

The Scalpel Is Mightier Than The Sword

By

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Dragon Force

Sega, Climax Japan, every other video game company that got plagiarised in some way see you all in exile!

Cast of Characters

<u>DIGGORY:</u>	A brave and heroic doctor.
<u>ASCLEPIUS:</u>	The God of Medicine.
<u>First VALKYRIE:</u>	A maiden of battle.
<u>Second VALKYRIE:</u>	A maiden of battle.
<u>KEITHA BEDFREY:</u>	A cheerful, happy-go-lucky euthanasist.
<u>DR. GANK:</u>	A killstealing euthanasist.
<u>ANITA:</u>	A cloned assassin.
<u>DR. ANNA:</u>	A master surgeon.
<u>DR. WILLARD:</u>	An avaricious doctor.
<u>DR. SEMINAR:</u>	A doctor from a far-off land.
<u>NIMROD:</u>	A golem.
<u>GRANDPA BEN:</u>	Dr. Seminar's grandfather, a priest.
<u>CHILD:</u>	Diggory's young apprentice.
<u>NURSE:</u>	A nurse.
<u>WARDEN:</u>	A prison warden.
<u>SAINT RETRIDIN:</u>	A virtuous paladin.

Scene

Huntingdon.

Time

Approximately ten years in the future.

*The Scalpel Is Mightier Than The Sword A Medical
Drama of Epic Proportions*

ACT I

SCENE 1

(Outside the Temple of the Gods. It is an enormous Parthenon temple of white marble columns with a single massive archway and thirty huge steps leading up to it. On the fifth step sits DIGGORY, a frail-looking blonde-haired doctor in a white coat. He is eating an apple. Suddenly, in a puff of white smoke, ASCLEPIUS, the God of Medicine, appears on the step above him. He wears long white robes, has a long white beard and is carrying his staff. DIGGORY immediately prostrates himself before the God in utter reverence.)

ASCLEPIUS

Such formalities aren't necessary, my child, we've been together for fifty years now!

DIGGORY

Has it really been so long?

(DIGGORY looks down at her hands.)

But it feels like only a couple of weeks... and I don't look a day older!

ASCLEPIUS

(ASCLEPIUS chuckles.)

Time passes differently in the Realm of the Gods to the Realm of Mortals.

(His face turns more serious.)

But this is what I need to speak to you about, Doctor Diggory. Soon, you will return to Earth.

DIGGORY

(Gasps, and grovels even more.)

Oh, Holy One... please do not banish me from your presence! I promise to study harder...

ASCLEPIUS

(CONTINUED)

(Chuckles again.)

Child, I am not punishing you! You have been an excellent pupil. With a machine in your hands, your healing technique now surpasses any living mortal! But... You are a mortal and you belong in the Realm of Mortals. Even now, although your mortal eyes cannot perceive it, your soul wanes in power. The strain of manifesting on this plane will eventually kill you! That is why you must return, at least for now.

DIGGORY

But... Holy One... I... I am scared!

ASCLEPIUS

Scared?

DIGGORY

Do you not remember what happened on the day I was brought up to the hall of the Gods? I was put on trial! Put on trial for nothing more than trying to keep a hospital from closing down! Mortals are not tolerant, oh unceasingly gentle one, they will persecute me like a criminal and cast me out for my differences!

ASCLEPIUS

The world has changed a lot since then, child, and so have you.

DIGGORY

That I fear as well. Fifty years is a long time! All my friends and family will be old or dead!

ASCLEPIUS

Only one year has passed in the realm of mortals! Like I said before... time passes differently here!

DIGGORY

Oh, Holy One... I shall miss you!

ASCLEPIUS

(CONTINUED)

I am a God. My presence shall be with your everywhere, as it is in the souls of all true healers.

(Raises his staff.)

The chariot leaves at first light tomorrow. I bid you farewell, my apprentice! I have divine matters to attend to.

(As ASCLEPIUS thumps his staff on the ground, there is an almighty crack of thunder and more smoke.)

(Exit ASCLEPIUS.)

(End of Scene 1.)

Scene 2

(Outside the Hall of the Gods. DIGGORY still sits in the same spot, slowly reading a medical textbook. His luggage lies beside him. As he turns the page a fifth time, two VALKYRIES run on-stage. They are both wearing breastplates, winged helmets and shoes, and carrying swords. As he spots them, DIGGORY jumps up.)

DIGGORY

Aaaaaaaaaaargh!

(DIGGORY runs away from the VALKYRIES, who chase him around the stage, up and down the steps for a while, before one of the VALKYRIES raises her hand.)

First VALKYRIE

Stop! We mean you no harm!

DIGGORY

I didn't do it! I mean... what business do you have with me?

First VALKYRIE

We were sent to protect you!

DIGGORY

From what? I'm not going into battle!

(CONTINUED)

First VALKYRIE

Well... you might get mugged or something!

Second VALKYRIE:

(folds her arms)

We know the rules!

DIGGORY

What rules?

Second VALKYRIE

Healers have protected status!

