The Sorcerer's Apprentice

Play and Lyrics by
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Music and Additional Lyrics by
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The Sorcerer's Apprentice was first presented by Seattle Children's Theatre for the 2006-2007 season.

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(Note: Except for Charles, Marguerite and John, who are the principal characters, all the others can be multiply cast which means the piece can be done with 7 to 8 actors. Musicians are excluded here but can also be utilized in some scenes that would benefit from onstage musicians. The 3-4 actors beyond the principals should also be dancers who can act and sing as in musical theatre.

CHARLES---9, an orphan, the apprentice
MARGUERITE---40-60, the sorcerer
JOHN---40, the evil conjurer
(The following are smaller parts that can be multiply cast with actor/dancer/singer folks : )
MISS ORANGE TREE, ageless, fussy, orange tree
MISS GRAPEVINE
MR. JUNIPER BUSH
MR. JEREMY GROUNDHOG
MR. WHO
THE DEMONS (2)
THE OLD BARON
GORDAGU
MUSICIAN(S)
SONGS

ACT I
1. I’m Moving on
2. Not Just a Tree
3. Grumble Grumble Grumble
4. I’ll Show You!
5. I Got a Deal For Ya
6. You Have Got To Listen
7. The Words The Words
8. Marguerite’s Healing Medicines (poem to music)

ACT II
9. Convincin’ Oil
10. Grumble, reprise
11. Gordagu Chop Chop
12. You Blew It
13. Our Hero
14. Gotstado
(14) THE SORCERER’S APPRENTICE

(MUSIC: Background Instrumental, befitting the narrative; Lights reveal a very tired, terrified, unkempt looking CHARLES as night begins a cacophony of insect and animal night sounds. He carries stick to which is tied a bundle with his belongings. He wears a torn cap of some sort. He clutches his growling, empty stomach. He hurries along.)

CHARLES (singing)
I KEEP MOVIN’ ON; I MUST KEEP MOVIN’ ON.
TILL I SEE WHAT I NEED AND I NEED WHAT I SEE.
I’LL KEEP MOVIN’ ON.

(rapping)
I WONDER IF THIS ROAD WILL TAKE ME TO A PLACE BETTER THAN WHERE I WAS.
BUT NOW MY LIFE IS IN MY OWN HANDS AND I MUST BE STRONG ENOUGH TO FIND MY WAY.

(singing)
I’LL KEEP MOVIN’ ON; I’LL JUST KEEP MOVIN’ ON.
TILL I SEE WHAT I NEED, AND NEED WHAT I SEE,
I’LL KEEP MOVIN’ ON.
SINCE THERE’S NOTHING TO STOP FOR OR WASTING MY TIME FOR...
AND NOTHING BUT MISERY AND NO ONE TO CARE FOR ME...
I’LL ACT LIKE A MAN---
WITH A POWERFUL PLAN.
TILL SOMEBODY WILL LOVE ME THE STARLIGHT ABOVE ME IS ALL THAT I HAVE TO SHOW ME THE WAY,
AS I KEEP MOVIN’...
MUST KEEP MOVIN’ ON.
(Speaking, not rapping, lines over accompaniment)

I BEEN WALKING FOR DAYS ON MY
SORE AND TIRED FEET,
AND I’M SO HUNGRY I COULD JUST LAY DOWN AND DIE!

(MUSIC OUT as the BARON appears before him. The Baron wears an
all white outfit that glows. CHARLES is startled, stifles a
scream, tries to put on a brave front.)

CHAS.
Oh! Didn’t mean ta scare ya. I’m sorta tough looking, ya know?
Name’s Charles. What’s yours?

BARON
Call me Baron.

CHAS.
I’m pleased to meetcha, Mr. Baron. You need some hired help?

BARON
I need no help. When I hear people call out for help, I come.
You won’t die. You’re just lost and hungry.

CHAS. (arrogant, speaking rapidly before thinking)
No. I’m too big to get lost. I know just where I’m going,
because… (pauses abruptly, finally hearing Baron’s last
word) Huh? Hungry, you said? You got food?

BARON
I never eat.

CHAS. (rapidly)
Oh, yer hungry too—well, that makes two of us—maybe we kin join
up and find some food to eat and then…Huh? Ya never eat?

BARON (amused)
I hear someone calling. I have to go. I’m certain I’ll see you
again. (pointing) There’s food down the road.

CHAS.
There is?
(The BARON disappears. CHARLES hurries on; LIGHTS slowly rise to full on the enchanted forest. CHARLES is astounded by what he sees. THE ENTIRE FOREST HAS AN OTHER WORLDSLY GLOW ABOUT IT. DANCE: EXOTIC, FLOWERING PLANTS, ANIMALS, TREES sway softly, dance, to the uniform percussive rhythm of a mild, flute, sounding wind. GLOWING INSECTS OF DIFFERING COLORS seemingly fly about the space. PUPPETS: BRIGHTLY COLORED TWITTERING BIRDS flutter overhead in rhythm; MR.WHO, a big-eyed, eccentric owl sits on a branch of MISS ORANGE TREE, his back to us. SOME FLOWERS grow up full from the earth before our eyes. MUSIC GOES UNDER, IS FAINT. No one should know immediately that the trees and bushes are actors. CHARLES’ stomach growls loudly as he rubs it. Present are MS. GRAPEVINE and MR. JUNIPER BUSH. He is ecstatic when he sees MISS ORANGE TREE, tries to pull on an orange when:)

MISS ORANGE TREE (MOT) (upper class Southern accent)
Ahhhhhhhhgh! Ouch! How dare you!
(SLAPS HIS HAND. MUSIC OUT ON A SUDDEN SOUR NOTE.)

MOT
How would you like it if I ripped your finger off?

CHARLES (astounded, frightened, intensely curious)
Yer talking!

MOT
How...Why...You can...Are you pretending to hear me?

CHAS.
That’s it! I’m cuckoo. Trees cain’t talk!

