the heroine, you'll enjoy not only the destination, but the scenery along the way.

THE BERSERKER OF OZ

Cast of Characters

Deidra

Kid 1

Kid 2

The Village Idiot

The Duct Tape Man

The Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker

Oarslave 1 / Viking Voice 1

Oarslave 2 / Viking Voice 2

Taskmaster / Viking Voice 3

Erik / Viking Voice 4

ACT ONE

(The lights come up on a peaceful park setting. A path wanders down from up stage right to down stage left where it ends at the edge of a lake. Deidra enters from upstage right, walks a little ways into the park, and then turns and looks off stage at the place she entered.)

Deidra:

Come here, Stay. It's time to go out for a walk. The sun is shining, the air is clear. No doubt birds would be singing if DDT from the sixties and seventies hadn't weakened all the bird eggs, wiping out the local population of sparrows and skylarks. *(Pause)* COME HERE STAY! Oh honestly... *(She walks off stage, coming back on with a small dog in her arms.)* Every time I try and get you some exercise it's the same routine. You start to come but then you just stop and sit down. I always have to drag you out of the house. And once you get out you love it and I have to go through the same drill to get you back in the house. I just don't understand it at all Stay. *(Deidra starts walking downstage left)* The park is always so lovely in the spring, don't you think so Stay? I love to wander among the willow trees and sit by the shore of the lake. It's always so peaceful. *(Deidra sits down by the edge of the lake. She places Stay on the ground next to her.)* Now don't go running off. I hate it when you chase the poor squirrels and ducks. *(Deidra picks a flower and starts pulling off the petals off, one by one.)*

He loves me, he loves me not.
He loves me, he loves me not.
He loves me, he loves me not.
He loves me, he loves me not.
He loves me!

(Deidra holds up the flower with only one petal left.) Look at this Stay! He loves me! Oh, I knew he would! He just had to love me! Sigh, if only I had a "he". *(Deidra throws the flower away disgustedly.)* It's so frustrating. All of my friends are dating. I'm the only girl in the senior class that can't seem to find anyone. Mother is always trying to push boys on me, but none are my type. 'What about that Symonds boy, he's a smart one.' What Mother doesn't know is that he's a total geek. He's into computers and plans on going to an engineering school. Definitely not my type. And then she says, 'how about Mrs. Antrosio's son, he's very nice.' Please, he's a total wuss. I need a man, not a boy. Someone who's strong and firm and not afraid to fight for me. But also someone who's sensitive and not afraid of his emotions. I need some tall, blue-eyed exotic foreigner. That's what I need. I won't be happy with someone local, that's for sure.

(Suddenly she looks up at the sky, as the stage starts to darken.) Why Stay, look at the weather. It's acting so strange. It's only three in the afternoon and it's getting dark already. And the clouds, they are moving in so fast. Looks like thunder and lightning for sure. *(Stage darkens considerably, thunder sounds and lots of lightening.)* We need to get home right now Stay! *(Deidra picks up Stay and starts running for upstage right. Halfway there a foam bolt of lightning falls from the sky towards Deidra. She turns and sees it right before it strikes her. As it hits Deidra the stage lights flash incredibly bright and go straight to black.)*

(Lights up. Deidra is standing where she was when the lightning struck her. Part of her hair and clothing is singed. The lake is gone and a sign points off stage right saying, "Munchkin Land, Daycare Center".)

Deidra:

Oh, my head. Stay, are you alright? I'm glad you're not hurt. I ache all over. *(Pause)* What is this place? This isn't the park by our house. Oh look, a sign. Maybe this will help. Hmmm, 'Munchkin Land, Daycare Center.' I don't know where I am, and I don't know where to go, but I certainly know where not to go. As you well know, Stay, I dislike children, munchkin or otherwise. No doubt 'Munchkin Land' is full of snotty nosed, gross disgusting brats...with cooties. *(As Deidra stands by the sign, two kids run in. One is holding a huge lollipop.)*

Kid 2:

Hey, wait up!

Kid 1:

Hahahaha, you're too slow. Now the lollipop's all mine.

Kid 2:

(He wipes his runny nose on his sleeve.) That's not fair! Mom told us to share the lollipop. So let me have some! *(Kid 2 grabs for the treat, but Kid 1 dances away.)*

Kid 1:

Haha, can't catch me! You're too slow!

Kid 2:

You're a stupid head.

Kid 1:

Booger brain!

Kid 2:

Ugly face!

Kid 1:

Nananananana, can't catch me! *(Kid 1 runs off towards the daycare center.)*

Kid 2:

Hey! Wait up! *(Kid 2 runs after Kid 1.)*

Deidra:

See what I mean Stay? Little kids are horrid things. If I get married I'm never having kids, no way no how. Let's get as far away from that place as possible. I'd like you get home before Friends is on. *(Deidra and Stay stroll off down the path, stage left.)*

(Deidra enters stage right. She and Stay are now in a lightly wooded area. Up stage left, the Village idiot hangs by his legs from a tree.)

Deidra:

This is a charming little place. A beautiful field, nice trees to provide shade and a gentle breeze. And not a soul around to disturb the peace.

Village Idiot:

HELP!

Deidra:

Oh bother.

Village Idiot:

HELP!

Deidra:

Sounds like someone needs help. I'd better check it out. *(Pause)* But I don't see anyone here. Just the trees and the grass and the nice gentle breeze. And an ugly sack hanging from that tree over there, but no one in need of assistance.

Village Idiot:

I am the ugly sack!

Deidra:

Really? Interesting. In my experience, ugly sacks don't usually call for help. Come to think of it, ugly sacks don't say much at all. They make terrible conversation.

Village Idiot:

HELP!

Deidra:

You can stop shouting. I can hear you.

Village Idiot:

Oh right. *(Pause)* So, are you going to help me out here, or what?

Deidra:

(Inspecting him further.) Oh I see. You aren't a sack at all. You're a man. An oddly dressed man. What are you doing in this neck of the woods?

Village Idiot:

Just hanging around. And yourself, what are you doing out here? You've certainly taken the road less traveled. I should know. You're the first person to come by this tree since I've been here.

Deidra:

How long have you been like that?

Village Idiot:

I'm not really sure. As they say, 'time flies when you're having fun.'

Deidra:

You've been having fun hanging there?

Village Idiot:

No of course not.

Deidra:

Oh. Why are you up there then?

Village Idiot:

I'll tell you the whole story if you help me down.

(Deidra sets Stay on the ground and frees the Village Idiot. He collapses to the ground and then picks himself up.)

That's much better. Oh, a doggie. Hello nice doggie. Is he yours?

Deidra:

Yes.

Village Idiot:

What's his name?

Deidra:

Stay.

Village Idiot:

I'm not going anywhere.

Deidra:

What?

Village Idiot:

You told me to stay.

Deidra:

No I didn't.

Village Idiot:

Yes you did. I asked you what your dog's name was and you said stay.

Deidra:

Of course.

Village Idiot:

So why did you want me to stay?

Deidra:

I didn't.

Village Idiot:

I'm horribly confused. Which really isn't too surprising I guess.

Deidra:

Why isn't it surprising?

Village Idiot:

To answer that question I'm going to tell you my history. Please, sit down. *(They both sit by the tree.)* First, I must introduce myself. I am a Village Idiot.

Deidra:

Really? I suppose that would explain the mismatched clothes, the fact that your pants are backwards and the two left shoes on your feet.

Village Idiot:

In fact, I come from a long line of Village Idiots. The position is handed down from father to son, and has been done so for generations.

Deidra:

How do Village Idiots have children? I imagine that women wanting to marry idiots are very short in supply. Seems like it would be tough to find a wife.

Village Idiot:

It is, although it has been known to happen every so often. Mostly though, the Village Idiot happens to be in the right place at the right time and some poor, unfortunate farmer's daughter happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and the next thing you know the Village Idiot has a son, and the farmer's daughter is a laughing stock. Once the son reaches the age of eight, he goes into a rigorous training program.

Deidra:

It takes a lot of training to be an idiot? Doesn't seem too hard to me. I always thought you were born with it.

Village Idiot:

Well, some people are born with the knack, but it takes dedication and training to be a really great idiot. It's a position that requires continual learning and practice. So I carry around this handy reference guide with me everywhere I go.

(The Village Idiot pulls out a book titled "The Idiots Guide to being an Idiot") It's saved my neck a few times let me tell you. Anyway, once the Idiot-in-Training completes the course at age fifteen, the father starts doing stupider and stupider things until he gets killed. Then the son takes over.

Deidra:

That's awful!

Village Idiot:

I know it must seem that way to an outsider, but we idiots provide a very useful service to our villages.

Deidra:

Being stupid and doing dumb things is a useful service?

Village Idiot:

No, no. That's not it at all. I admit that our actions may be counter productive, but that's not the service we provide. We make excellent scapegoats! *(He beams proudly)*

Deidra:

Scapegoats?

Village Idiot:

Yes. We even admit whatever they accuse us of. Even if it wasn't our fault.

Deidra:

That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard! Words cannot express how idiotic that is!

Village Idiot:

Thank you.

Deidra:

So, how did you end up hanging from that tree?

Village Idiot:

Well, my father died when someone told him to take a long walk off of a short cliff.

Deidra:

Oh boy.

Village Idiot:

I know. Dad was the best the village ever had. I did my best to live up to his name. But I must have not done a very good job.

Deidra:

Why do you say that?

