

THE QUILTMAKER'S GIFT

A New Family Musical Adventure
Based on the book by Jeff Brumbeau

Book by Alan J. Prewitt
Music by Craig Bohmler
Lyrics by Steven Mark Kohn

CAST

THE CHILD

The child may be male or female. They are 8-10 years old depending on stature, but should be small enough to believably play at being a "king". The child is curious, imaginative and full of questions.

THE OLD MAN

The old man appears to be in his sixties. He is dressed in rags that appear to have been grand at one time. He is warm and gentle and speaks as if everything in life is a magical gift. He speaks with confidence and enthusiasm. There is no doubt that there is something special about him.

THE QUILTMAKER

The Quiltmaker appears to be in her sixties, silver-haired and simply dressed. She has an air of mystery about her. There is a timelessness about her that reminds everyone of their grandmother. She is earthy and has a magical connection with the forces of nature. She is focused on her life goal of making quilts for the poor and needy. To her each quilt is a carefully constructed gift representing love and caring. "If someone is hungry the quilt may not feed them, but the pain of hunger is easier to bear if you know someone cares."

CHORUS KING

One of five chorus members, this one plays the King throughout the play except in the first and last scene. This member, is visibly transformed into the King by the other chorus members when the old man reaches that part of the story. The king is played at about age forty five to fifty. He is lonely and sad, greedy and self-centered. He is in search for the one thing in the world that will make him happy.

TENOR

A male chorus member who sings as his name suggests. He is never referred to by name and plays many parts, as required.

ALTO

A female chorus member who sings as her name suggests. Also plays many roles.

SOPRANO

A female chorus member who can sing as her name suggests. She also plays numerous roles.

BASS

A male chorus member who can sing as his name suggests. He plays many roles as well, including "The Bear".

Each chorus member starts in a base costume that is similar to the others. That base costume should have a "patchwork" appearance, but each should be unique. The chorus members will change hats and various costume pieces many times, so this base costume should be sleek and easily added to. These characters make everything happen in the play, rather like the clowns in a circus. They fill in the gaps, set up the scenes and then become a part of the action.

THE SETTING

When the audience enters they see what appears to be a large quilt covering most of the staging area. Clearly it is covering something for there are lumps, especially a large one upstage. There is a cyclorama or solid wall upstage for projecting lighting gobo images to help establish location of each scene. The one seen now is a "patchwork pattern" taken from a traditional quilt design. There is a large tree, *or something that may be fashioned into one*. There should be at least one limb that is suitable for two people to sit upon. It's other limbs stretch out to make a proscenium that reaches across the front of the stage. Some of the other items needed in the play may be visible or may be under the large quilt, including crates, trunks, lengths of material, etc. These items are later used for building the bear's cave, the island, or creating the water effect surrounding the island. The trunks may hold costume pieces or props.

SCENE

House lights are dimmed. As the pantoverture is played, we see movement under the quilt. Tenor pops his head out, sees the audience and lets out a surprised expression of sound. It is the "language of the chorus". It is "other-worldly" and consists of no recognizable words. He disappears under the drop. We see movement as Alto pokes her head out. She runs to the edge of the stage, looks closely at the audience. She is joined by the Chorus King. They stick their heads under the quilt and scream a warning. Simultaneously Soprano and Bass pop out and acknowledge the warning. They huddle to discuss and get organized when they notice Tenor is missing. They start pulling the quilt back in search of him. One member comes back to the audience to beg a moment. They fold back the quilt, pull it, push it and lift it to reveal the items underneath, including Tenor putting last minute touches on The Old Man who appears frozen in time, pulling a small cart, on which there is an item covered with a multicolored but faded and dirty piece of canvas. Tenor is so busy at work he fails to notice the activity around him until all have completed removing the quilt from the playing area and organizing the trunks and crates. They stand and watch him. He gestures to the tableau he has created for their approval. They all issue their own sound of delight, turn to the audience as if to signify they are ready. Tenor runs to Bass and audibly whispers in his ear. Bass reacts surprised, looks around and whispers to Alto the same audible concern. By now the others have noticed and react. They race off in all directions.

(From offstage we hear sounds that indicate they have found something.)

TENOR AND BASS

Ahhhh, ohhh yahhhh di da.

(The Tenor and Bass carry on The Child, who also appears frozen. The others enter and run about the stage to gather a sword from one truck and a crown from another. One gestures for smoke, it happens. One gestures for the upstage cyc to change, it does. Finally they turn to the audience, strike a pose as if presenting the scene, then they exit. Just as the overture is coming to a close, Tenor races back on with a standard that bears a banner that looks like a quilt piece which signifies "the road". He places the banner into the stage floor, re-positions the boy's arm with the sword into the air, snaps his fingers for a final light

change, just as the music ends. The old man starts to move as the boy steps into his path.)

THE CHILD

Hold there! I command you to halt in the name of the King.

OLD MAN

And what king would that be, young man?

THE CHILD

Why me, of course. What king do you think?

OLD MAN

Forgive me young lord, for I have known so many kings in my life. Remind me again of your name.

THE CHILD

(He looks about for a clue.)

King...uh...King...

OLD MAN

Perhaps you wouldn't mind telling me why you have stopped me.

THE CHILD

I am in need of something...a fee so that you may pass this way.

OLD MAN

Oh. A toll? I saw no sign suggesting that this was a toll road. I used to travel this road often and I have never known it to be...

THE CHILD

Things change, and today **I** control the road. And **you** had better hurry and come up with something cause my mom expects me home soon.

OLD MAN

Oh, I see, King...uh...

THE CHILD

Rich!

OLD MAN

King Rich?

THE CHILD

...as in beyond my wildest dreams.

OLD MAN

I see. So you must be very wealthy!

THE CHILD

I would be if anyone ever paid their toll! I want to be wealthy more than anything. It would make me so happy...and my mother too. I could buy her a big house. We're sort of...well, without a home right now.

OLD MAN

Oh. Well, in that case I am very sorry not to have the toll for you today, your majesty, but as you can plainly see by my clothes, I have little to give. Unless you would like this cart?

THE CHILD

I've no use of that old thing. What about whatever is covered up there?

OLD MAN

Another old thing, I'm afraid. It's really nothing that would be of value to you. Just a trinket I have brought to an old friend. I have, however, thought of a little something you might like. It's very dear to me, but I would be willing to part with it, considering the circumstances.

(He pulls out an old leather-bound manuscript, soft and tattered from age and use.)

THE CHILD

That looks very old. What is it, a book?

(Interested, The child draws to the old man's side.)

OLD MAN

A story. Do you like stories?

THE CHILD

Oh I do very much. My mother tells me plenty, but mostly the same ones over and over.

OLD MAN

Then you should hear this one!

THE CHILD

How do I know I haven't already heard it?

OLD MAN

Oh, I can assure you you haven't. Here, see for yourself.

(He hands the book to the boy.)

THE CHILD

Uh..well...*(shyly)*...see, the thing is...I don't read very well. I can barely make out this hand writing anyway.

OLD MAN

Sorry. Allow me.

(Extends his hands to re-gain the book.)

I shall read it to you if you like. Better still, perhaps I will tell you the story. Would you care to take a journey with me?

THE CHILD

No, sir! I'd love to hear the story, but I know better than to go anywhere with a stranger.

OLD MAN

(He laughs approvingly.)

You are exactly right young man, but the journey I speak of happens right here...

(He points to his head.)

...in your imagination.

THE CHILD

Oh sure, I get it. I go there all the time.

OLD MAN

Somehow, I was sure of that. I think you will enjoy this particular story for it happens to be about a King...a wealthy king.

THE CHILD

Really? Was he very wealthy?

OLD MAN

He was, but the story doesn't start there...

(He motions for the boy to sit at the base of the tree.)