MOT, JUNIPER, GRAPEVINE
WE beg your ignorant pardon!

CHAS.
No! It’s a trick. Orange trees, grapevines and juniper bushes cain’t talk!

MOT (livid)
Hmmmmph! We certainly talk better than you and it’s MISS Orange Tree.

GRAPEVINE
MISS Grapevine, if you please.

JUNIPER
MR.Juniper.

MOT, GRAPEVINE AND JUNIPER
You disrespectful little yipyap!

MR.WHO (rotates head 180 degrees, rolls his eyes)
Whooooooo Whoooooo Whooooo do you think you are?

CHAS. (not seeing Owl who re-rotates head to previous)
Who said that?

MOT
Who did.

CHAS.
That’s what I asked. Who said that?

JUNIPER
Who said it, noodle head.

CHAS.
But who is who?

GRAPEVINE
Who is Who. That’s true.

CHAS.
What’s true?

GRAPEVINE
That Who is Who.

CHAS.
Who said “Whooooo whoooo whoooo do you think you are?”

GRAPEVINE
Who said it.

JUNIPER
Who are you?
CHAS.
No, who is not me!

MOT
Puuuuuulease stop. You’re making my head spin like a mad hurricane! I’ll tell you who this child is; he is deranged, flighty, daffy, bananas, a total drizzlehead.

WHO (rotates head)
Drizzlehead is whoooooo he is.

GRAPEVINE
Well said, Mr. Who.

CHAS. (seeing Owl, getting it)
Owls too!? I lost my mind somewhere along the way. Trees cain’t talk!

MOT
People make me sick sometimes. They just refuse to understand that: (singing)

Not Just a Tree
I’M NOT JUST A TREE
I’M AN INSTITUTION

(all three plants)
THE QUEEN OF ALL THE PLANTS THAT MAKE THE AIR YOU BREATHE.
AAAAAAHHHH...
WE’RE NOT JUST PLANTS!
WE’VE CONQUERED AIR POLLUTION.
WITH ANGER NOW YOU’VE GONE AND MADE US SEETHING

(Motown-ish/a la Supremes)
TO THINK WE GROWING THINGS
CANNOT BE KNOWING THINGS...
WHAT A DUMB CONCLUSION!
BECAUSE A PLANT CAN PROTECT YOU
OR BRING YOU TO TEARS.
A PLANT HAS GOT FEELINGS
JUST LIKE ANYBODY HERE.
AND A PLANT CAN GROW WITH YOU
THROUGH ALL YOUR YEARS.

(ORANGE TREE)
I AM A TEMPLE OF LOVE...
ARMS OUTSTRETCHED TO THE SUN
AND ALL THE WORLD IS MY FUN...
BIRDS MY SYMPHONY...
RAIN IS MY MAKEUP.

(all three plants)
WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM?!!
WE ARE THE TEMPLES OF LOVE.
STOP...

THE CONFUSION.
WE ARE QUEENS OF THE FOREST
AND KINGS OF THE LAND.
A PLANT CAN DANCE AND SING
AND DO MOST ANYTHING.
EVERY CREATURE NEEDS US,
BECAUSE WE COVER THE PLANET
WITH THE AIR YOU BREATHE.

A PLANT HAS GOT FEELINGS
JUST LIKE ANYBODY HERE
AND A PLANT WILL GROW WITH YOU
THROUGH ALL YOUR YEARS.

What is your problem.

WE ARE TEMPLES OF LOVE
STOP
THE CONFUSION.
I AM MS.ORANGE TREE...
MS.GRAPEVINE...
MISTER JUNIPER BUSH.
SHOW
SOME RESPECT.
(JEREMY GROUNDHOG, a puppet, enters, rooting about for food.)
MOT (talking)
You keep your unwashed hands to yourself, squash head.
CHARLES
Name’s Charles, Ma’am, and I’m powerful hungry, but I won’t touch ya again.
MOT
Charlie Chump; that’s what I hereby name you.
CHARLES
I’m sorry! That’s all I can say. Maybe I’ll just roast that groundhog.
(ALL scream at him. JEREMY GROUNDHOG, a puppet, yells, jumps around, fists up.)
JEREMY
CHARLES (astounded)
Groundhogs talk too?
MOT
Now, Jeremy, calm down; Charlie Chump will soon be gone. (to Charles) I suggest you vacate Miss Marguerite’s enchanted forest now!
CHARLES (bewildered)
Who’s Miss Marguerite? And what in tarnation is a enchanted forest?
Miss Marguerite owns this forest, Chump, and it’s a place where anything can happen, even accidents like you. People never come here. How did you get here?

CHAS.
I followed the road.

JEREMY (fists up, dancing Ali style)
You better follow it outta here, chump, before I turn you into a chump burger.

CHAS.
Why, just ‘cause I’m hungry?

JEREMY
No, because you’re a cannibal! (dancing Ali style, fists up)

(HE chases CHARLES off. LIGHTS crossfade as THEY ad lib chatter; out on previous area, rise on CHARLES stalking about a badly tended, untidy, weed-choked garden, stealing an onion and a squash. He hears someone approaching, hides and peeks from behind a ROCK. MARGUERITE enters, begins hoeing a patch of spinach. She is dressed in a simple, but elegant house dress and is wearing a voluminous, elaborately styled, startlingly sky blue gele (pron. gay-lay), a Yoruba woman’s head wrap, and mystical looking jewelry that dangles from her wrists and neck. She grumbles in song.

MARGUEROTE
Nature is a better sorcerer than I could ever be. I wish nature could pull these weeds for me.

(singing/New Orleans beat)
Grumble, Grumble, Grumble
I SO SICK OF THIS GARDENIN’ TING,
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE
I HOE AND I CHOP 'TIL MY WHOLE HEAD RING
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE
IF I COULD FIND GOOD HELP, I’D SING.
I’D TAKE OFF AND FLY LIKE A BIRD ON THE WING.