Village Idiot:

Well, I tried my hardest. I told everyone who would listen that you could grow chickens by planting chickens in the ground. No one believed me, so I stole farmer John's prize winning rooster and buried it in a field. It didn't work. I also shot my mouth off about politics, economics, and anything else that I didn't understand. Which was just about everything. Finally the town council told me to go hang myself. So I did. Believe you me; it took a long time to do it. But once I was hanging upside down I realized that they probably wanted me to hang by my neck, But that didn't make any sense because I hadn't trained my protégé yet. I don't even have a protégé. To be honest I'm not even quite sure what a protégé is.

Deidra:

Surely your village wants their idiot back.

Village Idiot:

I don't know. I think I must have screwed up pretty badly somewhere along the line because it's obvious that they tried to get rid of me. I bet they even found a new idiot. I've disgraced the family name and tarnished our reputation.

Deidra:

What will you do now?

Village Idiot:

I don't really know. Maybe find a nice girl and settle down. Say, you aren't looking for a romantic interest are you?

Deidra:

Ummm, no, sorry. I uh, already, mmmm, have one.

Village Idiot:

Oh well. Never hurts to ask. So what are you doing around here?

Deidra:

I'm trying to get home. I took Stay to the park but a storm suddenly popped out of nowhere and I tripped and fell while running home. The next thing I knew I was here. Wherever here is.

Village Idiot:

So now you're heading down this path? Can I come with you?

Deidra:

Umm, sure I guess. If you want.

Village Idiot:

I figured it would be something to do. Plus I might find a girl to settle down with. Are you sure you're taken?

Deidra:

Yes!

Village Idiot:

Just checking.

(They both get up)

Deidra:

You know what you need? You need a brain.

Village Idiot:

Do I? I've always felt that that would be nice to have. Sigh, if I only had a brain...

Deidra:

Well, let's keep our eyes out for one.

Village Idiot:

I can't take my eyes out.

Deidra:

What?!?

Village Idiot:

How can I keep my eyes out for a brain when I can't take them out at all?

Deidra:

Look, it's a figure of speech. Just keep your eyes peeled, ok?

Village Idiot:

Sure thing. I'll just need a knife.

Deidra:

What?!? Never mind. Just look around and we'll see if we can find a place that sells brains.

Village Idiot:

You think such a place exists?

Deidra:

I don't know, but if all else fails we can enroll you in the local community college. At least then you can get a degree.

Village Idiot:

Is that any good?

Deidra:

A college degree is just as good as a brain, and slightly more prestigious.

Village Idiot:

Ok, let's do it.

Deidra:

Let's go. *(They start heading down the path stage left. Deidra turns around.)* Stay!!! *(The Village Idiot stops.)*

Village Idiot:

But you said I could come with you.

Deidra:

Not you, my dog. *(Deidra goes and picks up Stay.)* Sometimes he is so impossible. Leave him in one place for too long and he never wants to leave. *(They exit stage left.)*

(Deidra and the Village Idiot enter a lightly wooded area. Off to one side of the stage there is a wood wall, like the backside of a cottage. Stuck to the wall face forward is the Duct Tape Man.)

Village Idiot:

...And that's how a sheep's bladder may be employed to prevent earthquakes. What do you think of my idea Deidra?

Deidra:

It's, uh, great. An excellent idea I'm sure.

Village Idiot:

Isn't it though? The simplicity, the ingenuity, the understated elegance of the whole plan is what impresses me. I mean, just think of it!

Deidra:

I'd rather not.

Village Idiot:

That's just because you don't truly understand the magnificence of it. Here, let me explain it to you again...

Deidra:

NO!!! I mean, no thank you. I'm not sure I could handle it right now.

Village Idiot:

Oh, ok. Another time then. *(Pause)* Did I ever mention my idea for a courier service using flying monkeys?

Deidra:

No, but I'm sure you are going to.

(Deidra and the Village Idiot pass by the Duct Tape Man without noticing him.)

Village Idiot:

Well you see, flying monkeys are very fast and can carry a lot of weight, so they'd be perfect to deliver letters and packages. I've even thought of a jingle. It goes like this. *(The Village Idiot starts humming the Flying Monkey Music from the Wizard of Oz.)*

Duct Tape Man:

(Interrupts the Village Idiot after only a few notes) Fine! Go on! Walk away! Just leave me here, stuck to this wall.

Deidra:

Oh my. I'm sorry, I didn't see you there. How can we help?

Duct Tape Man:

Hmmppppffff. I dare say you never pay any attention to anyone but yourself, you selfish brat.

Deidra:

Hey! *(Glares at the Duct Tape Man.)*

Village Idiot:

What are you doing stuck to that wall?

Duct Tape Man:

Oh you know, I'm just here for the fun of it.

Village Idiot:

Oh cool. Can I try it? *(He goes and presses himself against the wall like the Duct Tape Man.)*
Hmm, you know, now that I'm here, this doesn't seem quite so much fun. Are you sure it's fun?

Duct Tape Man:

No of course it's not fun you idiot! I was being sarcastic, if you couldn't tell. Which I guess you couldn't. You must be the biggest idiot I've ever met.

Village Idiot:

(To Deidra) See, I told you my family is good at our job. *(To Duct Tape Man)* Is there anything I can do to help?

Duct Tape Man:

Well gee, I don't know. Maybe you could PULL ME OFF THIS WALL!!!!

Village Idiot:

(In a very manly tone.) Right. Stand back Deidra, I'll handle this.

Duct Tape Man:

(In high squeaky voice) My hero.

(The Village Idiot puts his arms around the Duct Tape Man's waist and begins to pull. After much struggling he manages to pull the Duct Tape Man off the wall, but now he is stuck to the Duct Tape Man.)

Duct Tape Man:

Alright Freak. Enough with the touchy feely crap. You can let go now.

Village Idiot:

I'm stuck.

Deidra:

What?

Village Idiot:

I'm stuck.

Duct Tape Man:

Great. Just great. First it's the wall, now it's this doofus. Oi vey. I was better off before you two chowder heads showed up. Thanks a lot.

Deidra:

Look buddy, at least we got you off the wall.

Duct Tape Man:

Yeah, and now I have an idiot strapped to my back. I can just feel my intelligence draining from my body by the minute.

Village Idiot:

See, that's the spirit. Always look on the bright side of things.

Duct Tape Man:

Oh boy! *(Slaps forehead. His own hand gets stuck.)* Oh crap!

(The Duct Tape Man uses his free hand to pry his other hand off of his forehead. Once he pulls it off he frantically waves his arms around trying to get them unstuck.)

Duct Tape Man:

(To Deidra) Look, if you aren't doing anything else you might as well get him off of me. It is, after all, your fault that all this has happened.

Deidra:

My fault? We were only trying to be nice and help you, you jerk.

Duct Tape Man:

Yes, well, if you want to help so much then would you kindly remove this bumbling fool.

Deidra:

Fine. But only because I like him. Not you.

(Deidra starts pulling the Village Idiot off of the Duct Tape Man, while he attempts to free his hands. After much application of force, everyone is free.)

Duct Tape Man:

Finally I'm free, no thanks to you two.

Deidra:

Hey! If it wasn't for us you'd still be stuck to that wall! Anyway, my name is Deidra and this is the Village Idiot. Who are you? And why were you stuck to that wall?

Duct Tape Man:

Deidra? That's a singularly repulsive name. And yes, I assumed that this cretin was a village idiot. It's easy to tell their kind. As for who I am, that's none of your business!

Deidra:

After all we did for you, you could be a little bit grateful.

Duct Tape Man:

You haven't done anything for me.

Deidra:

Yes we have. We freed you from the wall.

Duct Tape Man:

I used to be alone, there on the wall. Now I'm in your company. I can't say it's much of an improvement.

Deidra:

Well I never!!!

(Deidra shoves the Duct Tape Man back into the wall)

Village Idiot:

Alright, I admit that this happens to me a lot, but I'm confused. Why did we spend all that time getting him free, just to stick him there again?

Deidra:

We are teaching him a lesson.

Village Idiot:

Oh. *(Pauses a moment, thinking.)* How?

Deidra:

Eventually he'll be sorry he insulted us, and then he'll start asking us politely to let him go. And do you know what we'll do then?

Village Idiot:

We'll let him go?

Deidra:

No. We'll keep him stuck there. Then when the agony of being there starts building he'll beg us to help him. And do you know what we'll do then?

Village Idiot:

We'll let him go?

Deidra:

No. We won't. We'll leave him there. Soon, the pain will be unbearable and he will weep copiously, crying out to us to end his freakish misery. And do you know what we'll do then?

Village Idiot:

Since it's a well established fact that I don't learn from my mistakes, I'm going to have to say that we'll let him go.

Deidra:

Actually yes. This time you're right. I can't stand a crybaby.

Village Idiot:

I was right? Wow, that's a new feeling for me.

Deidra:

Just don't let it go to your head.

Village Idiot:

Right. Of course not.

Duct Tape Man:

I'm sorry to ruin your plan but it just won't work. In fact, I'm not sorry, and that's the reason it won't.

Deidra:

What do you mean?

Duct Tape Man:

I am unable to feel pity, sympathy, sorry, or apologetic. I have no heart.

Deidra:

Yeah, I've noticed.

Duct Tape Man:

No, quite literally. I have no heart. Listen. (*Village Idiot listens to the Duct Tape Man's chest, being careful to not get stuck.*)

Village Idiot:

He's right, no heart. That's okay, I don't have a brain.

Duct Tape Man:

It's pretty obvious. Look, help me out here and I'll tell you my sad story. Well I assume it's sad. As I already explained, I can't really tell.

Deidra:

Oh, all right. (*Deidra and the Village Idiot help him off the wall.*)

Duct Tape Man:

Allow me to introduce myself. I am the Duct Tape Man.