Shall we?

THE CHILD

I so command.

OLD MAN

Alright. Just close your eyes and just try to imagine this.

(Child closes his eyes tight. There is a music cue. As he begins to tell the story the chorus comes in and sets the stage. The road banner is removed and replaced by one signifying the mountain home of the Quiltmaker. The scene takes place just to the side of the child and old man, though they have no interaction with the characters until later in the scene.)

Once in a Kingdom, very near by, and closer than you may think, there was a Quiltmaker who kept a house in the blue misty mountains.

THE CHILD

Really? There's a nice older lady that lives on top of that mountain over there. I think she makes quilts too.

OLD MAN

You don't say?

(The old man looks in the direction the boy has pointed and smiles. He turns his attention back to the boy.)

This Quiltmaker lived quite simply and happily creating the most remarkable works of...warmth.

(The Quiltmaker enters, putting the finishing touches on one of her quilts.)

"THE GIFTS I SHARE"

THE QUILTMAKER

HERE IN MY MOUNTAIN HOME,
FAR FROM THE WORLD DOWN THERE,
I SPEND MY DAYS IN THE MISTY HAZE
MAKING THE GIFTS I SHARE.

QUILTS SO SOFT AND WARM,
FASHIONED WITH LOVING CARE,
TO SHIELD THE POOR FROM COLD,
THESE ARE THE GIFTS I SHARE.

A SIMPLE GIFT FROM A LOVING HAND,
 A WARM EMBRACE IN THE NIGHT,
 A GENTLE TOUCH TO A SOUL IN NEED,
 TO MAKE EVERYTHING ALRIGHT.

THIS IS THE WORK I KNOW
 AND AS LONG AS I SHALL LIVE,
 I WILL BRING MY COMFORT TO THOSE BELOW,
 FOR THESE ARE THE GIFTS I GIVE.
 FLY TO ME BIRDS,
 BRING A PATCH OF BLUE FROM THE SKY.
 BRING ME THE GREENS FROM A FIELD OF GRASS.
 AND COME TO ME NOW
 WITH THE FLOW'RS THAT BLOOM IN THE GLEN.
 BRING THEIR COLORS TO ME,
 AND I'LL SHARE THEM AGAIN AND AGAIN.

(The music continues under the following scene.)

OLD MAN

People used to make the long trek up the mountain, their pockets filled with gold, each asking to purchase one of her magnificent quilts. But her answer was always the same.

(The chorus has entered in a more dimly-lit area of the stage and takes costumes from a trunk and dresses in preparation for the following scene. Bass enters in an exaggerated vest and top hat, holding a cane.)

BASS

I am prepared to give you as much as twenty pieces of gold for one of your quilts.

QUILTMAKER

I have told you before sir, they are not for sale.

BASS

Oh alright, thirty pieces if I must!

QUILTMAKER

You know very well I make them only for the poor and homeless. You appear to be neither.

BASS

Name your price then. I will have one.

QUILTMAKER

When you are cold and hungry, when you have nothing to hold onto at night, then you shall have one, this I can promise, but today I bid you goodbye.

ALTO

(Has been visibly dressed in a dress bustle with a train and feathered hat, holding a parasol.)

That, my darling is simply divine. I want it, I'll have it, that quilt shall be mine. In fact, I'll take two.

QUILTMAKER

These quilts are only for those in need and it appears you are not!

ALTO

That's certainly true and I never intend to be.

QUILTMAKER

Then just as certainly, you will not know warmth from one of my quilts. Find your warmth in money...if you can.

ALTO

Well!

SOPRANO

(Dressed as a little girl. Skirt, bow in her hair and carrying a lollipop or a richly-dressed doll. She is dragging her father (Tenor) along.)

Look daddy, there she is. Get me one of those. I want one now.

TENOR

I'll buy you whatever you want, dear.

(To the Quiltmaker.)

Tell me, what's your price?

QUILTMAKER

There is no price. They are not for sale. Why is it so hard for the wealthy to understand?

SOPRANO

Daddy, I'm waiting. Give her some money and let's go.

TENOR

Just a moment, dear. You see old woman, you have made her very unhappy. Now please, just name your price.

QUILTMAKER

You would both find some happiness if you learned to be nice. Now leave before I ask the wind to carry you away.

(Tenor backs away and drags the squealing girl off with him.)

QUILTMAKER

(Sings)

THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN CASTLES OF STONE.
THEY HAVE ALL THAT THEY NEED AND THEY STILL WANT MORE.
BUT THERE ARE OTHERS WHO ARE POOR AND ALONE.
CAN'T YOU SEE THEY ARE CALLING TO ME?

(An old forlorn traveler crosses the stage. The Quiltmaker wraps a quilt around him.)

SLEEP, MY DARLING, SLEEP, FAR FROM YOUR WORLD OF CARE.
 LET SORROW CEASE, FOR A MOMENTS PEACE.
 THIS IS THE GIFT I SHARE.

*(As the song ends the old man and boy cross beside the
 Quiltmaker. She
 is in tableau as the boy examines the quilt she holds.)*

THE CHILD

They really are beautiful quilts, but I thought this story was about a king?
 Where's the king come in?

OLD MAN

Just now, as luck would have it.

*(They cross from the Quiltmaker as a chorus member comes and
 initiates her
 exit. Meanwhile, the others are hurriedly setting up another area of the
 stage for
 the King. They have set up a throne room, placed the standard in the
 floor and
 dressed the Chorus King after some confusion as to who shall play
 him.)*

Imagine if you will that in this very same kingdom lived a very powerful king. He spent his days acquiring as many "things" as he could, but the hundreds of beautiful gifts he received on holidays and birthdays weren't enough. Everything he had acquired was stored everywhere, and still it was not enough. He wanted more, because he was searching for that one thing that might make him happy.

"HAPPINESS"

CHORUS KING

I AM THE KING OF EVERYTHING I SURVEY,
 FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE VALLEY TO THE DISTANT BAY.
 I HAVE SERVANTS TO INDULGE MY EVERY WHIM
 AND OF COURSE THE ROYAL TREASURY TO SKIM.
 WHEN I RAISE MY BOOMING VOICE
 MY SUBJECTS COWER AT MY FEET!

WHICH AIN'T THE THRILL IT USED TO BE,
 BUT STILL IT'S KIND OF NEAT.
 YET WITH ALL THE LORDLY POWER I COMMAND,
 THERE IS SOMETHING I DON'T SEEM TO HAVE IN HAND.

HAPPINESS AND JOY.
 THESE ARE ALL I'VE EVER WANTED SINCE I WAS A LITTLE BOY.
 OH A GIDDY AND CHEERFUL FRAME OF MIND,
 SEEMS TO ME TO BE THE HARDEST THING TO FIND.

HAPPINESS AND GLEE,
 WON'T YOU COME ALONG AND SPEND SOME TIME WITH ME?
 HEAR MY CALL, HEAR MY PLEA, TAKE MY CASE,
 PUT A SMILE UPON THIS SOUR ROYAL FACE.

I WAKE UP IN THE MORNING ALL DEPRESSED.
 MY THERAPIST HAS TOLD ME I'M EXTREMELY STRESSED.
 SO I ASK HIM "WHAT ON EARTH'S A KING TO DO?"
 AND HE TELLS ME HE HASN'T GOT A CLUE.
 I LAY MY HEAD UPON MY GOLD EMBROIDERED
 PILLOW CASE AND WEEP.
 AT TIMES I FIND IT VERY, VERY HARD TO FALL ASLEEP.
 OH, THIS MISERY DOES NOT BEFIT A KING.
 MY REGAL WORLD IS MISSING JUST ONE THING.