First VALKYRIE

We ARE that protected status!

DIGGORY

*I have protected status in a WAR! Read my lips...
I... AM... NOT... GOING... INTO... BATTLE!*

(Inspects the VALKYRIES closely)

*Who sent you two anyway? Is Eir really, really
bored?*

First VALKYRIE:

EIR? Of all the cheek! We only answer to Freya!

DIGGORY

*Aaaand... Freya sent you to pester me and quote
the Geneva Convention at me?*

Second VALKYRIE

*(retrieves a copy of the Geneva Convention from
her armour)*

*This stuff's really fascinating! Do people really
follow all these rules nowadays? In the middle of
a pitched battle?*

(pause)

What's a nuclear bomb?

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

No, they don't, and no, you can't have one.

Second VALKYRIE

Aw... you're boring!

DIGGORY

Look, why don't you just go away?

First VALKYRIE

We can't! Freya says it's our destiny to protect you in battle! Its the reason we were awakened from our immortal sleep!

DIGGORY

(at the top of her voice) BUT I'M NOT GOING INTO BATTLE!

First VALKYRIE

Look... if we fail to protect you in battle, we'll be annihilated from existence!

Second VALKYRIE

Couldn't you just kick a vicious dog and let us kill it so it won't bite you?

DIGGORY

(to the audience) Well, I suppose it means I WILL have two elite bodyguards at no cost...

(to the VALKYRIES) Okay, I'll let you come with me.

VALKYRIES

Yay!

(A noise like the rumbling of hooves can be heard.)

DIGGORY

Hark! I hear the sound of the chariot!

First VALKYRIE

(CONTINUED)

(Draws her sword.)

Onwards!

DIGGORY

Yes, onwards! Onwards... to Huntingdon!

(The lights fade as the noise gets louder.)

(End of Scene 2.)

SCENE 3

(A quiet side street in Huntingdon. A few cans are left around outside two dustbins. Signposts on the wall lead to 'Saturn Valley Hospital', 'Saturn Valley University' and 'Huntingdon Life Sciences'. Near the balcony is a smart white building with metal bars over the broken windows. A sign saying 'Saint Retridin's Clinic' in big green letters hangs over the door. DIGGORY and the two VALKYRIES walk on-stage as if strolling down the road.)

DIGGORY

... And you have to watch out for Dr. Anna. She's nasty with that scalpel if she gets annoyed.

(Stops and looks at the sign above the building.)

Hello, what's this?

First VALKYRIE

Saint Retridin? Who the hell is that? Are you sure he's not made up?

DIGGORY

I don't know. I've never seen this place before. There used to be a Co-Op here...

KEITHA BEDFREY

(A young woman with green hair walks on-stage, humming a Game Over tune merrily to herself and carrying a bin bag. She walks over to the bin and puts the bag in the bin. Noticing DIGGORY, she turns and stares.)

(CONTINUED)

Diggory! Is that really you? Nobody's seen you for a year! Your disappearance was in the papers and the police were looking for you! We thought you were dead!

DIGGORY

No, I'm not dead! I feel better than ever!

(Turns to the VALKYRIES.)

Gunnhild! Olga! This is Keitha Bedfrey! Keitha, these are my new... er... bodyguards!

KEITHA BEDFREY

(Looks at DIGGORY suspiciously.)

Where'd you go anyway? Did the Government take you away for experiments?

DIGGORY

Not quite. I was... training.

(Points to the building.)

What's that?

KEITHA BEDREY

(Gasps.)

What do you mean, what's that? This is Saint Retridin's Clinic! Huntingdon's answer to Dignitas!

DIGGORY

Huntingdon's answer to... Keitha, what did I tell you about breaking the law?

KEITHA BEDFREY

Where the hell have they been keeping you? Euthanasia's legal now! The mayor of Huntingdon passed the law last week!

DIGGORY

And you opened a clinic in a week?

KEITHA BEDFREY

(CONTINUED)

Oh, it wasn't without the help of my loyal assistants!

DR. GANK

(O.S.) KILLSTEAL!

(A man dressed in a white coat over what looks like the sort of thing an Undead Rogue would wear in World of Warcraft runs on-stage wielding a fire extinguisher, before running off-stage again.)

KEITHA

(Sighs.)

Looks like somebody's struggling to make quota! Its his bedside manner. He just can't attract customers.

(Silhouetted in the top window of the clinic - the balcony - DAI is thrashing something vigorously with the fire extinguisher and roaring at the top of his voice. There is a yell of protest and a muffled argument.)

Would you like to come in for a cup of tea?

(DIGGORY starts to follow KEITHA BEDFREY off-stage As they near the edge of the stage, KEITHA pulls DIGGORY back.)

Wait, don't go through the...

(There is a sound like a grand piano crashing to the ground.)

Customer entrance!

(Lights fade. End of Scene 3.)