Village Idiot:

I'm the Village Idiot, pleased to meet you. (*The Village Idiot shakes the Duct Tape Man's hand, realizes his mistake, and frees his hand.*)

Duct Tape Man:

I wasn't always the Duct Tape Man. I used to be a lumberjack... (*Deidra interrupts*)

Deidra:

My name's Deidra.

Duct Tape Man:

Yes, well, I can't say it's a pleasure to meet you, but if I could get back to my story? Thank you. Now as I was saying. I didn't always used to be the Duct Tape Man without a heart. I once was a lumberjack with the biggest heart. I would love to pet kittens, play with babies, and give candy to little kids. I would cry at sad movies, although my favorites were romantic comedies.

Deidra:

That's pretty hard to believe.

Duct Tape Man:

Excuse me, I'm telling a story here. But one day while working in the forest cutting down trees, there was a horrible accident and I had to be rushed to the local hospital. I was in such bad shape it looked like I was a goner. But as luck would have it a specialist was visiting the hospital. He took one look at me and said, "I can save this man. Get me duct tape!" He saved my life, but my heart was in such bad shape that they had to remove it. I've lived without it for a number of years now, and as you can imagine I've grown a bit callous.

Deidra:

So it's possible to live without a heart?

Duct Tape Man:

Yes. But it makes life more miserable.

Deidra:

I believe that. But why Duct Tape?

Village Idiot:

Duct Tape fixes everything.

Duct Tape Man:

That's what the specialist said. Anyway, it's kept me together all these years.

Deidra:

So how did you get stuck to that wall?

Duct Tape Man:

Oh that, well um, it was dark out and I sorta walked into it.

Deidra:

(Laughing) That's so... *(Sees glare from Duct Tape Man.)* Uh, sorry.

Duct Tape Man:

I should hope so. Well, I've told you my story. Now go on your way and leave me alone.

Village Idiot:

Hey Deidra, maybe you can help out the Duct Tape Man. She's going to get me a college degree. Then I'll be smart.

Duct Tape Man:

(Dubious look) Somehow I doubt that. What could she do for me?

Village Idiot:

She could find you a heart.

Duct Tape Man:

Really? I'm sure I'd like a heart. Once I had one.

Deidra:

Whoa there! I think we should set a more reasonable goal. Let's find you a good therapist to help you. There are plenty of them where I'm from.

Duct Tape Man:

Really? Where are you from?

Deidra:

Well, I'm not really sure how to get back there from here. That's why I'm traveling down this path. I'm hoping I'll find my way home. I'm also looking for the man of my dreams.

Village Idiot:

I thought you said you were taken!

Deidra:

I am, by the man of my dreams.

Village Idiot:

Oh. Makes sense.

Duct Tape Man:

What makes you think he's around here?

Deidra:

Just a feeling I have. Come on guys, let's go.

(Deidra and the rest head off stage right. The Duct Tape Man notices Stay.)

Duct Tape Man:

What's your dog's name?

Deidra:

Stay. *(Duct Tape Man stops moving.)*

Not you. That's the dog's name.

Duct Tape Man:

Oh. It's a pretty stupid name for a dog.

Deidra:

Shut up. I like it.

Duct Tape Man:

Then you're an idiot.

Village Idiot:

Hey, I'm the idiot around here.

(They exit stage right, all the while arguing.)

(Deidra and the Village Idiot and the Duct Tape Man enter stage left. They are in a dark forest. Near where they enter there is a crude handwritten sign with the words "Beware the YBSS" scrawled on it. There are fluttery wings, spooky bird calls, and an occasional loud staccato tapping sound. There is a large tree downstage right. The Yellow-Bellied Sap Sucker bangs his head against it occasionally.)

Duct Tape Man:

No, I'm not going to do it. No way, no how.

Village Idiot:

Aw come on. Just one? Please?

Duct Tape Man:

No. You're crazy if you think I'd ever do that.

Village Idiot:

No, I'm stupid, not crazy. Come on, just this one time.

Duct Tape Man:

Oh, fine. But this is the only time.

Village Idiot:

Goodie, okay. Knock, knock.

Duct Tape Man:

(Resignedly) Who's there?

Village Idiot:

Ben.

Duct Tape Man:

Ben who?

Village Idiot:

Ben Do...

Deidra:

(Interrupting him) Guys, please keep it down. This place gives me the creeps.

Duct Tape Man:

That's because you're a girl.

Deidra:

(Glares at him) What did I say about comments like that? *(Duct Tape Man shuts his mouth with a click.)* Good.

(Pause)

What sort of creatures live here? I can just imagine all sorts of creepy crawly things. Things that slither through bogs and marshes. Slimy skin, tentacles, bulbous eyes. It gives me the willies just thinking about it. But what about bigger things, things with big sharp teeth and claws. Things just waiting for a poor helpless passerby to come through.

Duct Tape Man:

Don't worry, Deidra, with his stupidity and my bad attitude nobody will mess with us.

Village Idiot:

Yeah, we'll protect you.

Deidra:

But what if we get attacked by big and vicious beasts? Like lions...and tigers...and bears!

Village Idiot:

(Laughing) Oh my, Deidra. What an imagination you have! This is a temperate zone, we don't have to worry about lions and tigers. Bears, yes. And wolverines and cougars. And the occasional boar. But not lions and tigers.

Deidra:

Thanks. I feel so much better.

Village Idiot:

Glad I could help. *(Thoughtful pause)* We might have a cause to worry though.

Deidra:

Why?

Village Idiot:

Well...oh it's probably nothing.

Deidra:

What is it?

Village Idiot:

Weeellll, do either of you know what a "YBBS" is?

Deidra:

A what?

Duct Tape Man:

What are you blathering about?

Deidra:

I don't know. What is it?

Village Idiot:

According to this sign it's something we should be ware of.

Deidra:

What sign? *(The Village Idiot points to a sign)* I've never heard of that.

Village Idiot:

Me neither. I wonder if it's dangerous.

Deidra:

And if we run into one, how do we tell if it is a "YBBS"?

Duct Tape Man:

We'll just politely ask all the dangerous creatures with sharp pointy teeth if they are, or know, the "YBBS".

Deidra:

You aren't helping.

Duct Tape Man:

I never said I was trying to.

Deidra:

Well, we'll just have to press on. The sooner we start, the sooner we will be through the forest.

Duct Tape Man:

(Flippantly) Or the sooner we will be dead.

Deidra:

No one is going to die. Now let's go.

(They walk deeper into the forest. Suddenly Deidra spots a flash of yellow as the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker starts pecking at the tree.)

Look over there.

(In unison)

Duct Tape Man:

What?

Village Idiot:

Where?

(They turn to look in two different directions.)

Deidra:

It's a bird of some sort.

Duct Tape Man:

I can't see anything.

Deidra:

No, over this way.

(They turn to look where she is pointing.)

It looks to me like a sapsucker. A Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker.

Village Idiot:

Now wait a minute. I don't think it's fair to call the poor bird a coward when we've never even met it.

Duct Tape Man:

I agree with Deidra, it definitely looks like a wuss to me. Five bucks says he runs away when we pass by.

Village Idiot:

You're on.

Deidra:

What are you guys talking about? I never said that at all.

Village Idiot:

You called him a coward and I just don't think that's very nice at all.

Deidra:

I don't even want to know what you're talking about.

Village Idiot:

So what do we do now?

Deidra:

We could go ask it if it knows where this path leads. It might know what's after the forest.

Duct Tape Man:

You mean you don't know where we're going?

Deidra:

Not really. I just followed the path because it was convenient. Do you think some fairy came out of nowhere and told me to follow this road?

Duct Tape Man:

Fine. Let's go talk to the bird.

(They approach the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker. He has his back towards them as they approach quietly. He busily bangs away at the tree.)

Deidra:

Ahem

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH! *(He madly dashes behind the tree to hide.)*

Village Idiot:

You scared him.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Don't hurt me!

Duct Tape Man:

See, I told you he was a coward.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Don't hurt me!

Duct Tape Man:

Pay up.

(Village Idiot pulls a bill out of his pocket and slaps it into the Duct Tape Man's hand.)

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

I'll give you anything you want!

Duct Tape Man:

(To Village Idiot) It's been a pleasure doing business with you.

Village Idiot:

For you it has.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Just don't hurt me!

Deidra:

No one's going to hurt you. We just wanted to ask you some questions.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Then why did you sneak up on me like that?

(Deidra starts circling the tree.)

Deidra:

We're sorry we scared you. We didn't mean to.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Oh, I've heard that before. You think it's so much fun to scare some poor helpless birdie. Just go away and leave me alone.

Deidra:

Look, I said we were sorry. We'd just like to...to...talk!

(Deidra jumps and grabs the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker. She drags it from behind the tree. The Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker begins to yell and carry on, but it doesn't put up much of a fight.)

Ssshhh, just calm down. Everything is alright.

(The Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker stares wild-eyed at her, cowering in fear.)

It's alright. We just want to talk. I'm sorry I grabbed you, but I just wanted to show you that we won't hurt you. I'm going to let you go now. Will you stay and talk to us?

(The Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker doesn't move but continues to cower.)

OK, I'm letting you go now.

(As soon as Deidre lets go, the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker shoots up and starts backing away from them.)

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

What do you want to know?

Village Idiot:

I've always wanted to know what makes Teflon stick to the pan.

Duct Tape Man:

Shut up, you idiot.