OH, HAPPINESS, COME QUICK.
 I'M NOT GETTING ANY YOUNGER AND I'M FEELING A LITTLE SICK.
 BRING ME PEACE OR CONTENTMENT OR DELIGHT.
 BRING ME ANYTHING TO CALM THE LONELY NIGHT.

BUT WHAT AND WHERE AND HOW SHALL I FIND IT,
 THAT GLORIOUS THING I MUST POSSESS?
 OUT THERE, SOMEWHERE, MY TREASURE IS WAITING.
 WHEN I WRAP MY HANDS AROUND IT,
 THEN AT LAST I'LL KNOW I'VE FOUND IT...
 YES!

(Spoken over music)

Guard! Guard!

BASS

(Entering.)

Yes, my liege.

CHORUS KING

I am making a royal decree. Take this down.

(Sings)

TO MY SUBJECTS NEAR AND FAR ACROSS THE LAND,
YOUR KING, WHOM I KNOW YOU ALL HOLD DEAR,
IN THE INTEREST OF PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT,
SHALL CELEBRATE HIS BIRTHDAY TWICE A YEAR!

FROM THIS DAY FORWARD IT SHALL STAND,
BY ORDER OF THIS BINDING DECREE,
THEY SHALL GATHER UP THE FINEST PRESENTS THEY HAVE
AND BRING EVERYTHING THEY HAVE TO ME!

(Spoken.)

I just love birthday presents.

(The musical underscore continues as a parade of gifts are brought before the King. The Old Man continues the story, helps the chorus change costumes and hands them gifts as the boy watches. Each chorus member presents a gift, then gets back into the circle to procure another. Some chorus members might be guards or soldiers, while others may re-dress as peasants or subjects.)

OLD MAN

Once the decree was made, the King's subjects, fearing to disobey, brought the best gifts they could afford. On his birthdays the line circled the castle twice, both day and night.

CHORUS KING

And what have we here?

SOPRANO

It's a whatchamacallit, my liege.

CHORUS KING

Ah yes, and a fine one at that, but haven't I one of those already?

SOPRANO

You have twelve. But not one with a whatcha on the macallit.

CHORUS KING

Then I shall have this one too, don't you agree?

SOPRANO

As you command.

CHORUS KING

And what have we here?

TENOR

It's a whirl-a-ma-jig.

CHORUS KING

And what is it used for?

TENOR

I think, my liege, that you get jiggy with it.

CHORUS KING

Hmm. I always wondered how to do that. Store it safely.

TENOR

As you wish.

BASS

Are we content yet my liege? Perhaps we should close the doors for today.

CHORUS KING

How dare you? I need more, do you hear me? More! I want a...

(Sings)

NEW PAIR OF SHOES AND A BIG WOOLLY COAT
AND A HAT FOR MY HEAD AND A BOAT FOR MY MOAT.
A CANDLE FOR TURNING THE NIGHT INTO DAY
AND MY LIKENESS COMPOSED OUT OF PAPER MACHE.

TENOR

(Presenting)

AN EBONY CHESS BOARD WITH IVORY MEN...

SOPRANO

(Presenting)

SOME JADE AND A SPADE AND A PENCIL AND PEN...

ALTO

(Presenting, etc.)

A CHEMISTRY SET AND A LARGE WOODEN CHEST AND A...

CHORUS KING

WHAT IS THAT?

ALTO

OH, OH...

CHORUS KING

OH, PUT IT THERE WITH THE REST.
A PILE OF THIS AND A PILE OF THAT...

BASS

A DOG AND A CHIMP AND A CALICO CAT...

TENOR

A COUPLE OF CAMELS WITH ARABS TO RIDE 'EM...

ALTO

AND BOXES OF CHOC'LATES WITH CHERRIES INSIDE 'EM.

CHORUS KING

Ahhh...

THERE ARE A MILLION THINGS IN THE WORLD.
SOME ARE FRIVOLOUS, SOME ARE FUN.
BUT IF THERE ARE A MILLION THINGS IN THE WORLD,
THEN I WANT A MILLION AND ONE!

OLD MAN

(Over music)

And so it went, twice a year until there were few places left to shelve, store or stuff things. There were so many things the guards lived in fear of opening closets for fear of what might fall out. In fact, to keep track of it all, the king made the guards keep a list.

(Guards let a huge list unroll to add an item to it.)

So wouldn't you think the king was happy by now?

BASS

I have stored the last of today's gifts.

(We hear cat sounds.)

CHORUS KING

Those dancing cats were really **quite** unique.

BASS

And are we happy yet, my liege?

CHORUS KING

I think I...Well, I thought...I...No...Alas. NO!

BASS

But it seems you have every thing one could need or ask for.

CHORUS KING

Do I look happy to you? Apparently there is one thing more. More, More you hear me, I need more! Give me a

(Sings)

TRINKET, A BAUBLE, A TISKET, A TASKET,
ANOTHER OF THOSE. WHAT IS THAT, A BASKET?

BASS

A PAINTING DEPICTING THE TREES AND THE AIR.

CHORUS KING

DID YOU MAKE IT? I'LL TAKE IT! JUST PUT IT RIGHT THERE.
A BELL AND A BOOK AND A BIG COMFY CHAIR
AND A BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN WITH LONG FLOWING HAIR.

(Pause, spoken)

Do we have one of those?

*(He looks at the guard who shrugs. King looks
disappointed.)*

ALTO

A WATCHAMACALIT, A BRIC AND A BRAC...

SOPRANO

A NEW FRAME OF MIND AND A PAT ON THE BACK....

TENOR

A WHATSIT, A WHOSIT, A THING-A-MA-BOB...

ALL

A THING-A- MA-JIG AND SOME CORN ON THE COB!

CHORUS KING

A DOLL THAT GOES "EKE" AND A CART THAT GOES "ZOOM"
A MUSKET, A TUSK AND AN OLD WITCH'S BROOM.
IF THERE'S SOMETHING YOU COVET, I'M SURE I WILL LOVE IT,
SO WHY DON'T YOU SHOVE IT!...RIGHT INTO MY ROOM!

AND IN CASE YOU WEREN'T LISTENING BEFORE,
GIVE ME MORE, MORE, MORE, MORE, MORE
HAPPINESS, DON'T HIDE!

CHORUS

HAPPINESS, DON'T HIDE...

CHORUS KING

I AM WAITING AND MY ARMS ARE OPEN WIDE.

CHORUS

HOW I BEG, HOW I PLEAD, HOW I IMPLORE,
YOU'LL BE THE NEXT ITEM COMING THROUGH THE DOOR.

CHORUS KING

BUT I'M RUNNING OUT OF PATIENCE.
I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME.
I'M RUNNING OUT OF ROOM AND...

CHORUS

...AND YOUR RUNNING OUT OF RHYME!

CHORUS KING

I CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER FOR A SIGN
THAT HAPPINESS AT LAST IS MINE!

CHORUS

HAPPINESS, REQUIRED.
HAPPINESS, YOU'RE HIRED.
HAPPINESS, WE'RE TIRED!

(They all collapse from exhaustion. The Old Man motions for the boy to join him in the throne room. The King and guards are in tableau as he speaks.)

OLD MAN

So you see, even with all these things around him, the King was still...

CHORUS KING

...unhappy.

OLD MAN

Then one day it just so happened that one of the guards came to know of the Quiltmaker and he realized she was the one person who had not given the King a gift. Perhaps, the soldier thought, one of her quilts would be just the thing to make the King happy.

(The tableau is broken as the guards argue, in a whisper, as to who will break the news to the king. The child has moved in to see if he can hear what they are saying.)

CHORUS KING

What's all that chatter? Well? You have something to say?

BASS

Not I.

ALTO

She has!

(Pointing to Soprano)

SOPRANO

I'm sure I've forgotten, but he knows.

(Pointing to Tenor.)

TENOR

Yeah...well, about that...

