

#1a – Magic Underscore

LEADING PLAYER

Ladies and Gentlemen! This evening,
for your entertainment pleasure, we present
our most mysterious and miraculous tale.
A stunning example of...

ENSEMBLE

OOOOOH OOOOOH
OOOOOH OOOOOH

START
(read all
player
lines)—>

PLAYER

Magic!

PLAYER

And merriment!

LEADING PLAYER

You will witness acts of...

TWO PLAYERS

Lust!

PLAYER

Murder!

PLAYER

Holy war!

LEADING PLAYER

And a climax... Ladies and gentlemen, a climax you will remember for the rest of
your lives.

(A PLAYER appears with fire)

Not now... later...

(The PLAYER goes. The LEADING PLAYER continues)

Our tale today concerns the firstborn son of Charlemagne... and is entitled...

*(The PLAYERS use props and their bodies to form the words: PIPPIN: HIS LIFE AND
TIMES.)*

Pippin, his Life and Times!

But before we begin, there have been many misconceptions about Pippin. One that
he was...

PLAYER

A hunchback.

LEADING PLAYER

That he was...

PLAYER

Enormously tall.

LEADING PLAYER

That he was...

PLAYER

Extremely short.

LEADING PLAYER

That he was...

PLAYER (THEO)

Completely bald at the age of fourteen.

LEADING PLAYER

But I beg you, cast all previous misconceptions aside. Our story begins as Pippin's childhood ends...

PLAYER (CHARLES)

His last day at the University of Padua, where his father had sent him...

PLAYER (FASTRADA)

... so that he might embark upon his life with a maximum of choices.

LEWIS

... and possibilities.

PLAYER (BERTHE)

Pippin so distinguished himself at University that the faculty bestowed upon him the special title of—

ALL

"Scholar of the House."

LEADING PLAYER

And Pippin responded in his own deeply moving words...

(All of the PLAYERS look toward PIPPIN. Awkward silence.)

He may be a little nervous. This is his first time playing the role.

END ->

PIPPIN

START →

CHARLES

Take that man away and hang him!

(A noose is placed around the THIRD NOBLE'S neck and he is led off.)

Out! Out! Everybody out!

PIPPIN

(Who has been watching, steps forward as the OTHERS go)

No, wait! Sire!

CHARLES

I said everybody out.

PIPPIN

Father, it's me. Pippin.

CHARLES

Pippin?

(Delighted to see him.)

Pippin!

(But then...)

Wait, what are you doing here?

PIPPIN

I'm home. I finished school.

CHARLES

Already? Well... how did it go?

PIPPIN

Oh, very well, father. Some of my tutors—

CHARLES

(Not really listening)

Good, good. I'm a great believer in education.

PIPPIN

And yet you've become the most powerful man in the world without it.

CHARLES

The most powerful man in the world? What about the Pope?

PIPPIN

I rank you ahead of the Pope, sir.

CHARLES

And I happen to agree with you. Well, Pippin. Good to see you.

(Starts to go)

PIPPIN

Wait, Father...

CHARLES

(Stops with an idea)

You know we have a library now. Maybe you can find a book.

PIPPIN

Thank you—

CHARLES

After all, tomorrow is for you.

PIPPIN

But, it's still today.

CHARLES

Yes, but for how long? You'll see, Pippin, sunrise and sunset are similar, but they are not identical.

PIPPIN

Father, what does that even mean?

LEADING PLAYER

END →

Enter Lewis...

START —>

LEWIS

Of course it was! Did you know this arm slew twenty Frisians last year? And it's going to slay even more Visigoths.

PIPPIN

You're going to war against the Visigoths?

LEWIS

Uh huh. That's the next one. It's going to be a glorious campaign. And oh—those Visigoth women! I don't mean to shock your bookish sensibilities...

PIPPIN

I'm only shocked you're interested in women now.

LEADING PLAYER

Enter Fastrada. Pippin's step-mother. Crafty, cunning, calculating...

FASTRADA

But a warm and wonderful mother!

LEADING PLAYER

Dedicated to gaining the throne for her darling son, Lewis.

FASTRADA

Lewis! Lewis! Guess what Mommy had made for you... surprise!

(SHE gives LEWIS a gleaming breastplate)

LEWIS

Oh, Thank you, Mother. Think how I'll shine!