Scene 4

(The waiting room of St. Retridin's Clinic. As well as a coffee table surrounded by comfy seats, there is also a tea machine on another table and a stack of leaflets. On the wall, there are several pictures by Dr. Kevorkian. KEITHA, DIGGORY and the two VALKYRIES sit on the chairs. DIGGORY is drinking a cup of tea while the second VALKYRIE examines a leaflet.)

Second VALKYRIE

(CONTINUED)

(Points to a page in the leaflet.)

Can I have one of those?

KEITHA BEDFREY

I really wouldn't bother. They break down all the time and raise people as zombies.

(turns the page and points to it)

Now, THIS one...

DIGGORY

Don't encourage them.

(Finishes her tea and puts the mug down.)

So, it seems a lot has changed in the past year. Do you think you could bring me up to date?

KEITHA BEDFREY

Well, what don't you know?

DIGGORY

Anything. Just assume I've been in a coma for a year.

(KEITHA BEDFREY cracks her knuckles, a business-like look on her face. Diggory amends her words hastily.)

... And that I've come out of the coma now and I'm perfectly fine.

KEITHA BEDFREY

Oh, okay. Well, the hospital's still there. Dr. Willard and Dr. Anna are the same as usual, although Dr. Hesmendalsch was transferred and we haven't seen him since. Good riddance, I say. Dr. Seminar is having relatives over from his homeland...

DIGGORY

Really? All the way from Ragnaphoenicia?

KEITHA BEDFREY

(CONTINUED)

Yup. I'm thinking of taking a break from work to go over the road and visit them...

(Suddenly, there is a clatter like two people running down a flight of stairs. DR. GANK and ANITA, a young woman with purple hair, run in.)

ANITA

(Points to DR. GANK with vehemence)

HE STOLE MY KILL!

DR. GANK

Hah! You're just whining 'cause you lost! Loser!

KEITHA BEDFREY

Stop arguing! Honestly, you're like a couple of kids!

ANITA

He broke the fire extinguisher!

DR. GANK

It was already faulty!

ANITA

They cost a lot to replace, you know! It's gonna come out of your wages! Hah, you still get your pay docked even though you met quota!

DR. GANK

If you worked faster, you wouldn't keep losing your kills! Ain't we supposed to be fast?

KEITHA

I said, STOP ARGUING!

DIGGORY

I d... do believe I can resolve the conflict.

ANITA

Oh yeah, how?

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

(Stands, hands on hips, in a dramatic pose.)

I will resurrect your customer from the dead!

ANITA

(Claps her hands.)

Oh, that's a brilliant idea! Then I can kill them and we'll be equal!

First VALKYRIE

(Stands up.)

Oi! Wait a minute-

KEITHA

Wow, you can raise the dead, Diggory?

DIGGORY

It took me fifty years to learn, but yes, I harbour the knowledge of Asclepius' final secret!

First VALKYRIE

You can't be messing with the souls of the dead!

DR. GANK

Yeah, besides, those customers wanted to die! Its our responsibility to make sure they stay dead!

ANITA

I already said I'm gonna kill them afterwards!

DR. GANK

What if they ask for their money back?

Second VALKYRIE

With customer service this lousy, I'm surprised they pay you at all-

KEITHA

(CONTINUED)

Oh, come on, guys... we're gonna see someone raised from the dead! Its not something that happens every day!

DIGGORY

Then it's settled! Show me the customer!

(exit DIGGORY, DR. GANK and ANITA.)

Second VALKYRIE

Er... doesn't our opinion matter at all?

(end of Scene 4)

Scene 5

(KEITHA and the two VALKYRIES are still in the waiting room. The balcony light is on and you can see shadows moving. On the balcony, DR. GANK and ANITA move from left to right, carrying various implements, before DIGGORY finally stands in the room and raises her arms, while the other two exit.)

DIGGORY

In the name of Asclepius and Saint Kevorkian, I restore to thee the spark of life command thee to rise again! Cast away the shackles of death and return to the world of the living! I, THY HEALER, RESURRECT THEE!

(There is a flash of light and a crack of thunder. 'Shrine of the Master' from Soul Blazer begins to play in the background. After a minute, the music fades away and Diggory lowers her arms. There is silence. Then DR. GANK, ANITA and DIGGORY run back on stage pursued by a ZOMBIE.)

ZOMBIE

BRAINS!

(The ZOMBIE continues chasing the three from left to right and back again across the stage.)

KEITHA

Hm... machine's leaking again!

First VALKYRIE

(CONTINUED)

In Odin's name I shall smite thee, oh aberration of life!

(The two VALKYRIES draw their swords and charge at the ZOMBIE. KEITHA and the other three escape off-stage before a mighty battle ensues. The two VALKYRIES easily subdue the ZOMBIE before the First VALKYRIE runs it through with her sword and it collapses to the floor.)

Second VALKYRIE

Quickly! We must return it to Niflheim where it belongs!

(The music starts back up as the VALKYRIES drag the ZOMBIE off-stage, fading away as they leave the stage and the lights dim.)