(He sees the boy who has edged his way a little too close into the scene.)

The boy, sire. That boy, this one here...

(He marches the boy before the king.)

...he knows something of a woman who has not yet given you a gift.

CHORUS KING

What? Is this true?

(Chorus takes a step upstage and leaves the boy alone.)

THE CHILD

I, uh...

(He looks at the Old Man. The Old Man nods, encouraging the boy to speak.)

...uh...she makes quilts up there on the mountain, this woman, and uh...she won't sell them or anything and gives them only to the needy.

CHORUS KING

And aren't I needy?

THE CHILD

I'm sure I don't know.

CHORUS KING

Well, this won't do. Thank you boy for your service.

(The boy stands there.)

Well? Go!

(The boy backs away to the old man, and so disappears from the action of the scene.)

Soldiers! Prepare for a journey.

(He exits, followed by the boy and the Old Man, as we turn the stage over to The Chorus. There is an introduction to the march music. If they have not already transformed themselves into soldiers/guards, they complete that transformation now as they strike the throne room and banner, take up the "mountain home" banner and begin their march. In the choreography they pick up the King with the old man and boy following.)

“SOLDIER’S SONG #1”

SOLDIERS

BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM
MARCHING TO THE DRUM, DRUM, DRUM, DRUM, DRUM

WE ARE THE SOLDIERS OF THE KING!
WE ARE BRAVE AND WE ARE BOLD!
MARCHING TO AND FRO AND FRO AND TO...IS WHAT WE DO.
AND WE DO WHAT WE ARE TOLD.
BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM

WE ARE MARCHING UP THE MOUNTAIN BY ORDER OF THE KING.
HE SEEMS TO THINK THAT HE NEEDS ONE MORE THING.
WHY? WE COULD NOT GUESS.
FOR WITH ALL THOSE PRESENTS,
HE GOT FROM ALL HIS PEASANTS,
THE CASTLE IS A MESS.
BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM

WE ARE SOLDIERS OF THE KING
AND WE SORT OF HAVE A HUNCH.
WE DON'T THINK WE MAKE IT BACK...BY LUNCH.
BRUM, BRUM, etc.

(In the course of the song they have arrived at the Quiltmaker’s home. The banner-carrying soldier plants the “mountain” banner.)

CHORUS KING

Good day, dear woman. Do you know who I am?

QUILTMAKER

I would assume by your dress and all this commotion that you are a royal someone.

(The soldiers gasp.)

CHORUS KING

Indeed! I am your King.

QUILTMAKER

A pleasure, your majesty.

CHORUS KING

It has come to my attention that you have not presented me with a present...

(She stares at him blankly)

...a gift?

(Her gaze does not change)

I've received nothing from you as set out in my royal decree.

QUILTMAKER

Oh, now I see. First, your majesty, I hear little of decrees up here, royal or otherwise. And second, I certainly have nothing that **you** are in need of.

CHORUS KING

Ahhh, but you most certainly have. I understand you make the most beautiful quilts in the land.

QUILTMAKER

(Shyly)

Ah...well...

CHORUS KING

I should have one, don't you think? It may be just the thing I need to make me happy.

QUILTMAKER

(She pauses and looks him over.)

So actually, you are in search of...happiness. I would love to be able to help you your majesty, however you may not have heard that my quilts are only for those who are needy, hungry or cold. By all appearances, and with all due respect, I doubt you have ever known any of these things.

CHORUS KING

And what a calamity for you to think that a quilt can make a difference in eliminating hunger.

QUILTMAKER

It certainly will not fill an empty stomach, but the pain of hunger may be easier to bear *if* you think that someone cares.

CHORUS KING

Humph!

(The King fingers the quilt she is holding. The quilt should be wired to a fly system that will cause it to be whisked into the air at the appropriate moment.)

Are you suggesting I do not care if my people are hungry?

QUILTMAKER

I should not be the one to have to point it out, if that is so. I'm sure there will always be hunger, but when I see it, I attempt to do something about it.

CHORUS KING

(A pause, then quickly.)

And that's enough...chit chat. I demand you give me this quilt!

QUILTMAKER

Oh I'm so sorry this one is meant for someone else, but I will make you a quilt, if **you**...will make presents of some of the many things that I hear you own.

(The King and soldiers gasp.)

With each gift you bestow on someone else, I'll add a new piece to your quilt.
When you have given away what you treasure most, your quilt will be complete.

CHORUS KING

Outrageous! What a thought. Give away my beautiful treasures? I don't give things away, in case you haven't heard...I take them! Soldiers, take that quilt and let's go!

(As they approach the Quiltmaker, she throws the quilt into the air. We hear a gust of wind and it magically flies away.)

CHORUS KING

I...you...How dare you! Conspire with the wind to deny me my quilt will you? If I shall not have a quilt of my own, no one else will have one either. Soldiers, take her to Bear Mountain!

(The soldiers stand aghast and dumbfounded.)

Well !?

SOLDIER

As you command, my liege.

(Two of the soldiers take her by the arms. She travels with them willingly, while the others, during the song, construct the bear's cave out of found objects, perhaps canvas and the cart. Bass dresses as the bear. Ideally the journey to the cave takes just as long as the song does to sing. When they arrive at the cave, they plant the "bear banner". The bear is asleep. The soldiers have placed a large iron bracelet and chain on the old woman's arm which now attaches her to the cave.)

"SOLDIERS SONG #2"

SOLDIERS

BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM
MARCHING TO THE DRUM, DRUM, DRUM, DRUM, DRUM
WE ARE THE SOLDIERS OF THE KING!
WE ARE TRIED AND WE ARE TRUE!
OUR LOYALTY IS TO BE PRAISED.

YOU'D BE AMAZED
AT WHAT WE HAVE TO DO.
BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM

IN THE WOODS IS A CAVE WITH A BEAR.
OUR ORDERS ARE TO TAKE THIS LADY THERE.

ALTO

WHY? WE DO NOT KNOW.

OLD MAN

BUT THE KING SAID DO IT!

ALTO

AND EVEN THOUGH WE RUE IT,
WE HAVE TO MAKE IT SO.

SOLDIERS

WE ARE SOLDIERS OF THE KING,
AND WE DO NOT USE OUR HEAD.
WE DO EXACTLY WHAT HE SAYS... INSTEAD.
BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM,
MARCHING TO THE DRUM, DRUM, DRUM, DRUM, DRUM.
ALWAYS SINGING BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM.

CHORUS KING

Now old woman, I think you must have changed your mind. Will you or will you not give me a quilt?

QUILTMAKER

I have told you I would, if you will do as I asked.

CHORUS KING

By what right do you tell me what I must do!?

QUILTMAKER

Oh, now...I only made a request. This is the way the world often works. I will do what I can for you if you will do what you can for me. There is much to be learned from cooperating with others. I think my offer fair.

CHORUS KING

And I think *this* is a sleeping bear. I'm sure he will make a fine breakfast of you in the morning when he awakes. Have a pleasant evening.

(He turns to leave.)

QUILTMAKER

And you have a restful sleep, your majesty.

CHORUS KING

(A pause.)

I will. Soldiers, retreat!

“SOLDIER’S SONG # 3”

SOLDIERS

BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM
WE ARE SOLDIERS OF THE KING!
WE ARE BRAVE BEYOND COMPARE!
WE ARE MARCHING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN
WITH OUR HEADS HELD HIGH,
GALLANT AND FEARLESS, HEROIC AND STOIC AND...!

CHORUS KING

(He cuts them off)

SHHHH!

(Whispering)

...BEFORE YOU WAKE THE BEAR.

(He points to the bear. They continue the song in a whisper as they exit.)

SOLDIERS

BRUM, BRUM, BRUM etc....

OLD MAN

(As he speaks the lights transition to suggest nightfall. Owls can be heard in the distance.)