Deidra:

We were wondering if you knew where this path goes. You see, I'm trying to find my true love and get home. I'm also going to help the Village Idiot here get a college degree and the Duct Tape Man to get a good therapist. But I don't really know where I am or where this path goes. My name is Deidra, by the way, and this is my cute little doggie.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

AAAHHHH!! Dogs have teeth. Teeth bite. Biting hurts. (*The Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker cowers some more.*)

Deidra:

Oh don't worry. He's a nice doggie. He won't hurt you. I won't let anyone hurt you.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Oh. What's his name?

Village Idiot:

Don't even go there.

Duct Tape Man:

So how bout it, birdbrain? Where does the path go?

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

I don't know where it goes and my name is not birdbrain. My name is Varius, commonly referred to as the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker or the Yellow-Bellied Sapsuck, of the genus *Sphyrapicus*, of the family Picidae, of the order Piciformes, of the class Aves, of the phylum Chordata, of the kingdom Animalia of the domain Eukarya. It is a proud and noble lineage. I'd appreciate if you'd respect that!

(*The Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker, after finishing delivering the defiant speech, shrinks back to avoid being hit.*)

Deidra:

How come you don't know where the path leads?

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

(*Gaining some confidence and coming a little closer.*) Simple. I have never been out of the forest.

Deidra:

Why not? It's awfully dark and dreary in here.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Yes, but it's safe. In here there are plenty of places to hide. Out there, it's all open with scary people and places.

Deidra:

I can't imagine anyone would want to hurt you.

Village Idiot:

Yes, I like birdies.

Duct Tape Man:

You aren't really worth enough to bother to hurt.

Deidra:

That wasn't really very nice, Duct Tape Man.

Duct Tape Man:

Hey, no heart, remember?

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Maybe no one would want to hurt me, but someone might. My mother's last words to me were, "Stay in the forest where it's safe." I've lived by that saying ever since.

Village Idiot:

Where is your mother now?

(The Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker looks down, distraught.)

Oh...I'm sorry.

Duct Tape Man:

Looks like she should have heeded her own advice. *(Deidra jabs him in the ribs)* Ouch!! Geez!

Deidra:

I'm surprised you want to live in the forest, what with dangerous creatures and all.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

There aren't any dangerous creatures in the woods. In fact, I'm the only creature that lives here.

Village Idiot:

But there's a sign over there cautioning travelers about some horrible creature that stalks the forest at night, waiting to find some poor passerby to sink its big pointy sharp teeth into.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Oh. That. *(Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker looks sheepish)*

Deidra:

Yeah, that. How come you aren't freaking out about that?

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

I made that sign to scare off people who might try and hurt me. I've been afraid of everything for a long long time. My whole family is full of worriers and cowards. My godfather is a scaredy cat. Literally. I never learned to fly because I've always been afraid of falling and hitting the ground. I remember when I was first born that I wasn't always quite so scared to try new things, but my parents were awfully overprotective and gradually everything began to frighten me. I'm scared of big things. I'm scared of medium-sized things. I'm scared of little things. I'm even scared of small things.

Duct Tape Man:

So you're even scared of your own shadow, right?

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Ha. No. I am not scared of my own...

(As he says this, the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker looks down and sees his shadow.)

YAAAAHHHHHHH!!!

(He runs and tries to hide behind Deidra.)

Save me, save me, save me!

Deidra:

It's alright. It was only your own shadow.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Sigh. I guess you're right. I am afraid of my own shadow. Can you help me?

Deidra:

I think I can. I know exactly what you need.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Courage?

Village Idiot:

Confidence?

Duct Tape Man:

A backbone?

Deidra:

Self-help books.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Huh?

Village Idiot:

What?

Duct Tape Man:

Excuse me?

Deidra:

You need some self-help books. They are all the rage where I come from. You can get books on how to lose weight, how to speak in public, how to get rich. There has to be one on overcoming your fears.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

You really think that would work?

Deidra:

It's worth a shot. If it works no one will confuse you with a chicken anymore. If it doesn't, you're only down twenty bucks.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

OK, I'll do it. Thanks for letting me come with you guys...

Deidra:

You are welcome. Now, let's get out of the forest and head for whichever direction my home is in.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

What?!? No!!

Deidra:

What's wrong? Don't you want help?

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Yes, but this means leaving the forest. I've changed my mind. I'm too scared.

Deidra:

Come on. It's the only way you'll ever get help.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Nope. Not going to do it. It's too frightening.

Deidra:

You're coming, whether you want to or not.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

W...w...what to you mean?

Deidra:

(To Village Idiot and Duct Tape Man.) Grab him.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Hey!! You can't do this!

(The Village Idiot and the Duct Tape Man grab the protesting Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker. Everyone exits stage right.)

(It is now evening. Deidra, the Village Idiot, the Duct Tape Man, and the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker enter a large clearing in the woods. In the very center is a large sign that says, "Danger – Viking Marauders in the Area.")

Boy it's getting pretty late. Village Idiot:

Yep. Deidra:

It's pretty dark out. Village Idiot:

Uh-huh. Duct Tape Man:

It's... Village Idiot:

(Interrupting) We get the idea. Duct Tape Man:

Just trying to be helpful! Village Idiot:

By pointing out the obvious?! Duct Tape Man:

Yes. Village Idiot:

Well, stop it. You're annoying me. Duct Tape Man:

Deidra:
The Village Idiot is right. It is late, and I don't know about you guys but I'm pretty tired. We should find a place to sleep soon.

Village Idiot:
How about this clearing?

(The Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker starts frantically heading for the forest.)

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

No, no, no, no. Mustn't stay in the open. Have to go back in the woods.

Deidra:

(Grabbing the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker) Hey it will be alright. As long as we stick together nothing can happen to us. Don't worry, we'll protect you.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Oh...

Village Idiot:

Yeah, don't worry. Everything will be fine. I've been examining this place and I think it's probably the safest place around here. This sign here *(indicates Viking warning sign)* is brand new and the grass isn't overgrown, and the path has seen lots of foot traffic. Just look at all those big boot prints. I think it's safe to say that this is a well-traveled and maintained meadow. In fact, I'd stake my reputation on it.

Deidra:

See? Everything is going to be fine. Let's all get a good night's rest so we can face tomorrow refreshed and renewed.

(Everyone begins to find a spot to sleep and lays down. Deidra holds Stay. The Duct Tape Man flops onto the ground. The Village Idiot pulls out a teddy bear and a night cap. The Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker curls up into the fetal position. They soon fall asleep)

(Voices offstage)

Viking Voice 1:

(Spotted Something) Grrrrr. Oooh ra! Rowr raar gujdg.

Viking Voice 2:

(Questioning) Yarr?

Viking Voice 3:

(Curious) Yarrr roar wra?

Viking Voice 1:

(Reporting) Aaroar ur pujja gggrrroow jah gerrge.

Viking Voice 4:

(Surprised) Druww? Ur pujja? *(Musing)* Uuuroar jae rae ur garroor pujja.

Viking Voice 2:

(An idea has occurred) Gorgu, aaroar. Uuuroar yarg uuurear org uuurear jah gggrrroow.

Viking Voice 3:
(Skeptical) Yarr? Oogerd ro raw ruw uuurear jah yeg uuurear?

Viking Voice 2:
Gorge.

Viking Voice 4:
Wurr rah ooorrr Gorgroar jah.

Viking Voice 1:
Jor riar wojg.

Viking Voice 2:
Roo, yarr jaee roar raur?

Viking Voice 3:
Uuuroar jare rowrar yorg gae ra ru ra uuurear!

Viking Voice 4:
(Excited) Gorge!

Viking Voice 1:
Grooor graj ro raora.

Viking Voice 2:
(Hesitant) Aaroar neh jah...

Viking Voice 1:
(Cajoling) Gurr oore jah.

Viking Voice 2:
(Giving in) Roor gra. Goo jead rroaer ir yar?

Viking Voice 4:
Gorg.

Viking Voice 1:
Ar...Er...Ir!!!!

All Voices:
YYYYEEEEEE AAAARRRRRRGGGGGG!!!!!!!!!!!!

(On the last line the four Vikings charge through the audience yelling. They climb onto the stage and charge the sleeping group. Just as they get there everyone who is asleep wakes up, except for the Village Idiot. They sit straight up and scream as the Vikings attack. Black out.)

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

(Lights go up. Deidra and group are now on a Viking longboat in the middle of the ocean. The prow of the ship is an ornate dragon carving. The bow sits at stage left while the stern of the ship is at stage right. The audience views the ship from the side. The wall facing the audience has been cut away while the opposite wall is still there. Between the prow and the first slave bench is an area where Erik and the Taskmaster are standing and waiting before their entrances. This area will be kept in darkness. Deidra is chained on the first slave bench. On the bench behind her is the Village Idiot. The Duct Tape Man sits behind him. The Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker sits behind the Duct Tape Man and between them the ship's mast rises out of the deck. The sail is striped blue and white. Behind the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker sits Oarslave 1 and behind him, Oarslave 2. Between the last slave bench and the stern is a small area where the taskmaster will stand. This small area is also kept in darkness. At the stern there is a rudder. The ocean waters are calm.)

Deidra:

(Starting to wake up) Oh my. I had a horrible dream last night.

(Everyone but the Village Idiot starts waking up.)

Duct Tape Man:

Yawn.

Deidra:

I dreamed we were captured by Vikings and forced to row their boat. Pretty ridiculous dream, huh?

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Yep.

Deidra:

Wow, look how bright it is. Guys, I think we've wasted the whole morning sleeping. We'd better get a move on if we want to make any progress today.

(She tries to stand up but chains prevent her.)

Hey! What's going on here?

(Realizing where she is.) Oh no! Guys wake up! We've been kidnapped!!

