ETHAN

(Responds absentmindedly.)

Yes.

ALFRED

I hope that you rested well through the night. Breakfast

good?

ETHAN

(Distractedly fools with his pocket.)

Yes. Thank you.

ALFRED

So shall we begin with the order of the day?

ETHAN

Mmm..hmm.

(As ALFRED speaks, ETHAN

continues to reach discreetly

for his pocket in an attempt

to keep hidden a live frog

that is trying to free itself.)

ALFRED

This morning is the weekly audience with the king, where

you hear the complaints of the people, collect the

customary chicken or goat as gratitude. After that, an

etiquette lesson with your mother. Noon meal in the great

hall. Then off to the library for arithmetic and geography,

followed by sword fighting, archery. Then...what is that?

(ALFRED motions to ETHAN’S pocket)

ETHAN

Excuse me?

ALFRED

What is that?

ETHAN

What is what?

ALFRED

In your pocket?

ETHAN

In my pocket?

ALFRED

Yes, Your Majesty, in your pocket.

ETHAN

Oh, that...nothing really...just...

ALFRED

Yes?

ETHAN

Just...a frog.

ALFRED

Really? And has this frog agreed to attend you through all

your kingly duties today?

(ETHAN is silent.)

Perhaps it would be happier back in the creek from which it

came?

(ETHAN reluctantly reaches for

his pocket pulling out the

frog. ALFRED makes a gesture

with his hand and up runs a

servant who takes the frog from

ETHAN. After a few steps, the

frog escapes and the servant

scurries after as it hops

zig zaggedly off stage.

ETHAN suppresses a laugh,

ALFRED rolls his eyes. Stage

left, enter QUEEN SARAH, late

30's, attractive, regal, yet

warm hearted and approachable.

She smiles invitingly at both

ALFRED and ETHAN.)

QUEEN SARAH

Another lovely day.

(ETHAN and ALFRED cross stage to

greet her, bowing.)

ETHAN

Good morning, Mother.

ALFRED

Good morning, Your Majesty. You look beautiful, as usual.

QUEEN SARAH

Thank you, Alfred. And you, gracious with your

compliments, as usual. Have the men begun repairing the

road just west of the main gate?

ALFRED

As you requested.

QUEEN SARAH

Very good.

(Turning to address ETHAN with a

twinkle in her eye.)

The day is getting away from us! Shall we press on? There

is a crowd of villagers already awaiting your presence.

(ETHAN and QUEEN SARAH begin

walking stage right, ALFRED

following behind.)

ETHAN

(Laughing)

Do you think a pig will get loose again in the great hall?

I thought they would never catch it.

QUEEN SARAH

(laughing)

Whatever the day holds, I'm sure it will be full of

surprises.

ETHAN

May I ask you a question?

(ETHAN looks back at ALFRED, who

falls back to give ETHAN privacy.)

QUEEN SARAH

Of course.

ETHAN

(A bit self consciously)

The stories you've told me about my father and the kings

and queens that came before him, all the great things they

accomplished...were they always so sure of themselves? Did

they make mistakes? What if I do? What if I’m a terrible

king?

(QUEEN SARAH stops walking to face

ETHAN, placing her hands on his

shoulders or making some other

gesture of physical intimacy and

assurance.)

QUEEN SARAH

It is easy to tell a story when you already know the

ending. I cannot tell you what your future holds but you

QUEEN SARAH (CONT.) 11

must have faith and hold true to what you know to be right

and good. That is all one can ever do.

(QUEEN SARAH, ALFRED and ETHAN

are now stage right. A loud

monstrous roar is heard

offstage.)

What was that?

(ALFRED, QUEEN SARAH and ETHAN

look up and around. Another roar.

Lights rise on TOWNSPEOPLE who

begin to appear upstage as if

they are coming out of their

houses and shops, staring up at

the sky, pointing, straining

to get a look at where the

sound is coming from.)

ALFRED

I've heard that sound only once before, as a small boy.

(Another roar)

ETHAN

What is it, Alfred?

(A townsperson screams, then

another as they see the

dragon in the air.)

TOWNSPERSON #1

I see it!

TOWNSPERSON #2

What is it?

TOWNSPERSON #3

It's coming round again!

TOWNSPERSON #4

(Enter stage)

The fields are on fire! The fields are on fire!

TOWNSPERSON #5

Quick, we need water!

TOWNSPERSON #6

Buckets! Buckets! To the river!

(Several people run off stage

while others remain, some

cowering.)

ALFRED

It is...your mortal enemy...Your Highness.

(Center stage--Townspeople now

form a crowd facing the audience

as if they are storming the gate.

They begin to pantomime pounding

on the doors of the castle.

We hear loud pounding off stage.)