(Shows it off to PIPPIN)

Look at this! Isn't it a beauty?

PIPPIN

(Taking the breastplate and admiring it)

It really is beautiful...

FASTRADA

Of course it's beautiful! Lewis is a great warrior.

LEWIS

(Practicing a lunge again)

Hah! Visigoths!

(HE fights his way offstage)

FASTRADA

(to CHARLES)

We're so proud of Lewis, aren't we, dear? Oh, my darling, before I forget, the royal treasurer informs me I've somehow overdrawn my allowance account.

CHARLES

You're overdrawn again?

FASTRADA

Now, now, my Lord, you know how confused I get about money. After all, I'm just an ordinary housewife and mother...

(To the audience)

... just like all you housewives and mothers out there.

(And SHE goes)

CHARLES

(Looking after her)

You know, sometimes I wonder if the fornicating I'm getting is worth the fornicating I'm getting.

PIPPIN

Father. I know what I want to do now.

CHARLES

What? Oh, good. Good...

PIPPIN

I want to be a soldier.

CHARLES

What? Denied!

PIPPIN

Father, I'm your oldest son. That means I'll be King one day. And fighting wars is an important part of being King, isn't it?

CHARLES

Fighting wars is the most important part of being King. After all, the Pope and I have dedicated ourselves to spreading Christianity throughout the entire world, even if we have to kill every non-Christian to do it.

PIPPIN

Exactly. So, I want to join you in your campaign against the Visigoths.

END —>

#6a – Enter Berthe

LEADING PLAYER

Enter... Berthe. Pippin's grandmother, quietly living in the country.

(BERTHE enters, accompanied by TWO ATTENDANTS who try to help her)

START —>

BERTHE

(Pulling away)

I can walk by myself!

LEADING PLAYER

Warm... strong...

ATTENDANTS

(patronizing)

Still attractive...

BERTHE

Very attractive.

LEADING PLAYER

Charlemagne's mother... Exiled from court...

BERTHE

... Due to a personality conflict with her daughter-in-law, Fastrada...

(PIPPIN enters and calls to her)

PIPPIN

Grandma...

BERTHE

I hate needlepoint!

(BERTHE throws the needlepoint at the Attendant.)

PIPPIN

Ah, but you're so good at it.

BERTHE

Pippin...? Pippin...! Oh, Pippin, I can't believe it.

(SHE holds out her arms. PIPPIN embraces her)

Oh, how good it is to see you and to hold you, the way I used to.

PIPPIN

Grandma, you look great.

BERTHE

No, I don't. I look terrible.

PIPPIN

No, you look great!

BERTHE

No, I don't. I look terrible.

PIPPIN

Alright, fine, you look terrible.

BERTHE

Is that any way to talk to your grandma? But, Pippin, actually you look terrible. You need some fresh air, some good food, some hanky panky.

PIPPIN

I don't know what I need.

BERTHE

Oh, I know what I need... Some good juicy gossip. You gotta tell me what's going on at court. Is Fastrada still leading your father around by the... nose?

PIPPIN

Grandma, you haven't changed a bit.

BERTHE

But you have, Pippin. What have you been doing with yourself?

PIPPIN

Well, I went to war.

BERTHE

That explains it.

PIPPIN

(Speaking earnestly and increasingly fast)

I tried to own my own manhood, you know, give my blood back. I wanted to do something important, something meaningful. But that wasn't it. Now, I just feel empty and vacant. So, I think I need a plan—Yes, that's it, a goal and a plan. Well, I have a goal—I want to be fulfilled. But a good plan? That's what I've been thinking about. You can't just go rushing into whatever comes along and hope for the best, but on the other hand, you can't wait around wasting time and expect something to fall into your lap... So...

BERTHE

You lost me in the middle there, Pippin. Stop thinking! You think too much. That's your problem. You have to learn to live in the moment. Look at this day. Look at it! The sun is shining. The air is warm. And maybe tonight, down at the tavern, there's that lovely young girl you could hook up with and do those things you kids do and then come back and tell me everything in graphic detail—

PIPPIN

Grandma, I don't have time for that.

BERTHE

END —>

Time? Now, Pippin, you listen to me. I'm an expert on time.

ACT 1, SCENE 5 – Revolution

(The LEADING PLAYER appears, reading a newspaper.)