Duct Tape Man:

Oh great. Just great. I wanted to take a walk and maybe get some therapy. But instead I get kidnapped and put on some dinky ship in the ocean. I should never have let me pull you off that wall.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Kidnapped?? We've been kidnapped?! That means there are kidnappers here! AAAHHHHHHH!!

(The Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker tries to escape, but his chains prevent him.)

Deidra:

I don't understand. How were we kidnapped? That meadow was supposed to be safe.

Duct Tape Man:

Yeah, whose idea was it to sleep there?

Deidra:

Well, the Village Idiot suggested it as a nice place to sleep because it had a sign and was well traveled...

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Oh no!

(The three turn and look at the Village Idiot, who is still fast asleep.)

Deidra:

Hey! Wake up! *(She reaches back and shakes him.)* Wake up!

Village Idiot:

What? Oh, hello guys. Wasn't that a wonderful little rest we had. Such a peaceful meadow. Oh, hello, we aren't in the meadow anymore.

Deidra:

(Icily) No. We aren't.

Village Idiot:

Where are we? Oh, a boat. In the middle of the ocean. Hey, you guys never told me we were going on a cruise. What a surprise! Thanks, guys, you're the greatest. Do you know if they serve piña coladas? Because I could really go for one right now.

Duct Tape Man:

We are not on a cruise, you fool. We've been kidnapped and put on a boat, chained to the oars.

Village Idiot:

Oh...that would explain the chains and the less than luxurious traveling accommodations.

Duct Tape Man:

Yeah, yeah it would.

Village Idiot:

I just don't understand how this could happen. I know the sign said there were Vikings around but I never expected this.

Deidra:

The sign said there were Vikings there?

Village Idiot:

Yes, it said, "Danger – Viking Marauders in this area." But I saw so many boot tracks I figured that the park manager came by a lot.

Deidra:

I can't believe this.

Duct Tape Man:

I can.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

I'm scared.

Village Idiot:

Look, guys. I go us into this. I'll get us out.

Deidra:

How?

Village Idiot:

I'll simply explain to our captors that a terrible mistake has been made and that we would really appreciate it if they would drop us off at the next port of call. Being reasonable people, I'm sure they will agree.

Duct Tape Man:

You really think that will work?

Village Idiot:

Yeah, why not?

(Duct Tape Man rolls his eyes.)

Village Idiot:

Hey!! Hey Whoever Kidnapped Us! Hey!!! We want to talk to you!

Oarslave 1:

Hey! Keep it down! Are you trying to get us killed?

Oarslave 2:

Yeah, they'll get angry and come and beat us.

Deidra:

Who are they? And who are you?

Oarslave 1:

They are Vikings who captured you and put you on their ship.

Oarslave 2:

We are two poor slaves they captured a couple of months ago.

Deidra:

Why did they kidnap us?

Oarslave 2:

They have been raiding this area a lot, and they needed to replace some oar slaves.

Oarslave 1:

The raiding season is over. Now we're returning home.

Village Idiot:

Did you hear that, Deidra? We're going home. See? Things aren't so bad after all.

Deidra:

We aren't returning to *my* home. We're returning to the Vikings' home.

Village Idiot:

Oh. Do you think I could get a college degree there?

Deidra:

Probably not. (*To the oar slaves*) you said they captured us to replace some oar slaves. What happened to them?

Oarslave 1:

They died.

Oarslave 2:

All worn out.

Oarslave 1:

It's what happens when you are forced to row day in and day out for months on end.

Oarslave 2:

They don't give us much food or water, so we just get weaker and weaker.

Deidra:

Oh my.

Oarslave 1:

It's not too bad, as long as you stay on their good side.

Oarslave 2:

If you don't to make them mad they don't beat you too hard.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

They beat you?

Oarslave 1:

Yes. And they'll beat you, too.

Oarslave 2:

They will, now that you are their captives.

Deidra:

Can we escape? Surely we can.

Oarslave 1:

We can't.

Oarslave 2:

We're too weak.

Oarslave 1:

Besides, where would we go?

Oarslave 2:

There's nothing around but water.

Oarslave 1:

If we tried, they'd beat us twice as hard.

Oarslave 2:

Ouch.

Deidra:

Well I am not going to take this sitting down!

Village Idiot:

Deidra, the shackles prevent us from standing up.

Deidra:

It was a figure of speech.

Village Idiot:

Oh, sorry.

Deidra:

I say we band together and give the Vikings what for. A single twig is easily broken, but bound together several can withstand the strongest force. By ourselves we are weak, but if we stand together we can show those Viking that we won't be made slaves. We can take our freedom back. Now, are you with me?

(All together.)

Village Idiot:

Yes!

Duct Tape Man:

Yes!

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Yes!

Oarslave 1:

No!

Oarslave 2:

No!

Deidra:

Hey guys, we need your support. Please help us.

Oarslave 1:

No way. We've seen what happens to dissidents.

Oarslave 2:

We want to keep our health.

Deidra:

Fine, be that way. We don't need you. Now guys, remember, we won't do what they tell us whatever the consequences.

Village Idiot:

Yeah! Even if they beat us to bloody pulps, cut off our tongues, poke out our eyes, attach leeches to our ears and feed us to the fishes, we will stand firm, right?

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Gulp!

(Footsteps approaching.)

Oarslave 1:

Oh no! I hear the taskmaster coming!

Oarslave 2:

You guys better do what he says.

Deidra:

Never. Let him do his worst!

(The taskmaster enters from the darkened area at stage left. He is a tough looking Viking with a whip in one hand. His English is slow, gruff and drawn out. He crosses to stage right. As he stands in the small area just behind the last slave bench the lights on that section come up.)

Taskmaster:

Rooowwww!!!! *(The two oar slaves start rowing. Deidra and the group just stare at the Taskmaster.)* Rooowwww!!!! *(The Taskmaster snaps his whip in the air menacingly.)*

Oarslave 1:

Why aren't you rowing?

Oarslave 2:

You're gonna be in big trouble!

Deidra:

We won't be treated like slaves. We won't be beaten down by the likes of him.

Oarslave 1:

(Taking a look at the Viking Taskmaster.) Yes you will.

Oarslave 2:

Very much so.

Oarslave 1:

And once the beatings start, they won't stop.

Oarslave 2:

Until morale improves.

Deidra:

We are going to stand up for our rights. We're going to fight them, not with weapons but with passive resistance. Never give up! Never surrender! Right guys?

Village Idiot:

(Confidently) Right.

Duct Tape Man:

(Sarcastically) Sure.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

(Weak and faltering) O-ok.

(The Viking Taskmaster sees that Deidra and the group aren't rowing. He walks over to them.)

Taskmaster:

Why you not row?

Deidra:

We refuse to row or cooperate. We have been taken against our will. We find the practice of kidnapping people for slave labor to be a morally reprehensible crime. You have no right to treat us in this manner. Further, we find your resorting to physical threats and intimidation to be petty and cruel. We will not row. No matter what. We demand that you free us from these chains and return us to the area you found us in.

Village Idiot:

Yeah! What she said!

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Don't hurt me!

(The Viking Taskmaster seems to consider all of this, looking thoughtful as Deidra gives her dramatic speech. After she finishes he pauses briefly.)

Taskmaster:

Rooowww!!!! *(He snaps his whip.)*

Deidra:

Didn't you hear a thing I said?

Oarslave 1:

He doesn't hear too well.

Oarslave 2:

Too much blunt trauma to the head.

Oarslave 1:

Even if he had good hearing, he wouldn't listen.

Oarslave 2:
Never does. Never will.

Taskmaster:
Why you not row?

Village Idiot:
I think we've been through this before.

Duct Tape Man:
Look you stupid Norseman. We don't care how tough you are. Or what kind of evil tortures you'll put us through. Try and get it through your thick skull that we will not row your boat!

Taskmaster:
(The Taskmaster glares at the Duct Tape Man) Row! Row! Row! *(He snaps his whip.)*

Deidra and Group:
No! No! No!

Taskmaster:
You not row?

Oarslave 1:
Oh great. They're in for it now.

Oarslave 2:
Here it comes.

Deidra:
That's what we've been trying to tell you. WE WILL NOT ROW!!!

(The Taskmaster stands there looking at all four of them, trying to understand their reasoning, thinking about what to do.)

Taskmaster:
Ok...

Deidra:
(To oar slaves) There. See guys. If you have confidence in yourself and are willing to stand firm in the face of adversity, you can accomplish a lot.

Taskmaster:
...I get Erik. *(The Taskmaster walks over into the darkened area at stage left. The oar slaves stop rowing.)*

Who is Erik?

Deidra:

The captain of this ship.

Oarslave 1:

A very fierce Viking.

Oarslave 2:

So he's gone to convince the captain to let us go since we won't row?

Village Idiot:

No. He's gone to get Erik to punish you.

Oarslave 1:

Erik likes torture.

Oarslave 2:

Torture?! Torture?! I don't like torture. Waaaaa, I don't want to be tortured!

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

It's inevitable.

Oarslave 1:

If you don't row you get tortured.

Oarslave 2:

What kind of torture? What does he do?

Village Idiot:

Well, there's the whips...

Oarslave 1:

And the cat of nine tails...

Oarslave 2:

And the hot wax...

Oarslave 1:

And the needles...

Oarslave 2:

And the scorpions...

Oarslave 1:

Oarslave 2:
And the Chinese finger traps...

Oarslave 1:
And the pain...

Oarslave 2:
Oh the pain!

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:
WAAAAAHHHH!!!! I'M GOING TO DIE!!!

Deidra:
Stop it you two! You're frightening him.

Oarslave 1:
Sorry.

Oarslave 2:
(Points to the Village Idiot) He asked.