So there on Bear Mountain, in the dark, he left her chained to the wall of the cave. She was alone and cold.

THE CHILD

(The boy examines the chain.)

I think she might have been wishing for the warmth from one of her quilts.

OLD MAN

Indeed, but, ever resourceful, she simply huddled next to the bear for warmth and slept peacefully through the night.

(They back away from the cave scene and walk into a scene that has been set up on the opposite side of the stage.)

The same could not be said of the King.

(Chorus King paces in some sort of silly looking night gown.)

SOPRANO

You really should try to get some sleep, my liege.

CHORUS KING

What? Do you think I can't sleep? Do I look restless to you? Do you think I look upset?

SOPRANO

I am not paid to think, my liege.

CHORUS KING

Oh yeah. I forgot. So, leave me alone.

(She exits.)

Alone...alone. This Quiltmaker seems a kind old woman. She's a little sassy, no doubt about it. And look what she made me do; leave her up there all alone. What have I done?

"I DON'T MEAN TO BE MEAN"

CHORUS KING

I AM KING OF EVERYTHING IN THE LAND!
 MY SUBJECTS MUST OBEY WHAT I COMMAND.
 HOW DARE SHE DENY ME MY REQUEST!
 I'VE NEVER BEEN SO ANGRY AND OBSESSED.
 WHEN I RAISED MY BOOMING VOICE
 IT SHOULD HAVE CHILLED HER TO THE BONE.
 AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT
 WHEN I INHIERTED THE THRONE.
 I ONLY ASKED THE WOMAN FOR A QUILT.
 AND NOW I FIND SHE COVERED ME...WITH GUILT.

I DON'T MEAN TO BE MEAN.
 I DON'T TRY TO DEFILE.
 I DON'T ROLL OUT OF BED WITH THE THOUGHT IN MY HEAD
 THAT TODAY I'LL BE UTTERLY VILE.

I DON'T STRIVE TO BE COLD
 OR TO RULE WITH MY FIST,
 BUT THIS BEING KING IS A POWERFUL THING
 AND THAT POWER IS HARD TO RESIST.

WHEN YOUR EVERY WORD IS THE RULE,
 IT'S A BEASTLY CINCH TO BE CRUEL.
 I CAN STEW, I CAN RAVE, I CAN RANT,
 SINCE THERE'S NO ONE TO TELL ME I CAN'T.

WHEN MY SUBJECTS GET PUSHY OR PESKY,
 IT'S MY DUTY TO KEEP THEM DOWN.
 SO I SEARCH OUT AND FIND THEM TO GENTLY REMIND THEM
 OF WHO WEARS THIS GLORIOUS CROWN!

I DON'T MEAN TO BE GRUFF,
 OR BEHAVE LIKE A BEAST,
 BUT WHEN PUSH COME TO SHOVE, IF I CAN'T HAVE THEIR LOVE,
 I WILL SETTLE FOR FEAR AT LEAST.

I'M NOT KEEN TO BE MEAN,
 BUT THIS CROWN ON MY BEAN
 IS A MOST MIRACULOUS THING.
 SO YOU'LL PARDON ME NOW AS I SING
 AND PERMIT ME A FLOURISH AND FLING.
 I DON'T MEAN TO BE MEAN OR UNFAIR OR OBSCENE,
 BUT IT'S ALL PART OF BEING THE KING!

(Spoken)

Soldiers! Soldiers! Up! Everybody up!

(The lights transition to sunrise back at the cave. We hear birds as the bear begins to stir. He wakes and stretches. He looks at the Quiltmaker and starts to go back to sleep, then does a double take. He nudges her, she adjusts and curls up next to him again. He growls, she stirs. He growls louder and she awakes with a start. Not in the least bit scared, she gives him a friendly swat.)

QUILTMAKER

Oh dear me, you are grumpy in the mornings, aren't you?

(She stretches.)

BEAR

(Growls.)

QUILTMAKER

I can clearly see why. What with nothing to lay your head on at night, you must never sleep very comfortably.

(The bear tries to get a growl in edge-wise, but can't.)

QUILTMAKER

You poor dear. I can't imagine how you do it. Let me think. We should be able to solve that for you. Tell you what, if you will bring me an armful of pine needles, I shall make you a pillow from my shawl.

BEAR

Grrr...Grrrrr...

(Tries a growl but can't bring himself to do it.)

Grrreally?! You'd do that for me?

QUILTMAKER

Well of course. Although it would be much easier for me to work if you'd rid me of this nasty thing. *(Indicating the bracelet of iron.)*

BEAR

I'd be delighted.

(He breaks it apart easily.)

Who would do such a thing to you?

QUILTMAKER

It's just a little misunderstanding.

BEAR

You are so... kinda different from the rest.

QUILTMAKER

The rest?

BEAR

...of the people I meet....

"A VERY LONELY DAY"

BEAR

IT'S UNBEARABLE. THEY'RE SO SCAREABLE.
THEY SCREAM AND WAIL AND FLAIL AND RUN AWAY.
BEFORE I EVEN HAVE A CHANCE TO SAY,
"HEY, ITS ONLY ME", AND "ITS OKAY".

OH IT'S MADDENING, SICK AND SADDENING,
WHEN THEY JUDGE YA WITHOUT KNOWING WHO YA ARE.
IT'S PATHETICAL THAT THEY CAN ACT THIS WAY,
AND IT MAKES FOR ME A VERY LONELY DAY.

WHEN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD IS OUT TO GETCHA,
 YOU CAN BETCHA DREAMS ARE SITTIN' ON THE SHELF.
 WHEN YOU LOOK INTO THE MIRROR AND THERE'S ONLY YOU,
 WHO YA TALKING TO? JEST YERSELF.

OH IT'S STRESSABLE AND DEPRESSABLE,
 TO BE ALWAYS ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKIN' IN.
 DOIN' YOUR VERY BEST TO FORM A GRIN,
 NO ONE THERE TO ASK YA HOW YA BEEN.
 WISHIN' THAT THE BLUES WOULD GO AWAY,
 CAN MAKE FOR ME A VERY LONELY DAY.

QUILTMAKER

ITS NOT YOUR FAULT THAT YOU'RE HUGE AND HAIRY.

BEAR

AND SMELLY AND SCARY AND GROTESQUE.

QUILTMAKER

DEEP INSIDE YOU'RE LIKE EVERYONE.

BEAR

THOUGH MY EXTERIOR MAY NOT BE PICTURESQUE.

IT WOULD BE WONDERFUL, AND MUCH MORE FUNDERFUL
 IF EVERYONE COULD TREAT ME IN THIS WAY.
 FOR THE KINDNESS YOU HAVE SHOWN ME,
 HAS MADE ME LESS ALONELY,
 AND HELPED ME FEEL A LITTLE MORE OK.
 SO TODAY IS NOT...A VERY LONELY DAY.

(They end the song in an embrace.)

BEAR

Now whattaya say, I get those pine needles. Then we can have a nice breakfast
 of berries. I've been saving a premium berry bush for just such an occasion.

(Lights transition to the soldiers marching to the cave.)

“SOLDIER’S SONG #4”

SOLDIERS

BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM
MARCHING TO THE DRUM, DRUM, DRUM, DRUM, DRUM

WE ARE THE SOLDIERS OF THE KING!
WHICH CAN BE AN AWFUL CURSE.
THOUGH WE MAY BE SOLDIERS, WE ARE
REALLY PEACEFUL LOVING PEOPLE.
WHICH MAKES IT EVEN WORSE.
BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM

WE ARE TRUDGING TO THE CAVE OF THE BEAR
IF YOU RECALL WE LEFT THE LADY THERE.
WE'RE AFRAID OF WHAT WE'LL FIND.
BEARS ARE NOT KNOWN FOR BEING KIND...