MY JOB IS TO HEAL, AND CALM THE SPIRIT,
LISTEN TO THE MIND, LISTEN TO THE SOUL,
LISTEN TO THE HEART AND HEAR IT

BUT TO WHOM WILL I TEACH ME CRAFT?
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE
IF DIS OL’ HERB GARDEN MAKE ME DAFT?
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE

IF I COULD FIND GOOD HELP, I’D SING, I’D SING...
IF I COULD FIND GOOD HELP, I’D SING
AND TAKE OFF AND FLY LIKE A BIRD ON THE WING.

BUT TO WHOM CAN I TEACH MY CRAFT
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE
IF DIS OL’ HERB GARDEN MAKE ME DAFT
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE
IF I DON’T FIND GOOD HELP, I’LL SCREAM.
I NEED AN APPRENTICE RIGHT NOW!

MAR.
Oh, this kinda work make me vex! Where did I put me rake! Rake, rake, where are ya? (Intoning mystically) ASEEM DA KABALLA, DEEDEEDIMZOCK!
(The rake comes floating in, hovers near her. CHARLES is flabbergasted.)

MAR.
NEEBOODONGATA NEEBOODONGATA!
(The rake lowers itself to the ground.)

MAR.

And where is me seed basket? I know I leave the seed basket here yesterday. DOOCANDE LOPA LOPA DOOCANDE TONKA!
(The seed basket comes floating. CHARLES is stunned.)

MAR.

NEEBOODONGATA NEEBOODONGATA
(The seed basket lowers itself to the ground on her words. She resumes working, notices missing veggies.)

MAR.

Hey now, somebody done tief me onions and squash.

(Charles, goods in hand, upon hearing this, tries to sneak away)

Who

There’s the thief!

(Marguerite turns and sees him. Charles tries to run. She touches her gele which instantly glows and she extends a hand toward Chas. while intoning.)

Marguerite

BAZOMBA KEETAHKO.

(Charles freezes mid stride, struggles to break free.)

MAR. (angry)

What ya doin’ stealing me onions and squash, boy? Huh?

CHAS.

I’m mighty sorry, ma’am.

MAR.

Hmmmmph! You sorry I catch ya tiefing me food. I think I turn you into a salamander.

CHAS. (terrified)

A salamander? That’s a lizard! Please, I won’t do it again. Please don’t turn me into a salamander. I’ll pay for the food.

MAR.
I gon’ make ya pay for ya crime by crawlin’ on ya belly for the rest of ya life.

MOT
Serves him right. He tried to injure me.

JEREMY
He tried to roast me.

CHAS. (quickly)
It was a accident.

(MARGUERITE is startled, but impressed that he can talk to MOT and JER.)

MAR.
When ya start hearing the trees and animals talk?

CHAS.
When I got here. I mean…I just…I always did listen to nature, but I never heard trees talking and stuff until I came here.

MAR. (impressed, does magic gesture)
Boy, I release ya, but don’t try and run, is clear?

CHAS.
Yes, ma’am.

MAR.
Where ya parents, boy?

CHAS.
They died when I was a baby, so I was put with neighbors.

MAR.
Where the neighbors?

CHAS
They was mean to me, kept saying I was a weirdo, they hit me, and I don’t like folks ta hit me, so I ran away.

MOT
The weirdo part is right, Miss Marguerite.

CHAS.
So you’re Marguerite.
Miss Marguerite to you, boy.

CHAS. (desperate)
Miss Marguerite, Ma’am, I need a job.

MAR.

Oh?

CHAS.
Yes, ma’am. You need a good man to do your gardening. And I know everything there is to know about gardening.

MAR. (laughs)
A good man, eh? You is only half a man and a tief. I and I can’t have no tief in me forest.

CHAS. (bravely)
I am not a tief. I mean thief. I was hoping to work for the food, maybe do your gardening, because (cajoling) I can tell a smart lady like you is way too important to do garden work, is all.

MAR. (flattered)
Tank you. But the young people today don’t do nothin’ but sit around playing games. They all incompetent gardeners, kee’yant tell a carrot from a cucumber, scared of earthworms even.

CHAS. (quickly)
Not me. I eat earthworms for breakfast.

JEREMY (picks up a big wiggling worm, gives it to him)
Here, eat this worm.

(CHAS., with a hugely disgusted look, takes the worm and slowly brings to his mouth. MAR. is amused at his discomfort.)

CHAS. (quick thinking)
Ma’am, I can’t eat a worm without salt and pepper. If I had salt and pepper, I’d just gobble it down like a double cheeseburger.

(MAR. intones.)
MAR.

MOTOBAHTO BAKA.

(Large, Salt and pepper appear.)

MAR.

Get the salt and pepper, boy, and feast on the double cheeseburger.

CHAS. (crestfallen, his bluff called, ugly face)

Ooooooh uuuuggghh!

(Puts salt and pepper on the wiggling worm, brings worm to his twisted mouth.)

CHAS. (quickly)

Ma’am, earthworms are good for a garden. It’d be a downright shame ta eat it.

(MAR. and ALL THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS laugh at his ploy.)

MAR.

Okay, boy, ya prove ya got quick mind.

CHAS. (relieved, anxious to prove something)

Can I have the job?

MAR.

I give you job, but you must do it properly. I give you three chances and then you out. If you mess up once, I don’t like it; if you mess up twice, I don’t like it more. If you mess up three times, I fire ya. Is clear?

CHAS. (excited, happy)

Yes ma’am. I won’t mess up none. I promise.

CHAS.

May I be your apprentice sorcerer too?

MAR.

You have to be very special to be an apprentice.

CHAS.

What makes a person special?

MAR.
Talking to the forest is only half of it.

CHAS.

What’s the other half?

MAR.

Doing the right thing.

CHAS.

How do ya know if you’re doing the right thing?

MAR.

The brave heart always know when it time to stand up and fight for what is right, fight with all your might. Is clear?

CHAS. (a bit perplexed)

I reckon so. I guess.