Deidra:
I refuse to believe that this Erik would do those horrible things to us. He would have to be a monster. *(Suddenly a loud roar comes from the darkened area at stage left. Everyone cringes.)* What...what was that?

Oarslave 1:
No doubt it was Erik.

Oarslave 2:
No doubt.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:
Whimper.

Duct Tape Man:
Well, I don't see how anything this Erik could do, would be any worse than now. Its torture enough just being with you people.

Oarslave 1:
(To Deidra) What's his problem?

Deidra:
No heart.

Oarslave 2:

Oh.

(Huge, resounding footsteps are heard from offstage. The two oar slaves start rowing again, with renewed vigor.)

Oarslave 1:

Erik's coming.

Oarslave 2:

Better row.

Deidra:

I, for one, am going to hold fast to my principles. I won't be bullied about; intimidated by some uncouth, unwashed, bull of a man. I won't be a pathetic slave forced to row a boat for the rest of my days. I'm going to tell Erik exactly what I told that toady of his. You can't just kidnap decent people and expect them to do your bidding. It just isn't done. If we all band together, I think we could pull off a slave uprising.

Village Idiot:

Deidra, I don't want to rain on your parade, but even I can see that that plan is not feasible. There are only six of us. I don't think the six of us could even take out the Taskmaster, let alone a ship full of Vikings.

Duct Tape Man:

I'm forced to agree with numbskull here. It can't be done.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Yeah. And I'm a pacifist anyway.

Duct Tape Man:

That's because you're a coward.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Well, yeah.

Deidra:

So you guys are just going to give in and do whatever they tell you to do?

Village Idiot, Duct Tape Man, and Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Yes!

Deidra:

Oh brother. You guys need to stand up for yourselves. Sometimes you've got to fight, for your right, to...

(Suddenly Erik enters, triumphantly. As he crosses from the darkened area into the light, the lights on the front of the ship go up. Deidra stops in mid sentence. The Village Idiot, the Duct Tape Man, and the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker turn and look in awe at Erik. The Taskmaster can be seen standing behind him.)

Erik:

Yarrrr uorr?!! Yerg jah nae ur pujja gggrrougge?!!

Taskmaster:

Uggg gro uuror jeg uurroar gridja. Rurag gory erg jae nah grrogg. Uuuroar yarg uuurear org uuurear jah gggroow. Wurr rah ooorrr Gorgroar jah.

Erik:

Aaroar ur pujja gggroow jah gerrge. Roor gra. Goo jead rroaer ir yar.

Taskmaster:

Gorge, grodge. Yerag rujk glok urroar uuuroar jare rowrar yorg gae ra ru ra uuurear Aaroar neh jah.

Erik:

Aaroar ur pujja gggroow jah gerrge. Oogerd ro raw ruw uuurear jah yeg uuurear. *(Erik begins to walk by the slaves, threatening them in very guttural English. He walks to the end by Oarslave 2 first.)*

(To Oarslave 2)

Hey!! You there! Me glad you and your friend still row. It make me happy to see you act right. You keep up or I gut you like mackerel and make weapons from your bones. Unnerstand??

(To Oarslave 1)

Put back into oar lazy slob. Row harder. Stroke. Stroke. Stroke. That it. Me better not see you slack off, or me crush your ankles with bare hand and beat you black and blue with belt. You heard me. Now row.

(To the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker)

Slave!! Why you not rowing my boat?! You better row right now before me get really mad. You row or I get me chef to cook and serve you as main course in banquet for me. Start rowing, yellow bellied chicken! *(The Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker is so cowed by Erik that he starts rowing.)*

(To the Duct Tape Man)

Oh hohoho!!! What we have here? Mister fancy pants eh? Well, if you don't row now, not even silver jumpsuit help save you from horrible fate involving wax, termites, honey, and ball peen hammer. You get, buddy?!! *(Erik grabs the Duct Tape Man by the shoulders and shakes him. After he stops, Erik tries to remove his hands.)* What...? What this? *(Giving a mighty yank, which almost throws the Duct Tape Man out of his seat, Erik pulls his hands off the Duct Tape Man.)* Now row!!! *(The Duct Tape Man begins rowing.)*

(To the Village Idiot)

Hey Stupid!! Start rowing!!! Do it or me put you in world of hurt. Comprendo? You hear me. Now row! What you be, idiot?! Row! Row now!! Row! Keep rowing!!! *(The Village Idiot begins to row.)*

(To Deidra)

Just because you girl, does not mean you get easy job. This equal opportunity vessel. Me not discriminate against slaves based on age, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Every slave row. That why you slave. *(Deidra is unfazed by this.)* Still not row? Well, if you no row this instant, me going to take cute little doggie and feed him to sharks. *(Erik makes threatening gestures towards Stay.)*

Deidra:

I'll row your filthy boat but don't you dare touch my Stay! *(Deidra begins rowing.)*

Erik:

Oh ha! You challenge me eh? Don't like me threaten your dog? *(Tone changes to flirting.)* You know, you pretty when you angry. You available? Me want to take you out for dinner sometime. What you say? *(Erik looks at her longingly, and then heads back to the Taskmaster.)*

Gujdgu uuraor ro. Grrrrroow uuurear nah jae org roar rah yeg rowr yarrow.

Taskmaster:

Druww uuurear, wojg. aaroar jaad uuurear oogerd har uuurear jor.

Erik:

Graj. *(Erik walks to the front of the ship. The Taskmaster walks to the area behind Oarslave 2.)*

Village Idiot:

Deidra, what's going on? Why was he talking to you like that?

Deidra:

I think he was flirting with me.

Duct Tape Man:

Flirting?

Deidra:

Yeah. It's repulsive.

Duct Tape Man:

I'll say.

Deidra:

But why on earth would he flirt with me?

Duct Tape Man:

Why would anyone want to flirt with you?

Village Idiot:

Well Deidra, you are a very attractive young woman and he's a strapping man in his prime who has been stuck on a boat without any women for weeks, if not months. It's no wonder then that at the first sight of a female his hormones would go into overdrive.

Deidra:

When you put it that way, I get the heebie jeebies.

Village Idiot:

You're welcome.

Deidra:

Boy this day has been really swell. First I get kidnapped by Vikings and forced to do hard labor, then the captain starts hitting on me. And to top it all off, I have the three stooges here to watch me be humiliated. Great. Just great.

Duct Tape Man:

Isn't it though? Suddenly I feel better.

Deidra:

If you aren't careful, instead of a new heart you're going to get my fist in your face!

Duct Tape Man:

Maybe you should get your boyfriend to beat me up.

Deidra:

Grrrrr.

(Erik walks towards Deidra, carrying a tray of food.)

Erik:

Here you go me dear. Me brought you food, to keep up strength. You can take break from rowing to eat. *(To everyone else)* No food for you! Keep rowing!! *(Back to Deidra)* You finish that up while me go and plot course for home. Don't spill any, darling. *(Erik walks back to the front of the ship.)*

Deidra:

Mmmmmmm. At least it's good food. I still don't like the way he looks at me.

Duct Tape Man:

Say Deidra, would you mind sharing that?

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Yes, I'm hungry.

Deidra:

Back off. Get your own food. Maybe the Taskmaster wants a serious relationship.

Village Idiot:

That's not very nice Deidra. After all we've done for you, you could be a little grateful.

Deidra:

You haven't done anything but cause me pain and frustration.

Village Idiot:

Well...ok. But you could still share.

Deidra:

Oh, alright. *(She rations out the food for the Village Idiot, the Duct Tape Man, and the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker.)*

Village Idiot:

Mmmmmm. That was good.

Taskmaster:

Row! *(Snaps whip.)* Row! Row! Row!

Village Idiot:

Yes sir! *(Everyone starts rowing again. Short Pause.)* Say Deidra, I've been thinking.

Duct Tape Man:

Oh great.

Village Idiot:

Now this may be the dumbest idea you've ever heard, but let me finish. This Erik person seems to have the hots for you, right?

Deidra:

Right.

Village Idiot:

And he's the captain of the ship, so he has the power to let us go, right?

Deidra:

Right. I don't see where you're going with this.

Village Idiot:

Well now, hear me out. What if you were to flirt back with him. You could pretend to fall in love. And then, when he is completely under your spell, you can convince him to let us go. Well, what do you think?

Deidra:

You're right.

Village Idiot:

I am?

Deidra:

That is the worst idea I've ever heard. I don't want to encourage him! I want him to leave me alone! I think he's disgusting and vile.

Village Idiot:

Please Deidra, it's our only hope.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Deidra, I don't want to row anymore. And I don't want to be tortured.

Duct Tape Man:

You did promise to help us.

Deidra:

Not like this!

Village Idiot:

You could get your freedom too.

Deidra:

Not if that big lug falls in love with me. I'd never be able to get rid of him!

Taskmaster:

Less talk! More row!

Village Idiot:

(Whispers) Help us Deidra. You're our only hope.

(Deidra considers it for a moment. The others look at her expectantly.)

Deidra:

Sigh. Fine. I'll try. But don't expect very good results. I've never been much of a flirt. I've never even had a boyfriend before, so I'm not really sure what to do.

Village Idiot:

Just be polite. Try to cultivate his interest.

Duct Tape Man:

Compliment him on his eyes.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

And his eyes.

Deidra:

Ok ok. I hear him coming back. Boy this plan better not backfire.

(Erik walks back towards Deidra, holding a flower.)

Erik:

Ahh, my sweet! Me bring you flower for hair. Me think it go good with your eyes. *(He fixes the flower in her hair.)*

Deidra:

Why, thank you. It's very pretty. I'm flattered.