(end of Scene 4)

Scene 5

(Back outside Saint Retridin's Clinic. KEITHA stands in the doorway in front of DIGGORY. The two VALKYRIES stand behind her.)

KEITHA

Well, thanks for visiting! Sorry I stole your bodyguards!

DIGGORY

It's okay. I'm not likely to need them. But... are you two sure about this? Won't Freya be angry if you abandon me?

First VALKYRIE

Get thee gone, foul sorcerer! Freya is angered by your blatant disregard for the boundaries between the living and the dead!

Second VALKYRIE

(embarrassed) Sis, don't be like that! We'll be fine. Freya has given us a new mission. We have to stay at Saint Retridin's. You see, we've scanned the place and it turns out there are two souls awaiting Valhalla!

KEITHA

(CONTINUED)

Isn't it great? Think of the publicity... come to Saint Retridin's and be served by a real Valkyrie!

Second VALKYRIE

And we speak Scandinavian, so we can make some contacts at Dignitas and expand the place. Soon we'll be a worldwide organisation!

DIGGORY

Er... that's nice. Make sure Keitha pays you!

KEITHA

Hey, how dare you imply that I don't pay my staff! They get all the souls they can carry! Dr. Gank has a huge collection-

DIGGORY

(laughs nervously) Well, I'd better be off and visit the hospital.

KEITHA

Don't forget to give out those nice leaflets I gave you!

(Exit DIGGORY. After a pause, KEITHA straightens her sign and exits via the other side.)

(End of Act 1)

Act 2

Scene 1

(A staff canteen in a hospital. Around a plastic table with uncomfortable plastic seats sit DIGGORY, DR. SEMINAR, DR. WILLARD and DR. ANNA. The three doctors wear white coats. DIGGORY and DR. WILLARD have bowls of chips, while DR. SEMINAR has a coffee and DR. ANNA is busy polishing a scalpel and humming 'Red Mountain: A Symbol of Thrill' from Sonic Adventure under her breath.)

DR. WILLARD

It's so great that you're back! We all missed you!

DR. SEMINAR

Seminar think maybe Diggory deported!

(CONTINUED)

DR. WILLARD

The department has been in absolute chaos since you left! Your replacement's a hard worker and he's good at handling the equipment, but he really is... well... he's kinda... Dr. Anna, kindly describe Nimrod.

DR. ANNA

(not looking up from her scalpel)

He's a pest. I broke my No. 25 scalpel operating on him.

DIGGORY

Why were you trying to operate on other members of staff this time?

DR. ANNA

He just stopped moving. Turned out he'd hit his head on the wall and chipped his truth rune. If I hadn't intervened, he might have corrupted his programming.

DR. WILLARD

I still can't believe you let Seminar buy a golem! Do you know how much of a pain those things can be when they go out of control and kill their creators?

DR. SEMINAR

It okay. Dr. Seminar father make. He go back to Ragnaphoenicia. Golem no swim.

DR. WILLARD

Nimrod needs someone to train him properly. He's a bit gormless. Keeps taking my instructions literally. I told him to 'take your time' and he stole my watch.

DIGGORY

Er... okay... is there anything else I should know?

DR. ANNA

(CONTINUED)

We can't find Dr. Hesmendalsch. (pause) We're not sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing.

DR. WILLARD

It's okay, Dr. Anna, I'm sure he's just been fired.

DR. SEMINAR

I hope he fired properly. Nimrod keep flaking.

DR. WILLARD

Take your pills, Dr. Seminar.

DIGGORY

Talking of Dr. Seminar, I heard your family came to England. How are they?

DR. SEMINAR

They no like England. Go back tomorrow. (sigh) Dr. Seminar wish he could go home also. How longer Dr. Seminar must remain in exile?

DIGGORY

That's a shame. Say hello to them from all of us.

(pauses)

Keitha Bedfrey said hi too.

DR. ANNA

You saw Keitha? How was she? She hasn't left dead bodies by the bins for weeks!

DIGGORY

Busy.

DR. WILLARD

Aren't we all.

DIGGORY

Well, I'd better go speak to the manager. With my new found semidivine healing powers, I'm sure I'll be welcomed back into my former position with open arms.

(CONTINUED)

DR. ANNA

Mind the golem doesn't get to hear about that. It's got a bit of a phobia of being replaced. Thinks I'll eat it. Nobody's sure why.

DR. SEMINAR

I go take into other room and polish.

DR. WILLARD

Id better be getting back to work as well.

(Exit all.)

(End of Stage 1)

Stage 2

(A dark alley. Floodlights in the middle of the stage centre on two shifty-looking people: ANITA and DR. HESMENDALSCH, a tall man in a white coat with long black hair. They are conversing in low tones. ANITA is carrying a suitcase.)

DR. HESMENDALSCH

So, its a deal then?

ANITA

Yeah, the pay's good enough.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

It should be. That's my entire life's wages. You're sure you can do the job?

ANITA

Relax, I'm a professional.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

So is his friend.

ANITA

I've already earned Keitha's trust. She won't suspect a thing.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

(CONTINUED)

You get the other half of your money once Diggory's dead.