MAR.

Fine. I see more dirt on you than in me garden. Go down to the creek, wash, scrub, scrape all the dirt off ya body.

CHAS.

I don’t have no soap or nothing. No clean clothes.

MAR. (intoning)

KARAZOOM

(A large basket, with clean clothes, soap, a towel and a box of food floats in, hovers.)

MAR.

NEEBOODONGATA NEEBOODONGATA

(The basket lowers to the ground at CHAS.’S feet.)

CHAS. (in awe)

Gollygeesumthin! A real live magician.

MAR.

I and I is not magician. Me is sorcerer; got bigger connections than magician. Don’t do magic tricks. Now go scrub ya’self. You can stay in the small room at the back of me house. And eat the food in that box.
CHAS. (ripping open the box)
FOOD!
(HE sits, eats voraciously.)
MAR.
Take the food with you, boy!
(HE exits, eating madly.)
WHO
That boy is a hoooooot, but he’s brave!
MOT
He has no class whatsoever.
GRAPEVINE
At least he doesn’t think he’s better than everyone.
JUNIPER
He’s got potential but he’d be tough to educate.
JEREMY
Hmmph! Cannibals can’t be educated.
MAR.
Me give the boy a chance. Maybe he special, can’t tell yet.
(LIGHTS crossfade; up on CHARLES unhappily working in the
garden, hoeing and pulling weeds, clearly bored. MISS ORGANGE TREE, MR.JUNIPER BUSH, MISS GRAPEVINE, WHO, JEREMY look on skeptically. PATTER MUSIC.)
CHAS. (singing acapella)
Grumble Grumble Grumble
I SO SICK OF THIS GARDENING THING
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE
I HOE AND CHOP ‘TIL MY WHOLE HEAD RING
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE GRUMBLE

MOT
A chump can never become a gardener, much less a sorcerer!
(THEY all laugh at her comment.)
CHAS. (defiant)
I can be a sorcerer!
I will be a sorcerer!
I’ll show you!
SONG: I’LL SHOW YOU!

CHAS. (SINGING)
I’LL SHOW YOU; I’LL SHOW YOU;
I’LL SHOW YOU; I’LL SHOW YOU!
I’M GONNA BE A SORCERER
AND MAKE MY DREAMS COME TRUE.
I WANT TO RIDE AN EAGLE’S BACK
AND SEE THE WORLD A-NEW.

I’LL SHOW YOU; I’LL SHOW YOU.
I WANT TO BE A SORCERER
LAUGH AT STUFF THAT’S FUNNY
AND THEN I’LL TAKE THE SADDEST KIDS
I’LL MAKE THEIR DAYS BE SUNNY.
I’LL SHOW YOU...I’LL SHOW YOU.

(BRIDGE)
I WILL FLY TO THE STARS
AND WARM MY HANDS ON THE SUN;
THEN SIT ON THE MOON
AND WATCH THE COMETS RUN.
I WILL FIND A PLACE WHERE ALL IS PEACE AND FUN,
AND THERE’S DANCING FROM SUN TO SUN.
I’LL SHOW YOU; I’LL SHOW YOU.

(Hot break over Latin drumming)
IT SEEMS TO ME THAT I CAN BE
A SORCERER IF I WANT TO BE...
I’LL FLOAT AROUND FROM SEA TO SEA,
AND FOLKS WILL DO MY WORK FOR ME.
I’LL CHANGE A GNAT INTO A RAT, A HORSE INTO A CAT.
AND ALL YOU PLANTS I’LL TURN TO PLASTIC.
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?

I’M GONNA BE A SORCERER
AND MAKE MY DREAMS COME TRUE.
I’M GONNA FLY AROUND THE WORLD
AND MAKE IT ALL A-NEW.
I WANT TO MAKE A LAND OF WEALTH AND EASE,
WHERE A GUY COULD DO WHAT HE’D PLEASE.
I’LL SHOW YOU.
I’LL SHOW YOU.
I’M GONNA BE A SORCERER...
I’LL SHOW YOU!

CHAS
I ain’t gonna pay any attention to you guys!
(CHAS. continues working incompetently. WHO and MOT, argue furiously. GRAPEVINE, JUNIPER exit.)

M.O.T.
“Ain’t gonna” be a sorcerer? Hmmph! Speaking that kind of English, he’d make a better bucket, I assure you!
(JEREMY enters with mischief on his mind.)

JEREMY
Good gracious, boy. Look what you’ve done!

CHAS.
What? What I do?

JEREMY
You’re pulling up the spinach instead of the weeds.

CHAS.
I am?

JEREMY
For sure. See? *(pointing to spinach)* those are weeds and that *(pointing to weeds)* is spinach. Pull the weeds and put them in a pile; I’ll haul them away for you.

CHAS.
You will? Gee, thanks!

JEREMY
My pleasure. *(watches him a bit)* You’re doing so good now, Marguerite might even give ya a promotion.

CHAS. *(pulls weeds faster)*
Really? I’ll make her proud of me!
*(JEREMY secretly snickers at him. MARGUERITE enters.)*

CHAS.
Hi, Miss Marguerite. I’m pullin’ the weeds just like you told me.

MAR. *(inspecting)*
Boy, them not weeds; that’s me spinach!

CHAS.
Uh…I…oh…shucks…I…But Jeremy told me the spinach was a weed. He tricked me.

JEREMY
No, I tested you, boy, and you failed. *(gathering spinach)* I think I’ll go fix me some spinach lasagna. Goodbye.
*(LIGHTS OUT on JEREMY who exits. LIGHTS REMAIN ON MARGUERITE, WHO AND MOT.)*

MAR.
(She exits MOT and WHO laugh.)

MOT (snidely)
Perhaps on his planet spinach is a weed.

WHO
You must give him credit for working hard.

MOT
Puuuulease. Hard work is immensely overrated, darling.

CHAS.
It’s not fair to trick peobple like that!

WHO
That was a dirty trick Jeremy played. But, it seems you tricked yourself.