START —>

LEADING PLAYER

Boy, when you frolic, you really frolic, don't you? Well, how do you feel now?

PIPPIN

I feel empty and vacant.

LEADING PLAYER

Oh, I don't know. That looked like fun to me, what you were doing...

PIPPIN

But, it wasn't... fulfilling. Why can't I find something completely fulfilling?

LEADING PLAYER

Look. You just got started. There's a whole lot of things you can try...

PIPPIN

Like what?

LEADING PLAYER

Like taking a look at this...

(PIPPIN takes the newspaper and looks at it...)

#8c – *Pippin the Politico*

PIPPIN

"Peasants revolt. King slays thousands. Peasants protesting a rise in taxes were slaughtered yesterday by Charlemagne's soldiers." What? That can't be true.

LEADING PLAYER

Now, would a newspaper print anything that wasn't true?

PIPPIN

My father would never slaughter people just for protesting.

LEADING PLAYER

Why not? He's the King.

(LEADING PLAYER reads over PIPPIN's shoulder)

"Charlemagne today has given orders that nonbelievers be given the choice between baptism and beheading."

PIPPIN

Wait a minute! Forcing people to believe? Telling them what to think? Something's got to be done about this.

LEADING PLAYER

You're absolutely right.

PIPPIN

I'm finally beginning to see what my father really is. He forces people to fight and die over land that doesn't even belong to them...

LEADING PLAYER

He does!

PIPPIN

Well, I think that this has got to stop!

LEADING PLAYER

It has got to stop!

PIPPIN

It's time for a change!

LEADING PLAYER

Damnit, it is time for a change!

PIPPIN

You know – it doesn't matter that he's my father. We can't just sit around and wait for someone else to take action. Otherwise, one day we'll look around and ask, what happened? What happened is we failed to act!

(A group of PEASANTS appear.)

PEASANTS

Down with Charles! Down with Charles! Down with Charles! Down with Charles!

LEADING PLAYER

(Over this, testing microphone)

Testing... testing...

PIPPIN

(Into the microphone)

It's time to make a better world for all people, not just the rich and powerful. This tyrant must be overthrown!

(The CROWD cheers)

Terror and bloodshed must be ended! We need a leader with the youth and courage to sweep out the old order!

(The CROWD cheers)

Down with Charles! Up with... ME!

END →

START —>**FASTRADA**

Terrible. A son speaking against his very own father that way! In fear of my beloved husband's life, I brought Pippin's activities to his attention.

(Lights up on CHARLES)

Pippin is disloyal to you, my lord...

CHARLES

Every son is disloyal to his father at one time or another, my lady...

FASTRADA

But Lewis loves you, my lord...

CHARLES

Lewis is an asshole, my lady.

FASTRADA

(To audience)

Despite this rejection, I took upon my tiny shoulders the task of effecting a rapprochement between two men for whom I felt... deeply...

#9 – *Spread a Little Sunshine*

My lord.

CHARLES

Yes, my lady?

FASTRADA

Will you be praying at Arles next month?

CHARLES

No, I don't think so, my lady.

FASTRADA

Oh, but my lord, you always feel so much better after your yearly prayer.

CHARLES

I do?

FASTRADA

Yes, you do.

(In the Broadway Production, she put CHARLES into a magic cabinet.)

I sought out Pippin.

(SHE opens the door of the cabinet to reveal PIPPIN)

Your father loves you, Pippin.

PIPPIN

Freedom and dignity for all men is more important than the love between one father and one son.

FASTRADA

Still, your name will be on his lips when he prays...

(Pause)

...at Arles... next month... *alone*...

PIPPIN

Alone?

FASTRADA

And unguarded.

PIPPIN

What date?

FASTRADA

The fifteenth. Pippin, I beg you to bring this estrangement to an end.

PIPPIN

I intend to.

FASTRADA

May I tell your father of this resolve?

PIPPIN

No. Let it be a surprise.

(PIPPIN exits)

FASTRADA

A surprise.

(To audience)

I love surprises.

(FASTRADA opens the door of the cabinet; LEWIS is revealed.)

LEWIS

Mama... if Pippin kills Father...

FASTRADA

You'll be next in line for the throne, darling.

LEWIS

But if Father discovers Pippin's plot and executes him...

FASTRADA

You'll be next in line for the throne, darling.