ANITA

Dead? You make me sound like some lowly assassin. The word is 'erased'. Completely erased from the time-stream, as though he never existed.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

Either way is fine by me. As long as he's out of my face permanently.

ANITA

You have my word as a businesswoman. Now, I've gotta go clean the time machine.

(exit ANITA)

DR. HESMENDALSCH

Finally! My day has come!

*(Cackles insanely as the lights fade.)
(end of Scene 2)*

(Scene 3)

(DIGGORY's office. It is a complete tip. It looks like a cross between a messy office and a workshop. Every part of it not covered by machines of varying sizes waiting to be fixed is covered in piles of papers. DIGGORY sits at her desk behind her computer. DR. WILLARD wanders around the office, picking up papers and reading them, while NIMROD pokes one of the bigger machines with a spanner. NIMROD looks like the golem from the 1910s film and moves jerkily.)

DR. WILLARD

Isn't it great that they let both you and Nimrod stay on? Now you get your old job back and Nimrod won't kill us all in our sleep!

DR. DIGGORY

Nimrod wouldn't do that! He's a kind, gentle golem. Aren't you, Nimrod?

DR. WILLARD

(CONTINUED)

Don't tell me you're taking sides with that thing now!

DIGGORY

He's great with the patients. Well... better than Dr. Anna. Pass me that spanner, Nimrod.

(NIMROD picks up the spanner lying on one of the big machines and shuffles over to DIGGORY, who takes it off him and starts poking a machine with it. There is a hum as the machine starts up.)

DR. WILLARD

Did you just get that working? Its been broken for months! None of us had any idea what to do with it.

DIGGORY

I've... improved since my training.

DR. WILLARD

Where did you go for your training, anyway? I wanna go there too. Does it cost much?

DIGGORY

*N... no... it didn't cost anything at all...
(looks down at his spanner)*

DR. WILLARD

Are you sure? You're being mysterious, Diggory, I don't like it when you're mysterious! I remember what happened last time you were hiding something.

DIGGORY

The truth would be too much for your pathetic mortal mind to comprehend...

DR. WILLARD

Hey!

(DR. WILLARD stops looking through the papers and picks up one.)

DR. WILLARD

(CONTINUED)

This is the one! I'd better go and show the manager. Maybe he'll believe us now and give us enough money to cover the cost of our bills.

DIGGORY

I certainly hope so. I'd really like some more precise tools. (hits the machine with the hammer)

(exit DR. WILLARD. DIGGORY turns to address NIMROD.)

Now fetch me the screwdriver.

(The golem obeys DIGGORY's instructions.)

Thank you, Nimrod. You've been a great help. (sigh) It's nice to see there's someone around here I can rely on. I bet you don't need to eat or sleep, do you? You know, you've got a great future ahead of you in this career.

(The golem looks confused and turns to face the audience.)

Well, think about it. You're a machine as well. This makes you perfectly at one with the machines. You understand them instinctively. Not like us misinformed humans. (snaps his fingers) I bet if I forced Dr. Seminar to give me a user manual, I could program you to do my job better than I can.

(The golem makes that face a Nu makes in Chrono Trigger.)

Do you want to know the real secret of my training? You'd probably understand better than that idiot.

(Diggory leans over and whispers something into what passes as the golem's ear. The lights fade. End of Scene 3.)

Scene 4

(The staff canteen. DIGGORY, DR. WILLARD and DR. ANNA all sit at their usual seats around the table. DR. WILLARD has a very strong coffee. DR. ANNA peels an apple with a scalpel. DR. DIGGORY is asleep.)

DR. WILLARD

(CONTINUED)

... so then I said, 'financial drain? My department's not a financial drain! If you compare the budget to last week, you'll find that our loss decreased by...'

(shakes DIGGORY gently)

Hey, are you asleep?

(DIGGORY snores loudly and mutters something incoherent under her breath)

DIG-GO-RYYYYYYYYYYYY!

(DR. WILLARD shakes DIGGORY more vigorously. DIGGORY sits bolt upright, a terrified expression on his face.)

DIGGORY

NO, NOT THE FISH! STOP BITING ME! AAAAAAAAAAAAAARGH!

DR. WILLARD

Hey, are you okay?

DIGGORY

Wh... what? Where am I? (looks around)

DR. ANNA

Its 1949. The war ended REALLY badly. You really don't wanna look outta the window...

DR. WILLARD

Dr. Anna, what did I tell you about that earlier on?

DR. ANNA

That was different! They were coma patients!

DIGGORY

Oh yeah, I'm still at work! I'm sorry, I had a terrible nightmare. It was really bizarre I've been having them a lot recently...

DR. WILLARD

Maybe you should see the staff counsellor?

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

No, I'll be fine... maybe I just need more sleep...

DR. ANNA

Good idea. Willard, tell us some more about the financial situation... (looks around) Hey, where's Dr. Seminar gone? He always eats with us!

DR. WILLARD

He went home early. Said something urgent had come up with his family.