Erik:

Me glad you like.

Deidra:

I...uh, I like your beard. It's very, umm, majestic.

Village Idiot:

(Whispers) That's it!

Erik:

Really? You like beard? *(To the Taskmaster.)* Gorgu Olaf, uuroar yarg uuroar aaroar jae gorw! *(The Taskmaster flashes Erik a thumbs up.)* You hair is very nice. Very soft.

Deidra:

Uh, yeah. Thanks. Ummm, your hands are very calloused. Doh, I mean, your hands are very strong.

Erik:

It from chopping wood in fall, back home in town of Hamar. Starting in October we begin chop wood for long winter.

Duct Tape Man:

(In a whisper to the Village Idiot and the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker) They seem to be doing well.

Erik:

When me little boy, me would watch father chop logs behind tiny cottage. Me loved to hear swish of axe and dull thud against chopping block. Me remember those carefree autumn days. Running through forest like deer, jumping into piles of leaves with friends.

Deidra:

It sounds nice.

Erik:

It was. Especially festival of Mabon. Whole town would gather in square for songs and feasting. Everyone bring food to share, and chief provide mead and huge roast pigs. After we ate much, we sing or bards sing songs and tell stories at night.

Deidra:

Boy, I wish I could see that.

Erik:

You might get to. So, what nice girl like you do in middle of meadow with those three doofuses??

Deidra:

Hehehe. Well, it's a long story.

Erik:

We have much time. It be couple of weeks before we get back.

Deidra:

Well, it all started when I took Stay here out for a walk in the park. I had just had an argument with my mother. She's been trying to set me up with the sons of her bridge club members, but none of them suit me. So I just had to get out of the house and down to the park. It helps me relax.

Erik:

So you go to park? What happen then?

Deidra:

Well, while I was at the park, this weird storm came out of nowhere and as I was trying to make it home I got struck by lightning.

Erik:

Lightning?

Deidra:

Yes, lighting. It was a scary experience. The next thing I knew, I was standing along a path in a totally new place. So I followed the path and ran into these three guys. I'm trying to help the

Village Idiot get smart, the Duct Tape Man learn to be sympathetic, and the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker to have some more self confidence.

Erik:

So you barely know them, yet you try and help?

Deidra:

I guess when you put it that way it seems rather silly huh?

Erik:

You very special girl.

Deidra:

You're pretty special yourself. You have wonderfully blue eyes. I've always wanted someone with eyes as blue as yours.

Erik:

Really?

Deidra:

Oh, what am I saying? It could never work out between us. You're a fierce Viking warrior from Norway, and I'm a girl from California. We barely speak the same language.

Erik:

We could make it work. Love know no bounds.

Deidra:

But what about your friends and family? Could they accept me? And what about my family? My mother might not like the idea of a Viking son in law.

Erik:

We can't let others stand in way of what we want.

Deidra:

Oh Erik, can this really work?

Erik:

What does heart tell you?

Deidra:

Oh Erik! I'm so happy. But Erik, you need to let my friends go. I did promise to help them.

Erik:

Well, it have to wait until we get home. There not much point in let them go now. We in middle of ocean.

Deidra:

Promise you will let them go when we get to port?

Erik:

I promise.

Deidra:

Good. Now run along dear, and do whatever it is you need to do. I'll make sure we keep rowing. *(Erik kisses her cheek.)* Alright everyone! Let's row double time! *(Deidra starts to row with vigor, as the others start to pick up the pace.)*

Village Idiot:

Well, did my plan work Deidra?

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Yeah, is he going to let us go?

Deidra:

Yes.

Duct Tape Man:

Then why are we rowing harder?

Deidra:

We're in the middle of the ocean, there's no place to go. Don't worry, Erik promised to let you go once we get in to port.

Duct Tape Man:

What about you? He's not letting you go?

Deidra:

It's not that. It's that I'm not letting him go. Erik and I are in love!

(Cheesy romantic music, such as "Love is in the air", begins playing. All the lights go down. Lights up solely on Deidra's bench. Deidra is rowing while she and Erik mime laughing and talking. They perform their actions in slow motion. After several seconds of this, the lights go down. The lights come back up on Deidra's bench again. Deidra is still rowing. Deidra and Erik continue to mime laughing and talking. Erik feeds Deidra some chocolates. Lights down. The lights come up again on Deidra's bench. This time Erik is rowing and Deidra is on his lab. They mime laughing and talking and she feeds him chocolates. The music fades out while the rest of the stage lights come back up. Deidra and Erik continue what they have been doing. As the lights come up, we see that the Village Idiot, the Duct Tape Man, the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker, the two oar slaves and the Taskmaster are staring at Deidra and Erik in shock and disbelief.)

Duct Tape Man:

Your plan worked better than you thought.

Village Idiot:

Apparently.

(When Deidra and Erik notice the others staring at them, they quickly return to Deidra rowing and Erik standing next to her, acting like nothing happened.)

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

But what about us Deidra?

Duct Tape Man:

Yeah, how are we going to get help if you run off with a Viking warrior?

Village Idiot:

You promised to help us Deidra.

Deidra:

You guys don't really need my help.

Village Idiot, Duct Tape Man, and Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

What?!

Deidra:

You don't really need my help. You each have the ability to help yourselves. Village Idiot, you are actually very intelligent. You just do the first thing that comes into your head. If you spent more time considering the consequences of your actions before you do them, you will be much better off. And you, Duct Tape Man. You don't need a new heart; you just need to start thinking about how other people might feel. Then you can learn how to say things in a manner that builds others up, rather than tear them down. And you, Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker. You have the ability to stop being afraid of everything. You just need to work on your self esteem and self confidence. Start with small tasks that you can do easily. Then work your way up to bigger stuff. Take baby steps.

Village Idiot:

So you mean that I can be smart without a college education?

Duct Tape Man:

And I can be sympathetic without therapy?

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

And I can gain courage without reading self help books?

Deidra:

All those things will help, but it's the desire to change that will make it happen. And that desire comes from within you. It won't be easy. And it may be a long time, if ever, before you three can become productive members of society, but if you want to change the way you are, it will happen.

Village Idiot:

That's very deep.

Duct Tape Man:

It's very inspirational.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

It's very touching.

Oarslave 1:

It's very clichéd.

Oarslave 2:

It's very unoriginal.

Taskmaster:

It's very much time to row! *(Everyone starts rowing.)*

Village Idiot:

So Deidra, what is the plan exactly?

Deidra:

Well, in a week or two we will arrive in the port of Oslo. Erik and I will stay a week there while he repairs his ship. Then it's off to his home in Hamar where we will get married as soon as possible. Isn't that right dear?

Erik:

Right, sweetie.

Duct Tape Man:

So what happens to us?

Deidra:

Well, you guys will be set free at the port and from there you can go wherever you want. Of course, I'm sure Erik wouldn't mind if you three stayed with us while you figure out what you want to do. You wouldn't mind would you sweetheart?

Erik:

Not at all pumpkin.

Deidra:

See? It's not a problem.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

There aren't any dangerous animals, are there?

Deidra:

(Laughing.) No, I don't think so.

Village Idiot:

Hey Erik. Since we can't really go anywhere, and since you're just going to let us go when we get to port anyway, do you think you could unchain us? Because it would be so much easier to row your boat without them.

Erik:

You right. *(To the Taskmaster.)* Gorgu Olaf, rerg jae nah pujja!

Taskmaster:

(Questioning) Reg jae nah pujja? *(Erik glares at him.)* Roora ga, uuuroar jae grogtok. *(The Taskmaster unchains everyone. They all start rubbing the places where the manacles were.)*

Oarslave 1:

Oh that is so much better.

Oarslave 2:

I wish you guys had come aboard a long time ago.

Deidra:

I wish I had as well. Oh Erik, I forgot in all the commotion to introduce you to my dog Stay. Stay, this is Erik.

Erik:

Good boy Stay! Good doggie!

Duct Tape Man:

Say Erik, there's a nasty looking storm approaching rather quickly!

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

A storm! Oh no!

Erik:

Yes, me see. Do not worry. It take some time to get here. We safe for moment. We prepare ship for storm so we be safe.

Deidra:

Erik, that storm looks like the one that brought me here.

Erik:

Don't worry Deidra. It just regular storm. They happen a lot on ocean.

Deidra:

If you say so Erik.

(The Village Idiot notices something under his seat.)

Village Idiot:

Hey Erik, I found some sort of plug! *(Everyone on board freezes and looks at the Village Idiot as he holds up a long chain.)* It's got this long chain attached to it. What do you want me to do with it?

Erik:

(Frantically shouting at the Village Idiot) Put it back! Don't touch it!

Village Idiot:

What? You want me to pull the plug?

Erik:

No you fool! Don't pull it! You'll sink the ship!

Village Idiot:

Ok, if you say so.

(The Village Idiot gives a mighty tug and the plug flies out of its hole with a loud popping sound, reminiscent of a champagne bottle being uncorked. Stunned silence as everyone looks on in horror.)

Village Idiot:

I should have though harder about the consequences of my actions shouldn't I?

(As if in response to his question, the Taskmaster leaps overboard. The ship begins to sink as the storm overtakes them. A flash of lightning. There is a flash of light and a puff of smoke on the mast as it cracks and falls over. The two oar slaves don water wings and goggles.)

Oarslave 2:

Join the Navy they said.

Oarslave1:

See the world they said.

(A giant wave washes the two oar slaves overboard. They exit.)

Deidra:

Oho no! Are they alright? Shouldn't we do something to save them?

(The Village Idiot, the Duct Tape Man, and the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker run over to the place where the oar slaves got washed overboard.)