(They freeze in tableau as the music continues. We transition to the bear's cave.)

BEAR

More honey?

(The Quiltmaker is now sewing on his pillow, eating berries and sipping from a delicate tea cup. The bear does the same.)

QUILTMAKER

Actually if we had just a few more pine needles this might be perfect for you.

BEAR

I am most delighted to get them for you. I'll be right back.

(Starts to exit, then turns back.)

It's so very nice to have a visitor.

(The bear exits. We transition back to the Soldiers.)

SOLDIERS

BY NOW THE LADY SHOULD BE TORN TO BITS!
BODY PARTS AND MANGLED FLESH
AND VITAL ORGANS STREWN ABOUT
AND PILES OF BLOOD AND OOZY ICKY PUS!

THIS IS NOT A HAPPY DAY...
FOR US.

BRUM, BRUM, BRUM...etc.

CHORUS KING

(As he arrives from behind the soldiers)

What? Why aren't you torn to shreds? How did you escape the bear? And to think I was feeling sorry for you!

QUILTMAKER

You were?

CHORUS KING

Never you mind! I see you have started my quilt.

QUILTMAKER

I'm afraid you are mistaken, your majesty. This is a pillow for the bear. Poor thing had nothing on which to rest his head. He's really quite a nice fellow.

CHORUS KING

As opposed to me...is that what you're insinuating?

QUILTMAKER

You keep putting words in my mouth. And not very nice ones at that.

CHORUS KING

So, you will make a pillow for a lowly bear, but refuse to make a quilt for your king.

QUILTMAKER

He was in **need** of a pillow. But I can start your quilt today, if you've started giving things away.

CHORUS KING

I shall not lose one thing. But you on the other hand, may. Let's see if the fear of drowning will bring you to your senses. Soldiers...take her to the great lake. There you shall build her an island...

QUILTMAKER

(As the soldiers seize her.)

Oh that sounds very pleasant...

CHORUS KING

...only large enough for you to stand on your tippy toes. When you get tired and sleepy and need to lay down, you shall drown!

QUILTMAKER

Oh dear.

CHORUS KING

Of course it can all be avoided.

QUILTMAKER

Yes indeed it may...if only you'd start giving things away.

CHORUS KING

Take her.

(We hear the bear singing offstage. The king is in a hurry to leave. The Quiltmaker still holds the pillow. She pulls free of the soldiers and places the pillow where the bear had earlier laid his head, and takes a mint out of her pocket and places it on the pillow. She then returns to the soldiers and offers them her arms.)

Take her now...hurry.

(The king dashes out ahead of them all, obviously afraid of the bear.)

“SOLDIERS SONG #5”

SOLDIERS

BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM, BRUM

WE ARE THE SOLDIERS OF THE KING,
AND WE HAVE ANOTHER TASK.
WE ARE TAKING THE OLD LADY TO A SMALL SECLUDED ISLAND.
WHY?
WE DID NOT THINK TO ASK.
DUMB, DUMB, DUMB, DUMB

SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE AN AWFUL THREAT.
WHY THE KING IS ANGRY AND UPSET,
WE DO NOT GET.
AND YET...

DISSENT IS NOT ALLOWED,
WE MUST DO WHAT WE HAVE VOWED,
OUR JOB IS TO OBEY,
AND EVEN IF HIS MIND HAS GONE ASTRAY,
WE'D NEVER SAY...
OUTLOUD.

BRUM, BRUM, etc

(As two of the soldiers escort the Quiltmaker from the bear cave, we see the bear return. The bear sees the finished pillow, picks it up, hugs it and waves goodbye, as does the Quiltmaker. The bear then turns and allows the third soldier to help him take off the bear costume. They begin striking the bear cave and constructing the island. The other two soldiers return with the Quiltmaker and join in the construction. The island/water banner is placed. Material is laid on the floor to later be used as the water. The Quiltmaker is escorted by the guards and instructed to stand on the island, perhaps a crate draped in burlap. The King has entered and stands on the "edge of the lake" as it is created by the guards raising the blue shimmering material from the floor.)

CHORUS KING

Now old woman, what do you say? A quilt or a watery grave?

QUILTMAKER

I'm afraid you shall never have one of my quilts, until you know charity. I must stand on my principles.

CHORUS KING

The way I see it you have little to stand on. Tonight, when you fall asleep and sink to the bottom of the lake, you will wish you had made me a quilt.

"I"

CHORUS KING

I AM THE KING, THE KING, THE KING, THE KING!
WHICH MEANS THAT I'M THE BOSS OF EV-RY-THING!
I TELL MY LOYAL SUBJECTS WHAT TO DO.
I OWN THE ROCKS, THE TREES, THE LAKE, AND YOU!
WHEN I RAISE MY BOOMING VOICE....

QUILTMAKER

(She clears her throat loudly.)

Excuse me.

CHORUS KING

Heh?

QUILTMAKER

When you raise your "booming voice" do you listen to yourself?

KING

Well, I...

QUILTMAKER

If you did you'd notice. You say "I" an awful lot.

(She sings)

DID YOU KNOW THERE ARE SO
MANY LETTERS IN THE ALPHABET BUT "I"?

KING

I never really....

QUILTMAKER

TAKE A LOOK IN A BOOK
AT THE LETTERS BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER "I".

KING

I hardly think I...

QUILTMAKER

THERE IS A, B, C, AND D FOR DELIGHTFUL,
E FOR ENCHANTING, F FOR FAIR,
G FOR GOODNESS, GRACIOUS, GIFT AND GIVE.

H, I, J, AND K IS FOR KINDNESS.
TRY IT, YOUR HIGHNESS, IF YOU DARE.
YOU'LL BE AMAZED AT THE WAYS IT CAN CHANGE
THE WAY YOU LIVE.

WITH YOUR EYES OPEN WIDE, YOU WILL FIND
THERE IS MORE TO LIFE THAN "I".

KING

I think you should...

QUILTMAKER

AS THE DAY FADES AWAY,
YOU'LL BE LONELY IF YOUR ONLY LETTER'S "I".
THINK OF L, M, N, O, P IS FOR PLEASANT
BETTER THAT A PRESENT, YOU WILL SEE
Q, R, S AND T IF YOU ONLY TRY.

V IS THERE TO SHOW HOW VERY HAPPY YOU COULD BE.
AND YOU WOULD BE (DOUBLE-U) WONDERING WHY...

THE WORLD IS A KINDER PLACE.
THERE'S A SMILE ON A CHILD'S FACE.
THINK OF ALL THE PAIN YOU COULD ERASE
WERE YOU NOT SO FULL OF "I".

A LITTLE LESS "I"...
A FEW, FEWER "I's"...
SOMETHING OTHER THAN...

KING

(Cutting her off)

I, I, I, I, I AM STILL THE KING!
YOUR CLEVER LITTLE SONG WON'T CHANGE ONE THING!
IN FACT, IF YOU'LL PERMIT A QUICK REVIEW...
TAKE NOTE, YOU LEFT OUT THE LETTER "U"!

WELL, U...ARE IN A BIT OF A JAM
BECAUSE U...DON'T KNOW HOW TO OBEY.
SO U...WILL BE LEFT ON THIS ISLAND.
U...HAVE A NICE DAY!

(He exits. The soldiers exit the playing area after attaching the material to the "lake standard" and handing the other end to the old story teller. One immediately replaces her soldier costume with a sparrow costume. One soldier becomes "wind", another "water", and the other a second sparrow.)

"WIND, WATER, EARTH AND SKY"

CHORUS

THE WORLD TURNS, THE DAYS GO BY,
WIND AND WATER, EARTH AND SKY.
A LIFE IS BORN, A LIFE GOES BY,
WIND AND WATER, EARTH AND SKY.
EVERY HARDSHIP WE MUST FACE
WILL BRING US TO A BETTER PLACE.
AND IF WE NEED TO FIND A REASON WHY,
WE ASK THE WIND AND WATER, EARTH AND SKY.