DR. ANNA

I thought they had gone back home!

DR. WILLARD

Oh dear. I wouldn't go there. I'm not too keen on Ragnaphoenicia's economic situation. Did you know that last year, according to the Financial Times, their stock market-

(DIGGORY falls asleep again.)

HEY!

DR. ANNA

Let him sleep. He's obviously had a rough time. C'mon, back to work.

(The doctors stand up and leave the canteen. Lights fade. End of Scene 5.)

Scene 5

(Back in DIGGORY's office. DIGGORY and NIMROD are fixing a big machine, walking around it and passing tools to each other.)

DIGGORY

... and I was wondering whether I'm just not used to being in a mortal body. That might be affecting my sleep and causing the nightmares. What do you think, Nimrod?

(NIMROD turns to the audience and looks very confused.)

(CONTINUED)

All this eating and sleeping... its hard to get back into the habit of being mortal. I never really thought about it before, but... the Hall of the Gods doesn't have a toilet! (sigh) I don't suppose you have to worry about things like that either.

(DIGGORY walks up to the golem and inspects it thoughtfully.)

Are they polishing you properly? You look like you're drying out, too...

(Suddenly, DR. SEMINAR runs through the door with his grandfather, GRANDPA BEN. The old man has a long beard and is dressed in yellow robes and sandals. He is in surprisingly good health for his age.)

What is it?

DR. SEMINAR

Diggory!

(starts chattering in Ragnaphoenician, before stopping and taking a deep breath to calm himself down)

I go back fuyodol! Home!

DIGGORY

What?

(GRANDPA BEN makes a beeline for NIMROD and starts fussing over him, polishing him with a rag and tapping him with a chisel.)

DR. SEMINAR

Grandfather pull strings! Dr. Seminar allowed home if no cause trouble!

DIGGORY

So this is you famous grandfather... did he make our golem?

GRANDPA BEN

(nods enthusiastically)

Golem! Good, eh? You like?

DIGGORY

Beautifully crafted!

(SEMINAR translates for the old man, who smiles and nods.)

GRANDPA BEN

(proudly) My grandson... he go home!

DIGGORY

We'll miss him!

DR. SEMINAR

*I miss you all too! Send postcard every day!
Sometimes Government steal mail though...*

DIGGORY

What will you do once you're home?

DR. SEMINAR

Home need doctor too!

GRANDPA BEN

*(Looks angry and grabs his grandson by the ear.
NIMROD mimics his angry expression.)*

*No! Work as priest! Priest is healer! Doctor
useless! Just give pill and say I have virus!*

DIGGORY

*(laughs) I see you've got your work cut out for
you!*

GRANDPA BEN

(slaps DIGGORY) No you be cheeky!

DR. SEMINAR

I guess this goodbye.

DIGGORY

*Goodbye, Dr. Seminar. Don't forget to find the
others and tell them too.*

(CONTINUED)

(DR. SEMINAR walks off stage, followed by GRANDPA BEN. NIMROD attempts to follow them, but GRANDPA BEN pushes him back on stage.)

GRANDPA BEN

No! You stay!

DIGGORY

We can keep the golem?

GRANDPA BEN

Golem for you! Present, for look after my grandson!

(hands DIGGORY an ancient-looking scroll)

This say how control golem!

DIGGORY

(Takes piece of paper.)

I'll take good care of Nimrod! Thank you, sir!

GRANDPA BEN

Listen, you! I see something in you, as priest. You different.

DIGGORY

I have... a special relationship with the Divine, it is true.

GRANDPA BEN

Keep golem close. It protect you. You need it.

(turns his back in DIGGORY)

Keep alive, you. You no just doctor... you true healer.

(GRANDPA BEN walks out. DIGGORY opens the the scroll and reads it, examining NIMROD at the same time.)

DIGGORY

(CONTINUED)

I'm not some great healer... I just work through my machines. Do I really do anything but press a button to turn the machine on? Maybe the machines are the real healers...

(Reads aloud from the scroll).

'The golem is but a tool. Always remember that you are in control. If the tool becomes a master, it will control you.' Why do I have the right to be in control? What makes me so much better than my machines? Maybe there's no distinction between machine and operator at all...

(Lights fade. End of scene 5.)

Scene 6

(The Manager's Office, Saturn Valley Hospital. It is an ordinary office with a desk, a computer, a sign on the desk saying 'Manager' and a waste paper bin. MR. POUNDSTRETCHER, the manager, is a short, bald man in a black suit. He sits at his chair behind his desk. DIGGORY sits facing him. She looks half asleep.)

DIGGORY

What did you wish to see me about, sir?

MR. POUNDSTRETCHER

Isn't it obvious? Look at you, you're about to fall asleep on my desk. I've had complaints about you sleeping on the job.

DIGGORY

I'm sorry, sir, I've been having trouble sleeping. I keep having these terrible nightmares... they get worse every night!

MR. POUNDSTRETCHER

Have you been to see the staff counsellor?