LEWIS

Mama, no matter what happens... I'll move up!

FASTRADA

Yes, darling.

END —>

(A light comes up on LEADING PLAYER)

#9a – Chapel Underscore

LEADING PLAYER

INTRIGUE PLOTS TO BRING DISASTER...

The royal chapel at Arles.

(CHARLES is praying. After a moment, a mysterious hooded MONK enters; it is PIPPIN, although we can't yet see his face)

START →

CHARLES

(Sensing his presence)

It's all right, Father. You may come in.

PIPPIN

I'm sorry to disturb you, my son. I know you like to pray alone.

CHARLES

You know who I am, Father?

PIPPIN

Of course, my son.

CHARLES

You want something from me perhaps... a favor... advancement?

PIPPIN

I'm here to be with you for one moment... to look into your eyes.

CHARLES

And what do you see?

PIPPIN

I see two eyes... a little cloudy with age... a sunset.

CHARLES

What else?

PIPPIN

I see the death of thousands... the slavery of more... terror and bloodshed.

CHARLES

You see all that in my eyes?

PIPPIN

Do you deny it?

CHARLES

Deny it? I'm proud of it. I brought order out of chaos. If terror and bloodshed were necessary to achieve that order, so be it.

PIPPIN

Those are words from the past. Time has passed you by, my son.

CHARLES

And your time has come... my son?

PIPPIN

(Taking down the hood on his robe)

Yes, Father.

CHARLES

It's so easy from where you stand to judge the things that I have done. Eagles, ospreys, even vultures had a better view. From the heights all things are very clear. But, when I marched, the dust of the road was in my mouth, and when I fought, the blood of the enemy was in my eyes. But, by God, I blew my breath across a continent and shaped an empire with it.

PIPPIN

Father, maybe you did the best you could, but things have to change.

CHARLES

And you're the one to change them?

PIPPIN

Yes, I am.

CHARLES

Well, if you truly believe that, there's only one thing that you can do.

(CHARLES takes out his knife)

PIPPIN

Thank you, I brought my own.

(PIPPIN reveals his knife)

CHARLES

Then use it. Or go, and leave me to my prayers.

PIPPIN

What do you pray for, Father?

CHARLES

Strength. And may God give you the same—

(PIPPIN stabs his father. CHARLES slowly sinks to the ground)

END →

START —>**THEO***(Trying to wake PIPPIN up)*

Pippin... Pippin... say hello to my duck...

*(HE pushes the duck into PIPPIN's face)***PIPPIN**

How do you do...

THEO

Guess his name.

PIPPIN

Augustus.

THEO

Wrong. His name's Otto. You're not very smart...

PIPPIN

I'm smart enough to know that a duck belongs in a pond and not in my bed!

THEO*(After a beat)*

Bite me!

*(HE stalks off as PIPPIN goes back to sleep)***CATHERINE***(Goes to him, exasperated.)*

Pippin, you have been lying in this bed for seven days now. What is the matter with you?

PIPPIN

It's nothing you could possibly understand.

CATHERINE

Well, try me. Give me a chance.

PIPPIN

All right. I have been searching and searching for something important and fulfilling to do with my life, and I have tried everything I can think of, and I haven't even come close. So I am in utter, abject, complete despair.

CATHERINE*(After a beat)*

And that's it?

PIPPIN

Yes, that's it.

CATHERINE

Pippin, let me tell you something about despair.

#13b – Hearth Incidental

(SHE points to the conductor and a piano begins to play as if this were the beginning of a soap opera. CATHERINE sits on the end of the bed and begins speaking)

(CATHERINE)

I loved my husband very much. The years we spent together were the happiest years of my life. And then one day he was struck by fever...

(Slowly PIPPIN comes down to the end of the bed and watches her)

... and when his hand went cold in mine, I felt my life, too, was over. I was overcome by the deepest despair. I took to my bed for five days. But on the sixth day I got up. There were things to be done. An estate to be run. A boy to raise.

(PIPPIN reaches out and touches CATHERINE's hand.)

SHE looks at the hand for a long moment. Then softly to PIPPIN)

Pippin, this is such a large estate. I'm all alone here and I can't do all this work by myself. Couldn't you please help me...

LEADING PLAYER

Hold it! Hold it! You're supposed to read the line "naggingly".