LIGHTS suddenly dim to eerie coloring; the entire forest trembles, lightning flashes, thunder rumbles; large crows call out and circle overhead. OMINOUS, DARK MUSIC. JOHN V.KING enters through the audience toward the forest, wearing a crooked stovepipe hat, ragged clothing, unshaven, holding two DEMONS, each on a leash. The Demons are hybrid creatures, grotesque, with some huminoid features. They occasionally growl and snap at audience. He glares about the audience, intimidates folks. When he sees CHARLES, he orders his Demons thusly):

JOHN
Wait, sit, stay, quiet!
(The DEMONS sit quietly. As he walks upon the stage, The WHOLE FOREST leans away from him.)

JOHN
Come here, boy.

(CHAS., wary, hesitates.)

JOHN
Do you know a sorcerer woman named Marguerite?

CHAS.
Yessir, I’m her gardener and I live in her house.
Oh? I done hit the jackpot. Is she anywhere near about?

(Next 8 speeches are rapid fire, greatly flusters JOHN.)

MOT
Don’t tell him anything!

CHAS.
I don’t have to obey you!

WHO
But you should listen to her.!

CHAS.
Why? She hates me!

MOT
He’s a dangerous man!

CHAS.
I ain’t scared...! Too much.

WHO (screeching high pitched)
Whoooooo is this evil man?

CHAS.
Be quiet and leave me alone!

JOHN (angrily)
What? You talk to big John King like that.

CHAS.
I was talking to that orange tree and that owl, honest, Mister!

(JOHN gestures to his DEMONS that CHAS. is crazy. Releases him. DEMONS utter snortling laughter.)

JOHN
Plants and birds don’t talk, boy.

MOT (quickly)
He can’t hear us.

CHAS.
I know.

JOHN
Good. Now step over here where the trees cain’t...uh...”ovaheah” us.

WHO

Be careful what yooooooou say!

(THEY step away from MOT and WHO. LIGHTS OUT on those two.)

JOHN

This sorcerer woman, she got plenty power?

CHAS. (childish excitement)

You standing in her forest. She can do anything. She can even make things fly. You need her help?

JOHN (scheming)

Well, yeah, I come to get what she got, and I just might have a job for ya.

CHAS.

I got a job now.

JOHN

Oh, but I got a special deal for ya.

CHAS. (curious)

You do?

JOHN (recitative)

I got knowledge of the latest explicatory evidence Of majorific scientistical analabis. I got the newest metawizzical secrets that defect our mundanny lives. Dr. John V. King can do whatever need to be done.

(JOHN whistles to the DEMONS who come running, arrange themselves as his backup singers.)

(SINGING/Mississippi swamp blues feeling)

I GOT A DEAL FOR YOU

GOT ALL THE RECIPES.

WANT GET-TOGETHER DROPS?

DO YOU NEED MAGIC SHOESTRINGS?

I’VE GOT ALL THAT PLUS TONS OF DEEP FRIED CHICKEN WINGS.
DEMONS
HE GOTS A DEAL FOR YOU;
GOT ALL THE RECIPES

JOHN
DO YOU WANT SOME POWER?
I’LL LET YOU HAVE A BIG PAY DAY.
I GOT ALL THE RECIPES THAT LET YOU
HAVE YOUR WAY.

DEMONS
HE CAN GIVE YOU A CHARM
TO KEEP ALL HARM AT BAY.

JOHN
I CAN FIX CITY HALL.

DEMONS
HE CAN SEE THROUGH THE WALLS.

JOHN
I CAN FIX ALL THE BANKS,
NO MATTER WHAT THEIR RANK.

DEMONS
HE CAN FIX OL’ WALL STREET,
MAKE SURE SHE NEVER SANK.

JOHN
I CAN FIX YOUR MAMA.

DEMONS
OOO-OOWAH

JOHN
I CAN FIX YOUR DADDY

JOHN AND DEMONS
WITH MUD WE TOOK RIGHT FROM A MANHATTAN RICE PADDY.

JOHN
I GOT A DEAL FOR YOU.
STEP RIGHT THIS WAY TO ME
DEMONS
STEP RIGHT THIS WAY TO HIM.

JOHN
STEP RIGHT THIS WAY TO ME.

DEMONS
MMMMMMMMMMMM

JOHN
I CAN MAKE YOU HAPPY BETTER
THAN MARGUERITE
THE TIME WILL SOON BE COMING
WHEN SHE WILL KNEEL AT MY FEET!

DEMONS
YEAH, YEAH, YEAH.
(talking)
Now what you make of that, boy?

CHAS.
It sound fine, but I like Miss Marguerite.

JOHN
Yeah, well, when you change yo’ mind, you kin look me up. I live
below in the red poppy field about a mile outside the forest.
But for now, you run along home and think about my deal, just
between you and me, okay?

CHAS.
Okay.

(Charles exits. John takes the leashes in hand. The demons
remove disguises; they speak in unrecognizable, guttural accents
that are punctuated with growls, squeaks and yelps.)

JOHN
Yessir, what a nice neighborhood to raise my pets in!

DONNA
MMMMMMMMMMMMPH! What tasty looking children!

DENNIS
Can we eat as many as we like?

JOHN
Ya’ll kin eat only the ones who hate school and don’t obey their parents.

DEMONS (all)
It’s supper time!
(They strain fiercely against their leashes, leaping toward children.)

JOHN
Dennis, Donna, Denise, sit stay! Bad demons! Bad demons! You’re scaring the children.
(DEMONS instantly obey, sit down, growling, yelping low. JOHN pets them a bit, gives them each a “demon biscuit”.

JOHN
Pretty soon your master will own everything that sorcerer woman got, especially her power over nature. Yessir, we gon’ rule the whole entire world, and that crazy boy is gonna to help us without knowing that he’s helping us.