DIGGORY

(DIGGORY nods.)

(CONTINUED)

H... he told me to relax and get more sleep... I tried to, but I can't sleep any more with these nightmares... When I try and meditate, I just get awful visions. I even took some pills but they didn't work. I really don't know what could be causing the nightmares.

MR. POUNDSTRETCHER

Well, you're in no fit state to work. I am ordering you to take some time off and don't come back until you're well. A hospital is no place for ill people.

DIGGORY

Th... there might be a problem with just leaving the office...

MR. POUNDSTRETCHER

Is it anything that the other two can't sort out?

DIGGORY

It's... Nimrod...

MR. POUNDSTRETCHER

The golem?

DIGGORY

It's supposed to follow everyone's orders... they're easy to manage if you remember that they take everything literally... but Nimrod's been acting odd...

MR. POUNDSTRETCHER

Odd in what way?

DIGGORY

It follows me around everywhere. And it protects me in my sleep. It almost broke someone's arm because they tried to shake me awake. I'll get it fixed, I promise, but it'll take me a little time...

MR. POUNDSTRETCHER

(sighs) Just deactivate it and put it in the cupboard... the department can survive with two less members of staff for a few days.

DIGGORY

If you say so.

(makes a move to stand up)

MR. POUNDSTRETCHER

And another thing, Dr. Diggory...

DIGGORY

Hm?

MR. POUNDSTRETCHER

If you see that friend of yours from the euthanasia clinic, tell her that if she uses our bin again, the security guards will place her in it head first and close the lid.

DIGGORY

Yes, sir.

(stands up and heads out of the door. The lights fade. A spotlight follows Diggory across the stage.)

(O.S.) Dr. Gank? What are you doing here?

(end of scene 6)

ACT 3

SCENE 1

(A dark back alley behind St. Retridin's Clinic. There is a bin in the corner. DR. GANK faces DIGGORY, a knife in his hand.)

DIGGORY

Kill me and my golem will come after you and pound your brains into dust.

DR. GANK

What? I'm not gonna kill ya. I made quota in three hours today, thank you very...

(CONTINUED)

(looks at the knife)

Oh... ah... sorry, its just a nervous habit.

(puts the knife away)

Wait a minute... what da... you've got a GOLEM?

DIGGORY

Do you need me for something, or can I go now?

DR. GANK

I came here to warn ya. That's right.

DIGGORY

Warn me?

DR. GANK

*You're not gonna believe me unless I show ya.
Follow me and shut up.*

DIGGORY

Look, I'm really tired and not very well.

DR. GANK

You'll be dead if you don't follow me.

(stops)

Unless ya wanna die. I'm happy to oblige-

DIGGORY

*On second thoughts, I'm really very well and not
at all on my last legs!*

DR. GANK

*That's the spirit! C'mon, I know all the best
shortcuts around here*

*(DR. GANK leads DIGGORY off the stage. The lights
fade. End of Scene 1.)*

Scene 2

(Darkness.)

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

*(O.S.) We can't just break into someone's window!
What are you, a bur-*

DR. GANK

Shh! Can you hear the noise?

(A humming noise a little like a Tardis slowly grows louder. As it reaches a crescendo, a glowing blue device is wheeled in. It is metal and UFO-shaped, with blue wires leading from it in every direction. Lights in various shades of blue wink on and off in a random pattern. The spotlight focusses on DIGGORY and DR. GANK standing on the balcony.)

DIGGORY

What in blessed Hippocrates' name is that?

DR. GANK

Its a time machine!

DIGGORY

Y... you've got to be kidding me!

DR. GANK

I can prove it! Wanna see?

(DR. GANK leads DIGGORY off the balcony, then onto the stage. He crouches down next to the machine and searches.)

Here we go! The instructions manual!

DIGGORY

(reads) 'To go back in time, turn the dial anticlockwise. Warning: avoid the year 1999 at all costs.' But you could have written this! How do I know this isn't an execution chamber and you're just trying to convince me to stand in it and let you pull the lever?

DR. GANK

Nah, I'd just stab ya in the back if I wanted ya dead.

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

Okay, time machine or no time machine, why did you take me all the way here in the middle of the night to see this weird machine?

DR. GANK

I told ya. To warn ya. (taps machine) This is Anita's machine.

DIGGORY

What, your work colleague?

DR. GANK

Yeah. She ain't just an ordinary human being. She's got this... talent. She's a time-travelling abortionist.

DIGGORY

A WHAT?

DR. GANK

Ya see, one day we had this big row, so I stole her wallet as revenge. I only wanted to nick some money, but I found out more than I should. The job at St. Retridin's is just a front. She's an assassin. And her next target is... you!

DIGGORY

(gasp!)

DR. GANK

I know, she's a goddamn awful assassin, isn't she? What kind of loser keeps all this stuff in their wallet?

DIGGORY

But... who would want me dead badly enough to pay an assassin?

DR. GANK

I don't know, but the only way to find out... is to track down the assassin!