Duct Tape Man:

(Looking offstage at the oar slaves) I think they'll be fine. They look as if they passed their junior lifeguard training courses. I'm more worried about us.

Deidra:

Erik, where are the lifeboats?

Erik:

We don't have any.

Deidra:

You don't have any lifeboats?

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

No lifeboats?! What are we going to do?!

Erik:

What we carry lifeboats for? This Viking ship for crying out loud.

Deidra:

Let's just stay calm and find things that float. And try to stay together...AAAHHH!

(There is a flash of lightning and a peal of thunder. A flash of light and a puff of smoke appear in the middle of the ship as the two halves of the ship begin to pull apart, showing jagged edges. Deidra and Erik are on one half, while the Village Idiot, the Duct Tape Man, and the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker are on the other. The people on each half desperately cling to the ship.)

Village Idiot:

Are you guys alright?

Deidra:

Yes.

Erik:

Yes.

Deidra:

How are you?

Duct Tape Man:

We're ok.

(The half of the ship the Village Idiot and others is on begins to drift off stage right.)

Village Idiot:

We appear to be drifting away.

Duct Tape Man:

Brilliant deduction Holmes!

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

The weather is getting rough.

Village Idiot:

Our tiny ship is going to be tossed.

Deidra:

Just have courage and be fearless guys.

Erik:

Otherwise, you minnow of ship will be lost.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

Our minnow of a ship will be lost!!! AHHHHH!

Duct Tape Man:

Oh, I pray that I don't get stuck on some uncharted desert isle with these two.

Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker:

I'm frightened.

Deidra:

You'll be fine.

Village Idiot:

We'll miss you Deidra.

Deidra:

I'll miss you too. Good luck.

(The Village Idiot, Duct Tape Man, and Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker are carried off by the storm. The seas grow rougher. Suddenly there is another flash of lightning. Another flash of light and a puff of smoke appear on the half of the ship that Deidra and Erik is on. The prow of the ship breaks off and sinks beneath the waves. Erik and Deidra are left clinging to what is little more than a plank.)

Deidra:

Erik, the storm, it's getting worse. I don't think we'll make it on this small plank.

Erik:

Deidra, my love, promise one thing. *(Erik begins to lower himself into the water.)*

Deidra:

I'll promise you anything. But what are you doing?

Erik:

Promise you never let go of plank. *(Erik let's go of the plank, sacrificing himself to save Deidra. He is carried off by the waves.)*

Deidra:

Erik, noooo!!!! Erik come back! Come back! I'll never let go Erik! I'll never let go! Just come back! I love you! *(Starts weeping.)* I love you Erik. Come back! *(Suddenly a bolt of lightning falls from the sky and hits Deidra, like in the beginning. Black out.)*

(Lights up on the same park scene from the opening of the play. Deidra is laying half out of the water of the lake. Stay is next to her.)

Deidra:

(Unconscious) Erik! Come back! Come back Erik! I'll never let go! *(Deidra wakes up and sees where she is. She begins to cry again.)* Erik, Erik my love...

(Erik enters and walks up next to Deidra. He kneels down beside her.)

Erik:

Deidra, my love.

Deidra:

Erik? ERIK!!!! But, but I watched you get carried off by the waves. How, how did you get here?

Erik:

Was struck by lightning before me drown. Suddenly I appear here.

Deidra:

Lightning?

Erik:

Yes.

Deidra:

I don't care about how you got here, I'm just s glad!

Erik:

Me too.

Deidra:

Come on. *(She gets up, picks up Stay and puts her arm through Erik's.)* Let's go home. To my home. *(Looking at Erik.)* Oh, my parents will love you. *(They begin to walk home).*

CURTAIN

THE END

CONCLUSION

Now that you've read The Berserker of Oz, you fall into one of four main categories. I predict that 35% of the people who experience this play, either as a dramatic text or a performance text, will absolutely love it and find all sorts of deep symbolism throughout its pages. Another 35% will love it because it is hilarious, but won't believe that it means much. Then there will be a 20% who don't get it because they have not had enough experience with Douglas Adams or Monty Python. Finally, 10% will absolutely hate it, but even Samuel Beckett had his critics.

Through the course of this work I have concluded that 'funny equals hard.' It is incredibly difficult to write a humorous play. I cannot count the number of times I've stayed up late thinking of jokes and praying other people laugh as hard as I do. It's a balancing act. If the joke is one that is used far too often no one will laugh, although some may groan. If the joke is too specific to one's life experiences, no one else will find it funny because they can't relate. It's very tempting to throw in numerous inside jokes. There's also the issue of the joke to non-joke ratio. Too many jokes and people will tire of laughing. Too few, and the play ceases to be a comedy. I have spent days, weeks even, agonizing over issues like these. Somehow it's turned out alright. I wonder if Joe Orton and Oscar Wilde ever had this much trouble.

The Village Idiot, the Duct Tape Man, and the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker weren't too hard to develop. I gave each a single trait and went from there. The Village Idiot is, well, stupid. The Duct Tape Man is rude to everyone. And the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker is scared of everything. Not that every line they speak is stupid, abusive or cowardly. If they didn't exhibit a

blend of traits they would quickly become tiresome. When working with a character it is best to ask, “What does he want?” I answered that question with “He wants to be stupid. He wants to be cruel. He wants to be frightened.” It worked better than I had hoped, although at first the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker felt like mindless filler. After much development he was able to stand on his own.

Getting back to the four categories of people, I fall into the second 35%, who say that it’s fun but there isn’t any symbolism. While there are some good messages like believing in one’s self and the first step to change is wanting to, for me it was mostly just a fun adventure. It’s a fallacy to think that anyone could ever know what the author intended, but it’s an even bigger fallacy to think that I myself know what I was talking about. One would assume that I am an authority on my own work, and I say that the play is only meant to be enjoyed, not analyzed. Of course, if someone decides to make the world a better place after seeing my play, so much the better. I for one will be satisfied if people come away happy; pleased that they did not waste the afternoon.

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APPENDIX A: STEP OUTLINE

1. Deidra takes her dog out for a walk in the local park. As she enters the park, a freak electrical storm comes out of nowhere and envelopes Deidra and her dog. As her dog runs away, Deidra faints in the midst of the storm.
2. When they both come to, Deidra finds herself on a pathway in a field. A sign points off the path saying, “Munchkin Land, Daycare Center.” Deidra doesn’t particularly like kids so she heads off down the path in search of, well, anything.
3. As the path winds its way through meadows, Deidra happens upon a guy hanging upside down from a tree. His clothes are mismatched, he has two left shoes on, and his pants are backwards.
4. Deidra helps him down and naturally asks what he was doing there. During the course of their conversation it becomes abundantly clear that this guy is the Village Idiot.
5. Deidra suggests that they find him a brain or at least a college education, so they follow the path together.
6. Deidra and the village idiot are walking through a lightly wooded area when they come upon a man completely dressed in silver, stuck to a wall.
7. The Village Idiot pulls him off the wall, but ends up stuck to the man. Deidra pulls them apart and finds herself stuck to the strange man. All this time the Duct Tape Man hurls abuse at them.
8. Once everyone is separated, Deidra introduces herself and the Village Idiot, who promptly shakes the hand of the Duct Tape Man. After getting out of that sticky situation, Deidra suggests finding the Duct Tape Man a good therapist. He readily agrees, and the three journey on together.

9. The three companions enter a dark forest. As they proceed deeper into it, they begin to hear spooky bird calls and loud staccato tapings. Rounding a bend in the path, the three of them see the Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker pecking at a tree. When he sees them he tries to hide, but eventually they catch him. Deidra asks if he would like her to buy him a self help book. The Yellow Bellied Sap Sucker thinks it over and decides that it's a good idea.
10. Night begins to fall as the group comes upon a little clearing in the woods. A sign in the middle warns, "Danger – Viking Marauders in the Area." The Village Idiot suggests that they bed down here for the night.
11. Once everyone is asleep, a band of Viking Marauders led by Erik the Red comes upon the company. Using hand signals, he gestures for his crew to capture them. They do.
12. Deidra and the rest awake to find themselves chained to oars on a Viking Longboat in the middle of the Ocean. Examining their surroundings, Deidra sees two other slaves.
13. The Viking Taskmaster enters and forces everyone to start rowing. When Deidra protests, he tells them to row or he'll be forced to get Erik. They refuse and he exits.
14. Erik enters and begins barking commands and threats to everyone on board. He begins with the two original slaves, and goes down the line. When he reaches Deidra, the threats change to flirting; this thoroughly disgusts Deidra.
15. As everyone begins to row, Erik continues flirting with Deidra, and occasionally barks out commands to the others. She decides that the only way to gain her freedom is to flirt back, and hope she can convince the Viking leader to let them go.
16. Slowly, Deidra discovers that she's falling in love with the rugged Erik, and fueled by her passion, she admonishes everyone to row harder.

17. As Deidra and Erik begin making plans for the future together, the Village Idiot notices a chain connected to a plug in the bottom of the ship. He mentions his find to the people around him.
18. Mistaking Erik's warning as an order to pull the plug, the Village Idiot does so. The ship begins to sink and people start jumping overboard.
19. Deidra and Erik end up on a plank together, but Erik realizes that it can only support one of them. He valiantly sacrifices himself to save Deidra.
20. Deidra cries out to him to come back, but he sinks beneath the waves. Deidra is struck by another lightning bolt.
21. Deidra awakes to find herself laying half in the pond in the park, her dog licking her in the face. As she weeps, Erik walks up to her and explains how he got there. Deidra and Erik are reunited and they go off together. The end.