(We hear wind. The following action takes place as the Old Man speaks. A sparrow comes flying by and struggles against the wind. The Quiltmaker extends her hand and helps the bird onto her island. The

bird is cold and shivers. The Quiltmaker takes off her vest and gives it to the sparrow.)

OLD MAN

A small sparrow had been lost in a storm, but the Quiltmaker, seeing the bird was cold and tired, offered to share her small space on the island, so the bird might rest.

CHORUS

FOR EVERY DREAM THERE IS A SIGH,
WIND AND WATER, EARTH AND SKY.
IN TIME OUR DREAMS ARE ECHOED BY
WIND AND WATER, EARTH AND SKY.

QUILTMAKER

LIFE REMAINS A NOBEL QUEST
FOR WHAT IS TRUE AND WHAT IS BEST.
ANSWERS TO A THOUSAND QUESTIONS LIE...

QUILTMAKER AND CHORUS

BETWEEN THE WIND AND WATER, EARTH AND SKY.
WIND AND WATER, EARTH AND SKY.
WIND AND WATER, EARTH AND SKY....etc

OLD MAN

To repay the Quiltmaker's kindness, the little bird called upon her friends to carry the Quiltmaker to the safety of a giant oak standing at the edge of the lake.

(Two sparrows lift her from the island, and with the help of the wind and the water, carry her to the safety of the tree. As the music ends, the chorus begins cleaning up the island and water. We transition to the king.)

CHORUS KING

Soldiers!!

(To himself.)

Again I cannot sleep.

We must journey quickly to the lake to save the Quiltmaker. I can't imagine what makes me do such things. Soldiers, wake up!

(At least two soldiers run quickly to his side, though they may not have had a chance to change their costumes. He sees them in their unusual outfits. He does a take to the audience. The chorus hurriedly change their costume. Even the old man and boy get involved in helping them change while the king paces. When all are changed, they leap into their song.)

SOLDIERS

WE ARE SOLDIERS OF THE KING...!

CHORUS KING

(Cutting them off)

Enough already! Geez, you are driving me nuts with that! Now lets move out, quietly!

(They march quietly with the King to the foot of the tree. The King looks off as though standing at the edge of the lake. The Quiltmaker sits in the tree above him, unseen by the king.)

AHHHH! Alas. We're are too late. She has disappeared into the deep and with her my hope of getting the one thing that might make me happy.

QUILTMAKER

Hope is never far away, and sometimes even closer than you think.

CHORUS KING

You! How did you...? Where did you...? And what are you doing up there?

QUILTMAKER

I'm thinking I should make some coats for my bird friends. They need something warm for the...

CHORUS KING

I give up. Tell me again what I must do for you to make me a quilt. This time I'll try hard to listen.

(He gesture for two of the guards to hold his ears wide open.)

QUILTMAKER

Just you come up here with me.

(She pats a space on the limb next to her.)

CHORUS KING

Oh, very well. *(He mumbles as he crawls up beside her.)*
There! I'm listening.

“THE GIFTS I SHARE” reprise

QUILTMAKER

OPEN YOUR EYES MY KING, LOOK PAST THE WORLD BELOW.
THE PIECE OF MIND THAT YOU LONG TO FIND
IS MUCH NEARER THAN YOU KNOW.

(Spoken)

Now tell me, why have you made it your business to collect so many things?

CHORUS KING

Because it makes me happy.

QUILTMAKER

Does it? You have been telling me how unhappy you are. So doesn't it follow
that all those things aren't the answer?

(She sings, intimately)

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED
FROM YOUR TOWER OF GIFTS GROWING HIGH?
HAS IT BROUGHT YOU THE JOY YOU SO DESIRE?
AND WHERE ARE YOU NOW,
FEELING LOST AND WEARY AND STRANGE?
WHEN NOTHING IS WORKING FOR YOU,
THEN PERHAPS YOU ARE READY FOR CHANGE.

CHORUS KING

Yeah, maybe. So?

QUILTMAKER

So...try giving some of them away.

CHORUS KING

I can't do that. I love all my beautiful and wonderful things. Without them, who would I be?

(The Chorus King gasps. Realizing what he just said he clasps his hand over his mouth.)

QUILTMAKER

Good question. If things don't make you happy, what good are they?

CHORUS KING

Well they....when I look at them....sometimes I...they seem to...
(A pause and a long sigh.)

QUILTMAKER

Do you like the view?

CHORUS KING

Very nice. What is that tiny little speck glimmering in the distance?

QUILTMAKER

Don't you recognize your castle, filled to the brim?

CHORUS KING

It doesn't look like much from here.

QUILTMAKER

Exactly. Pretty small in relation to the wonders all around you. Would it be so difficult to send out one tiny thing from your world into this larger one?

CHORUS KING

Hmmm. Well, when you put it like that it seems quite reasonable to...
(reluctantly) Gi...gi give something away. I can't imagine what it'd be.

QUILTMAKER

(Sings)

WHEN I BEGIN A QUILT, I START WITH A SINGLE SQUARE.
 THE SAME IS TRUE WHEN IT COMES TO YOU.
 YOU MUST BEGIN SOMEWHERE.

CHORUS KING

(Mumbles as he climbs down.)

One thing! I'll give away one thing.

QUILTMAKER

One thing will make an awfully small quilt, but it's a start.

CHORUS KING

And I have to start somewhere. That's what you said, right?

QUILTMAKER

That's correct. And when you do, I will start your quilt. I will add a piece for each thing you give to someone else.

CHORUS KING

This is going to be very difficult. I'll be overwhelmed just trying to decide what to part with. *(Looks back up at her.)* How will you know when I have done as you asked?

QUILTMAKER

Oh, a little bird will tell me.

CHORUS KING

Right.

(Mumbles as he is deep in thought and gestures for the soldiers to follow him.)

A little bird indeed. She's awfully friendly with all these creatures. She has friends at every turn...

(He exits with the soldiers who immediately set up the throne room and prepare to bring items out for the King to survey.)

OLD MAN

The king returned to his castle with every intention of finding something to part with.

THE CHILD

What did he give away?

OLD MAN

That was just the problem. He couldn't find anything he could bear to part with. He had the soldiers bring him this and that, bric and brac and fiddle faddle.

(They do.)

Still he couldn't find anything. In desperation he started searching for himself until...

CHORUS KING

(He has been rummaging through boxes and trunks until...)

Aha! Just the thing.

(He pulls out a marble.) (this coordinates with the triangle music)

This will do just fine. It has a little chip on it anyway. Now who to give it to. Ah...there, you boy, come here.

THE CHILD

(Looks at the old man. The old man gestures for him to go.)

Yes, sire?

CHORUS KING

I have a gi...gif... *(He has a hard time saying it and giving at the same time.)*

...gift for you.

THE CHILD

Really, for me?

CHORUS KING

Here, take it. Quickly, take it before I...

(He hands it to the boy. There is a magical sound effect.)

THE CHILD

It's really beautiful.

CHORUS KING

(Whispers.)

What's that you say?

THE CHILD

I said it's really beautiful. What a nice thing for you to do. Thank you sire, very much.

(The child is overjoyed and instinctively gives the King a hug before starting back to the old man. The king is taken aback by the show of affection.)

CHORUS KING

(Sings.)

I GAVE HIM THE TINIEST THING THAT I HAD,
AND LOOK AT THE SMILE IT BROUGHT TO THE LAD.
HMMMM....

(Spoken)

Hold on there boy...uh...*(Finding it hard to say.)*
I have others. Would you like another?

THE CHILD

I would indeed. I've never had a gift from a King before.