(He and the DEMONS slink off as ominous music plays. LIGHTS crossfade, rise on MARGUERITE in her office later that same day. CHAS. enters and begins mopping the floor while Marguerite mixes potions, prepares packages, consults her books, and she mumbles words that transforms liquids in various glass vials into different colors. She puts the vials into various packages. When she’s finished, she walks over to a special cabinet and says some magic words to open it, takes out and puts on her gele, (pron. gay-lay) head wrap.)

MAR
TUKANI SHALEM
(The cabinet opens; she places it reverentially in the cabinet. Charles is fascinated, can’t take his eyes off her work and the gele.)

MAR.

TUKANI SHALEMAY

(The cabinet closes.)

CHAS.

Gollygeesumthin’.

MARGUERITE (chuckles at his amazement)

You like that, eh, boy?

CHAS.

Yes ma’am. Wish I could do that.

MAR.

Come here. Do as I say. Tink of the most beautiful ting you ever see. What is it?

CHAS. (seeing the vision)

I once saw a flower so beautiful it made my heart beat fast. It was yellow and red and green and purple, and it look like it was smiling at the sun. And in the sky was these big fluffy white clouds that drifted by real slow in a blue sky and the wind was singing some real nice song that made the flower dance.

MAR.

Now, keep that thought and say TUKANI SHALEM.

CHAS.

TUKANI SHALEM.

(THE CABINET DOOR OPENS.)

CHAS.

Gollygeesumthin’!

MAR.

Now say TUKANI SHALEMAY.

CHAS.

TUKANI SHALEMAY.
(The cabinet door closes.)

CHAS. (ecstatically leaping about)
Gollygeesumthin’! Wow! I did it! I did it! Wow!

MAR. (chuckling)
Settle down, boy. See what ya can do when ya think beautiful thoughts, eh? You tink ugly, you make ugly ting happen. You tink beautiful things, you make beautiful things happen. Dat is the first lesson of sorcery. Don’t forget!

CHAS.
No ma’am, I won’t!

MAR.
Good. Also don’t forget: when ya in me shop, don’t touch nothing but the broom and the mop. Stay away from me sorcery books.

CHAS.
Yes ma’am. You think I’m ready to be a sorcerer?

MAR.
Not yet. You have to learn what you gotstado.

CHAS.
What do you mean?

MAR.
You must listen and learn from your elders. You must follow their instructions. You must be brave enough to do the right ting at any time. Ya do them tree tings, you get power to do anything ya want. Of course, ya must practice, practice, practice.

CHAS. (memorizing)
Listen and learn. Follow instructions. And do the right thing. And practice, practice, practice.

MAR.
Good. Now, me got a special chore for you, a delivery.
CHAS.
Apprentice chore/whoopee!/Anything ya want/I’m ready to fly; I can...Huh? A delivery?
MAR.
Not apprentice chore, but it show if ya can follow instruction.
Do what I tell ya now. First, scratch your left knee three times. Now, turn around two times, then jump up in the air and say, “whoa. Whoa,” real loud while ya in the air. Now, do that one more time.
CHAS.
Why I gotta do that?
MAR.
Just in case you drop one of these packages. Take this basket of packages, set it in the middle of the grassy meadow on the western side of me forest; hurry back. Them package got powerful medicine; ya keeyant drop ‘em and ya keeyant let nobody else touch them. If these medicines get used the wrong way, dem cause great harm, very great harm, understand?
CHAS.
I just leave ‘em? What if somebody steal them?
MAR.
There is no stealing in this forest.
CHAS.
But who’s gonna get the packages?
MAR.
The creatures who need ta be healed.
CHAS.
But how will they know which medicine is for them?
MAR.
They’ll know.
CHAS.
What does the medicine do?

MARGUERITE’S HEALING MEDICINES
MAR. (soft music under)
It helps the trees to spread their strong green arms wide to hold the vast sunlight. It inspires the flowers to paint their faces and dance. It urges the birds to sing while they glide smoothly in the sweet, gentle, invisible breath of the wind that flows in harmony forever like endless streams in the sky. It refreshes the waters that quench our thirst and cleanse our bodies and gives us tears to wash away our sorrows. It polishes the stars that are sparkling diamonds of hope that adorn the endless black velvet face of the night sky. Now, these is for you.

CHAS.
What are they?

MAR. (handing him a cloth bundle)
This is a little snack I fix for you, some fresh bake blueberry tarts.

CHAS. (sparkling,)
Whoa, thank you, ma’am.

MAR.
I must tell you about the most important thing. Me must warn you about a man who come trespassing in me forest, a man named John. One day he gonna try to take me power and use it for evil. Ya must stay away from this man. Don’t trust him, okay.

CHAS. (takes a few steps, turns back)
Okay. (goes to her and hugs her.) I just wanna hug ya!

MAR. (hugging him back, kisses top of his head)
I hug ya back, boy.