CATHERINE

But he put his hand on my face. They don't usually do that.

LEADING PLAYER

I don't care where he puts his hand. Read it naggingly! Listen. You're almost too old for this role. So, you better watch it. I've got my eye on you.

CATHERINE

(To PIPPIN, naggingly)

Pippin, this is such a large estate. I'm all alone here and I can't do all this work by myself. Couldn't you please help me!?

PIPPIN

All right! All right!

(HE starts to go)

Anything to shut you up...

END →

START —>**CATHERINE**

Close your eyes.

PIPPIN

Why?

CATHERINE

Because we've got a surprise for you.

(THEO, who has entered quietly, now runs to PIPPIN)

THEO

We've got a surprise!

CATHERINE & THEO

We've got a surprise!

PIPPIN

I usually don't like surprises.

CATHERINE

Well, you'll like this one.

(CATHERINE uncovers a dish and lights the contents)

Ok, you can look now.

(PIPPIN does)

Ta-da! Quince pudding flambé! Oh, I haven't made it for years but I thought that for this special occasion...

PIPPIN

What special occasion?

CATHERINE

Well... one year ago today... you arrived here. So Theo and I thought that we would celebrate with a little party. So I made this... and Theo made you a new flute...

(THEO gives PIPPIN the flute)

PIPPIN

Thank you, Theo. It's beautiful. I don't know what to say.

CATHERINE

Well, let me say something then. In the year that you've been with us, a lot of water has flowed under the dam, and—

LEADING PLAYER

(Appearing suddenly)

Over the dam. Water flows over the dam.

CATHERINE

I'm sorry, I know. I seem to be a little bit confused.

LEADING PLAYER

I can see that. Try sticking to the part, huh?

CATHERINE

I will.

(SHE turns to PIPPIN)

In the year that you've been with us, a lot of water has flowed over the dam. You've come to mean a great deal to me... to us... to our very ordinary lives. But I just want to say for me... and for Theo... we're glad you're here. And now... well, now we have so many good years ahead of us...

(SHE and THEO move PIPPIN to the head of the table and sit him down)

Sit here. Sit here, right at the head of the table.

(There is an uncomfortable pause)

Well, isn't anybody going to eat my pudding?

THEO

I am!

END —>

(CATHERINE starts to dish out the pudding. PIPPIN rises suddenly, and goes downstage)

START —>**LEADING PLAYER**

All right... you'll see what it's like without us... Take down the tent... You heard me. Everything out... move it. Pull down the canvas. Strike the rig.

(The set begins to move out)

Colored lights out. Take 'em out. Pinks and reds out... Well, that's not too flattering is it, Pippin?

(The lighting becomes harsh. PIPPIN does not answer)

Costumes... get their costumes...

(The PLAYERS strip CATHERINE, PIPPIN, and THEO, leaving them in underclothes)

Make up... let's go... get it off... and the wigs...

(PLAYERS remove make up and wigs from PIPPIN, CATHERINE and THEO)

Look around, Pippin. How do things look to you now?

LEADING PLAYER

A mole, Pippin. Look at the mole on her face. You're going to spend the rest of your life with a woman with a mole?.

LEADING PLAYER

And the kid... Do you know how much he's gonna cost you?

LEADING PLAYER

This is the way you want to live?

LEADING PLAYER

No costumes... no makeup...

LEADING PLAYER

No colored lights...

LEADING PLAYER

And no magic!

(Suddenly remembering the audience, turns with a big smile)

Ladies and Gentlemen, we apologize for our inability to bring you the Finale that we promised. It seems our extraordinary young man has elected to compromise his aspirations. But I know there are many of you out there... extraordinary people... exceptional people... who would gladly trade your ordinary lives for the opportunity to do one perfect act: our Grand Finale. And we'll always be there for you... anytime you want us. Why, we're right inside your heads! And we promise you... Sets! Costumes! Lights! Magic!

LEADING PLAYER

All right. It's over. The show's over. Everybody out. Let's go! Out. Come on, out! Out! Get outta here!

(The PLAYERS go)

Take out the rest of the lights.

(Lights go out.)

Orchestra, pack up your instruments, let's go.

(ALL stop playing, except the pianist)

Take your damn hands off the keyboard!

(Piano stops. It is silent. Then to PIPPIN)

You try singing without music, sweetheart!

END →