CHORUS KING

Really? Is that special?

(The boy nods his head. The king then turns and finds the bag of marbles.)

Oh heck. Take the whole bag.

(Another sound cue. He feels something strange. He sings)

SOMETHING IS STARTING TO HAPPEN TO ME,
PERHAPS IF I GIVE AWAY MORE...LET ME SEE...

(Spoken)

Guard!

(Tenor/Guard enters)

Bring me something that tickles your fancy.

(Guard runs off. To himself.)

I can hardly wait to see what he finds.

(Guard runs back on.)

TENOR

How about this, my liege? I think this is really fun.

CHORUS KING

Then it shall be yours. Take it, and run!

(Guard exits, overjoyed. King sings.)

THIS GIVING AWAY IS BECOMING APPEALING.
ITS FILLING ME UP WITH A CURIOUS FEELING.
SOMETHING I'VE NEVER ENCOUNTERED BEFORE.
NOW, HOW WOULD IT BE IF I GAVE AWAY MORE?

(Spoken)

Guards! Guards!

(Guards enter)

Bring me a wagon and load it with...

(King Sings as Guards assist him.)

MY BELL AND MY BOOK AND MY BIG COMFY CHAIR
AND MY PAINTING DEPICTING THE TREES AND THE AIR.
WE'LL PACK EM AND RACK EM AND STACK EM RIGHT THERE,
WHILE I THINK OF A FEW OTHER THINGS I CAN SHARE.
HMMMM...

MY CANDLE FOR TURNING THE NIGHT INTO DAY,
IT'S MARVELOUS, PERFECT FOR GIVING AWAY!
MY CHEMISTRY SET AND MY LARGE WOODEN CHEST,
MY JADE AND MY SPADE...PUT EM THERE WITH THE REST.

MY WHATSIT AND WHOSIT AND THINGAMABOB,
MY THINGAMAJIG AND THAT CORN ON THE COB,
MY EBONY CHESSBOARD, I'LL GIVE IT AWAY,
ESPECIALLY SINCE I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PLAY!

A BRIC AND A BRAC AND WHAT ELSE CAN YOU FIND?
A PAT ON THE BACK FOR MY NEW FRAME OF MIND!
I CAN FEEL A FEELING BEGINNING TO SOAR,
SO GATHER UP MORE, MORE, MORE, MORE, MORE!!!

(The music continues as the pantomime of giving things away takes place. The music changes with each country that he visits.)

OLD MAN

So on that very day the King started to find his long sought-after joy, not in receiving things, but in giving them away. And when he had given something to everyone in his own kingdom, he decided to go out into the world in search of those in need of his gifts.

(Here the pantomime takes a turn as we travel and move in the musical styles of the Orient, Mexico, Italy, The Middle East and Ireland. At some point the pantomime might take the soldiers and King into the audience with pieces of wrapped candy. As the pantomime and musical interlude draw to a close, the old man continues.)

OLD MAN

At long last the King arrived home.

(The Chorus King is handed the book by the old man and begins to write as he sings.)

“HAPPINESS” reprise

CHORUS KING

HAPPINESS , YOU'RE HERE!

OLD MAN

(Echoes and joins the song, but never looks at the Chorus King for they are one in the same.)

HAPPINESS, YOU'RE HERE!

CHORUS KING AND OLD MAN

LIKE A GENTLE WIND, YOU'VE CAUSED THE CLOUDS TO CLEAR.

CHORUS KING

HOW YOU'VE BROUGHT ME A WHOLE NEW FRAME OF MIND...

(He hands the book to the old man who jots his own note.)

OLD MAN

HOW YOU'VE BROUGHT ME A WHOLE NEW FRAME OF MIND...

CHORUS KING AND OLD MAN

A FEELING I FEARED I'D NEVER FIND.

OH HAPPINESS, DIVINE....

(By this time the Chorus King has taken off his kingly robe and given it away to reveal under-dress that is a cleaner version of the old man's garb. The transition is complete and the old man stands alone with the manuscript in the same position of the stage as where we started. The boy has crossed to his starting point as well.)

OLD MAN

AT LONG LAST YOU ARE MINE.

THE CHILD

(Suspiciously)

And then...well...What did you say happened to the King?

OLD MAN

As you have guessed, my journey finally brought me home. I am delighted to see my people thriving and that, as was my wish, the castle has been transformed into a shelter for the poor. And I am delighted to see little ones playing at being King.

THE CHILD

And the Quiltmaker?

QUILTMAKER

(Has entered)

...is closer than may you think.

(To the old man.)

Welcome home, old friend.

OLD MAN

But, how did you know? Ahhh...don't tell me. A little bird told you?

QUILTMAKER

Just so. I have something for you.

(The ensemble presents the Old Man with a huge quilt, wrapping him in it.)

OLD MAN

It's grander than I could have imagined! And I have something for you. I have one last treasure to share. It was the thing I most treasured, once upon a time. Now I give it to you. It occurred to me that you might make good use of it.

(He slips the cover from the item still on the wagon. It is his throne.)

It's just the thing for long days of sewing and singing. I thought perhaps if you'd make more of those lovely quilts...well could I...I mean, I would be honored if you'd allow me to give them away. You can see I have little else to give.

(A beat)

It would save you a lot of trips up and down the mountain...

QUILTMAKER

What a wonderful idea!

THE CHILD

This throne must be worth a lot of money.

(Aside to the Quiltmaker)

It could make you very wealthy.

QUILTMAKER

(Chuckles.) Dear boy. I have always been wealthy beyond...beyond.

“WEALTH BEYOND, BEYOND”

QUILTMAKER

WEALTH BEYOND, BEYOND IS FOUND IN SIMPLE THINGS.

OLD MAN

STORIES TOLD TO LITTLE BOYS,

QUILTMAKER

LESSONS LEARNED BY KINGS.

OLD MAN, QUILTMAKER AND
ENSEMBLE

(Chorus enters from various parts of the stage.)

WEALTH BEYOND, BEYOND CAN COME FROM ANYWHERE,
AND WHEN WE LEAST EXPECT IT, IT IS THERE.

QUILTMAKER

THE LIFE WE CHOSE TO LIVE,

OLD MAN

(Handing the manuscript to the Child.)

THE STORIES THAT WE SHARE,

QUILTMAKER AND OLD MAN

ARE JOINED IN ONE GREAT TAPESTRY
OF COLORS RICH AND RARE.

THE CHILD

WEALTH BEYOND, BEYOND, I THINK I UNDERSTAND,
IT ISN'T FOUND IN PALACES. IT'S RIGHT HERE IN MY HAND.

OLD MAN

RICHES COME AND RICHES GO
AND WHAT THEY ARE WE SELDOM KNOW.

QUILTMAKER

A STORY OLD AS HUMANKIND,

QUILTMAKER, OLD MAN AND
ENSEMBLE

THE SEARCH FOR THE GREATEST TREASURE ANYONE CAN FIND!
WEALTH BEYOND, BEYOND, IS EASY NOW TO SEE.
IT'S IN THE HEART OF EVERYONE, WAITING TO BE FREE.
FOR ANYONE WHO'S EVER LIVED, WHETHER GREAT OR SMALL...

THE CHILD

THE GIVING IS THE GIFT...
AND THAT IS ALL.

(As the Quiltmaker, Old Man and Chorus leave the stage, the boy, holding the book, starts to exit.. He stops, turns and looks at the audience. As he deliberately extends his new found treasure to the audience, the light narrows on his face beaming with the joy of giving, and on the gift which he offers.)

BLACKOUT

(After curtain call, as the music continues, the chorus, now in base costume, gets busy setting the wagon and the other items back to their original position, while waving good-bye to the audience. Their final act

*is to cover everything with the giant quilt drop. They wave and exit.
Lights go to original pre-set.)*