CHAS.
I wanna be just like you when I grow up.
MAR.
It best you learn to be like your real self. Now git!
(SHE watches him go, a smile and a tear on her face.)
MAR.
This is the child I been waitin’ for all these years. I know it in my heart!
(CHARLES strolls off puffed with self importance and confidence. MARGUERITE goes about her tasks. LIGHTS crossfade; up on CHARLES walking slowly in the road. Chas. walks like he owns the world and deigns to walk in it. JEREMY appears.)
JEREMY
Howdy do, Charlie?
CHAS.
Just fine, thank you.
JEREMY
I heard Miss Marguerite gave you something to do and some blueberry tarts?
CHAS.
Yep, and I’m gonna eat ‘em soon as I deliver these things.
JER.
I just wanted to warn you about the bluppermongs in the western forest.
CHAS.
Bluppermongs?
JER.
Your’re new; you don’t know how dangerous they are.
CHAS.
Dangerous?
JER.
They once made a man’s legs come loose and walk away on their own!
CHAS.
Why’d they do that?
   JER.
The smelled fresh baked blueberry tarts.
   CHAS.
Really?
   JER.
Really.
   CHAS.
How do I know it’s not another trick?
   JER.
I guess you don’t know and you won’t trust me, but at least (starts crying), at least I warned ya. (sobbing) It’s my way of apologizing for my disgraceful trickery. I had no business tricking ya, and I’m sorry. I just felt so bad knowing that the bluppermongs were going to destroy you when they smelled those blueberry tarts!
   CHAS.
Well, maybe if I keep ‘em covered up, they won’t….
   JER. (flings himself on the ground, sobbing)
Bluppermongs can smell through stone walls. I couldn’t bear to live knowing that I let you perish without apologizing to you. Ahhhhhhhhhhhgh! Goodbye.
   CHAS. (after a couple hesitant steps)
Tell ya what, you meet me back here in about 20 minutes. I’ll share ‘em with ya.
   JER. (sobbing less)
I don’t want a morsel. I’ll meet you here.
   CHAS. (handing tarts to Jer.)
You promise?
   JER.
I give you my most solemn groundhog promise.
(CHAS. exits. As soon as he is out of sight JEREMY starts eating the blueberry tarts as he exits dancing and skipping along as a salivating DEMONS stalks him while LIGHTS crossfade, rise on JOHN AND THE OTHER DEMON. John sees CHARLES enter.)

JOHN
Quick, see what he’s got in that basket!
(The DEMON does as told and goes after Charles. Demon jumps out and startles him.)

DEMON
AHHHHHHHHHGGGGGH!!

CHAS. (JUMPING)
I didn’t bring the tarts, you nasty bluppermong!

DEMON (fake girl’s voice)
I’m a little old lady.

CHAS.
Ha. No you’re not, you’re trouble! I’ve seen you before. Get outta my way.

DEMON
GIMME that basket.

CHAS.
I’m warnin’ you. Git away from me.

DEMON
What ya gonna do, cast a spell on us? Ha!

(DEMON snatches at the basket of packages which causes it to spill the contents; he grabs one. Charles remember to do the ritual that Marguerite taught him: scratches left knee 3 times, turns around twice, jumps up saying “whoa. Whoa.” As CHARLES points the packages at the demons they become possessed by some spirit. They become animals, march like soliders, and dance. JOHN breaks the spell on the demons, who again begin to try to attack Charles. Charles throws packages at the demons. The DEMONS furiously chases after Charles who runs in circles,
yelping loudly, and throwing packets. John immediately exits with the Demon following the package Charles has thrown offstage. Charles lies in a heap among the scattered packages. MARGUERITE runs on, takes it all in.)

MAR.
Wa’happenin’s here, boy? What’s happening here?

CHAS. (near tears)
I...I...don’t knooow!

(JOHN appears stealthily, overhears, unseen.)

MAR.
You was here! How you not know!? And you want to be me apprentice? Causing this kinda foolishment hereabouts.

MAR. (SINGING, angry feeling, uptempo)
You Have Got to Listen
(Marguerite and the plants/big band/jazzbeat)

YOU SAY YOU WANT TO RAISE YOUR POSITION
WELL, FIRST BOY! YOU GOT TO LISTEN.
YOU TRY TO DO THINGS BEFORE YOU KNOW HOW;
WALK THROUGH A DOOR BEFORE YOU UNLOCK IT.
YOU STUMBLE ‘ROUND AND GET INTO TROUBLE
FAST AS A ROCKET

IF YOU WANT A BETTER POSITION,
BOY, YOU’VE GOT TO LISTEN.
A CHILD LEARNS TO WALK ONE STEP AT A TIME.
IT ROLLS THEN IT CRAWLS.
IT STANDS THEN IT CLIMBS.
IT DOESN’T LEAP LIKE A DEER AT THE START.
SO STOP, LEARN, N’LISTEN WITH ALL YOUR HEART...

IF YOU WANT TO RAISE YOUR POSITION,
BOY, YOU HAVE GOT TO LISTEN!
MAR.
Now, hurry and clean up this pitiful mess, and then ya come straight back to me shop and mop the floor, is clear?

CHAS
Yes, ma’am.

MAR.
Ay! Ya got one more chance left, that’s all, one more chance to be me apprentice. You ain’t looking so special to me now!
(She exits. CHAS. is sad, cries as he picks up stuff, does the ritual.)
(The BARON appears.)

CHAS.
I didn’t call you, honest.

BARON
I know, but when people lose hope, their hearts call out to me. Do not betray your heart and give up your dreams.
(BARON disappears. JOHN ambles in as CHAS.finishes.)

JOHN
I still got that deal for ya. What you say to that?

CHAS.
No.

JOHN (slyly cajoling)
I unnastan. Let Papa John help you clean up this mess.

CHAS.
I’m finished. Gotta go.
(CHAS quickly exits as JOHN and DEMON’S watch. They see JEREMY, coming down the path. They hide and grab Jeremy as he drags by. He screams and struggles as the Demons hold him, lick him, salivate.)

DEMON
Well, look here what nature done brought to us.

DEMON (other)
a big fat groundhog sammich. (sandwich)

JOHN

Bon appe’tit, ya’ll. Eat up. (THEY put napkins into their collars, salivate, lick lips.)

JEREMY

Heeeeeeelp! Oh noooooo, no, no. Please. Noooooo! (continues, ad lib)

(THEY quickly pull out two huge slices of bread [foam rubber], put JEREMY between them, pour on ketchup from large bottles.)

JEREMY (tearfully)

Oh no, not ketchup; I HATE KETCHUP!

(THEY prepare to take big bites as Jeremy screams and suddenly breaks loose and runs off. The DEMONS chase after him while JOHN laughs and follows them off. LIGHTS crossfade, rise on MARGUERITE’S office where SHE is hurriedly bustling about making up another batch of medicine for her forest.)

MAR.

Ah, you arrive. Sweep and mop the floor in my office. And don’t do nothing else! Don’t touch nothing, especially me books. Is instructions clear?

CHAS.

Yes, ma’am.

MAR.

When ya finish, leave.

CHAS.

Yes, ma’am.

MAR.

Now me must go and finish the errand you ruined before me forest fall apart.

(She quickly exits. As soon as she is gone, CHARLES begins peeping in her books, trying out magic words. He takes off his shirt and wraps it on his head in a makeshift gele.)
CHAS.
SLAMBUMBO ARISSSSSSHH.

(CHARLES ATTEMPTS THE WATER BARRELL ILLUSION.)

CHAS. (recitative)
I knew it; I can do it;
Anyway you view it
No one can say I blew it!
I’m a sorcerer!

(THUNDER AND LIGHTENING. A CANDLE ON THE TABLE GOES OUT. CHARLES TRIES TO TURN OFF THE WATER BARRELL).

CHAS.
Slamblino Rissssh.
Slamadimo Rush?

(WATER DOES NOT STOP)

CHAS.
Something is wrong, let me check this book.

(BOOK COMES TO LIFE AND FIGHTS WITH CHARLES. BOOK TRIES TO FLY AWAY. BOOK SLAMS ON CHARLES’S HAND.)

CHAS.
Hey! Whoa! Ouch! Stop! Stop!

CHAS.
NEZCUM ABOOTEEM CHOTOKALA!
BOMAKA BOMAKA TYKULA!
SHAYMOKA BALUUKA!
CHEEKAMAKOLA!
KNOCKABADOTOP!

(Suddenly the room is filled creatures that appear from the bookshelf. Things quickly are beyond his control. CHARLES runs about trying to stop the mess, looks in books, tries more magic words and makes things even worse.)

CHARLES
I gotta stop this! Uh,..let’s see...uh, how does it go? Oh!

HITUUDONBASHI MADUKI.

(Things worsen. Sound: martial music, incessant drum beat.)

CHAS.
The words! The words! What are the words to stop this?

(SONG) THE WORDS THE WORDS

CHAS. (Singing)

THE WORDS; THE WORDS, WHAT ARE THE WORDS?
WHAT ARE THE WORDS THAT MAKE MADNESS CEASE?
WHAT ARE THE WORDS?
I KNOW THE WORDS TO MAKE 'EM HOP.
BUT HOW’M I GONNA MAKE 'EM STOP?
SHU NO LEE NO GATTA
HO NO LU DONGATA
SHE LA SHU,
SHU BO SHE
DONA SHU. WOE IS ME
WHOA...

THE WORDS; THE WORDS; THE WORDS...
THERE’S ONLY CRAZY MADNESS. IT’S ALL AROUND.
I’VE GOTTA FIND THE WORDS TO SAY
TO MAKE IT SETTLE DOWN.
NEEBOONADONAGA?
NABOONEEDONGATTA?
DONASAYONARA?
MALADY?
DONADU?
NEEBODEE?
NEEBOLU?
AHH...
NEEBOBOO?
AHHH...
WHAT TO DO?
AHHHHH...

(AS MAGUERITE SHOWS UP)

MARGUERITE

NEE-BOO-DONGATA

NEE-BOO-DONGATA

(The room trembles from thunder, lightning and the sound of a furious wind. In a very few moments silence and calm is restored.)

CHARLES (sheepishly, slowly pronouncing)
Oh! Nee-boo-dongata

MAR. (raging)
Boy, ya burn me up! I told you what to do, but you didn’t follow instructions and look what happen. How can ya be a sorcerer’s apprentice and you kee-yant listen and follow instructions? That was your third chance. You fired!

CHAS. (angry)
Well, you shoulda taught me to do it right! I keep asking ya...

MAR. (livid)
Ya gon’ blame me? Huh? You do something dangerous because you don’t listen and follow instructions and then you gon’ blame me, boy?

CHAS. (exploding)
I was trying to practice, since you won’t teach me. You shoulda taught me so I wouldn’t make no mistakes.

MAR. (losing it)
Git out me house!

(CHARLES exits. Lights crossfade: up on the decimated herb garden. Chas. enters, flops down by the trunk of MISS ORANGE TREE who instantly begins beating him with her branches. He stands, dejected, head down as they berate him in turn. MUSICAL underpinning for speeches below.)
MISS ORANGE TREE (in tears)
You think like a bowl of mashed potatoes. Everything you do is a catastrophe. Your flood absolutely ruined my makeup.

JUNIPER BUSH
Boy, I was almost cut in half by a flying bush trimmer blowing in the wind. I learned from my elders but you refuse to. You won’t last long in this world. (turns his back on him).

GRAPEVINE
I never have been so thoroughly polluted in all my life. My grapes are scattered all over the forest and most of my vines are shredded like spaghetti. (turns her back on him.)

WHO
IIIIII’m glad I can fly, but I need to land sometimes. After the mess you caused I couldn’t find a place to land. You are loooooonier than the loooooniest loony bird. (turns his back on him).

JEREMY (still in the sandwhich bread)
Luckily I escaped your cannibal friends, just in time to say farewell. Here’s some lunch.
(throws bread at Charles’s feet)

MOT, JUNIPER, GRAPEVINE, WHO, and JEREMY
Get outta this forest now, Charlie Chump!

(LIGHTS CROSSFADE, OUT ON MOT, GRAPEVINE, JUNIPER, JEREMY, AND WHO. CHARLES sadly starts to walk away. LIGHTS RISE on JOHN who sees him, goes to intercept him.

JOHN (quickly)
(walks to Charles) Charles, you lookin’ terrible sad. What happened?

CHAS.
She fired me, and I’m back where I started.

JOHN
Papa John know how to git yo’ job back.
CHAS.
You do? How?

JOHN
Convincin’ oil. Good ole convincin’ oil. You come with me I’ll explain how you can git yo’ job back and still become a famous sorcerer.

CHAS. (brightening)
For real?

JOHN
Fa real! I promise. You got to trust me.
(HE takes CHAS. by the hand and leads him off. The BARON enters watches CHAS and JOHN leave and follows them off.)

END ACT I