(CONTINUED)

(points to the time machine)

We have to go back in time after her! Diggory, when were you born? If she's an abortionist...

DIGGORY

W... wait a minute! I can spot two flaws in this plan already!

DR. GANK

Oh yeah?

DIGGORY

For one thing, if we follow an assassin around, she'll just kill us. I'm no expert in battle and I doubt even you'd survive against a professional assassin! Secondly... this is impossible! If you go back in time and kill someone before they're born, you cause so many paradoxes it'd destroy the fabric of space and time! Do you know how many chains of cause and effect you'd have to mess w-

(snaps her fingers)

Get the Valkyries!

DR. GANK

Er... I'd r... rather not... it's late and I'll wake them up and th... they've both got PMS.

DIGGORY

So you're scared of them and not a time-travelling assassin?

DR. GANK

Why don't you get your golem?

DIGGORY

Don't be silly, it'd never fit through the d-

(doubles over in obvious agony)

DR. GANK

Its starting already! Space and time are warping around you! Quick, there's no time to lose! Get in the machine!

(CONTINUED)

(DR. GANK pushes DIGGORY through the door of the machine. Before he can retreat, DIGGORY uses the last of his strength to pull DR. GANK in after him.)

DIGGORY

1984, you idiot!

DR. GANK

Aww, do we have to go there? It's all Orwellian and icky!

DIGGORY

No it isn't! That's just a book! Turn the dial!

(The machine starts humming again and the blue light gets brighter. There is a flash and the machine winds down again. When it falls silent, the lights fade. End of scene 2.)

SCENE 3

(The streets of Huntingdon, outside the hospital, 1984. There is a high wall covered in ivy and the hospital building can just about be seen over the top. The hospital looks in considerably better repair than it will in the future DIGGORY and DR. GANK crouch under the wall, discussing their plan.)

DR. GANK

... and then we sneak into the Maternity Ward!

DIGGORY

Come to think of it, I'm not sure where the Maternity Ward is. Oh well, I'm sure it's signposted...

(DR. GANK starts sneaking along the wall. Suddenly, there is a sound of a cat yowling and he jumps back.)

Be careful! We can't make any unnecessary changes! Even standing on a cat's tail might trigger a whole chain of events that lead to us dying horribly in a car crash!

DR. GANK

(CONTINUED)

Man, I hate time travel already. How'm I supposed to concentrate on sneaking when I-

DIGGORY

Holy Saint Kevorkian!

DR. GANK

Huh? What?

DIGGORY

We've made a terrible mistake!

DR. GANK

What's wrong?

DIGGORY

I just remembered! I wasn't born in Huntingdon! My parents moved to Huntingdon in 1989 after I was born! We're at the wrong hospital!

DR. GANK

Aww man, where are we supposed to be?

DIGGORY

Saturn Valley!

DR. GANK

The machine can't travel in space, only in time. We'll have to take the train!

DIGGORY

It's a good job its impossible for us to be late!

(The lights fade. There is the sound of a train pulling in at a station and a train announcement beep.)

TRAIN ANNOUNCER

(O.S.) The 10.30 to Saturn Valley will now be departing at Platform 3! The first class is at the front of this train and the non-smoking carriage is at the rear! A buffet service will be provided! Platform 3 for the 10.30 service to Saturn Valley, calling at Moonside and Saturn Valley!

(CONTINUED)

(The lights come back on, revealing DIGGORY and DR. GANK stood outside an identical hospital labelled 'Saturn Valley Hospital'.)

DIGGORY

Now... the Maternity Ward!

DR. GANK

I hope we don't meet any babies. Man, I hate babies...

(Lights fade.)

... and puppies...

(End of Scene 3.)

SCENE 4

(A dark hospital corridor. A sign on the wall points to the Maternity Ward. DIGGORY and DR. GANK sneak along the floor, trying to stay out of sight of a security camera on the wall. Suddenly, there is a sound like a crying baby and DR. GANK jumps.)

DIGGORY

Sssssh!

DR. GANK

I'm sorry. I told ya I don't like babies!

DIGGORY

Are you scared of them?

DR. GANK

No I am NOT!

(pauses and looks around)

I'm sure I just heard someone moving around...

(pause)

Talking of babies, how are we going to know which one is you? Babies all look the same.

DIGGORY

(CONTINUED)

I think they have tags on their feet...

DR. GANK

Have you really never been in the Maternity Ward?

DIGGORY

I work in the medical technology department!

DR. GANK

The Maternity Ward has loads of machines in it!

DIGGORY

Yeah, but someone else wheels the machines down. They don't let us weirdos near the babies! Especially not Dr. Anna... she's bad enough with the coma patients...

DR. GANK

Shh! I heard it again...

(They both stop and tense up, looking around. Suddenly, ANITA bursts out of the shadows and points a gun at them.)

ANITA

Well well, what do we have here?

DR. GANK

We know all about your evil plan, Anita! Is that even your real name?

ANITA

It doesn't matter, as you won't live long enough to learn it. I was going to kill you swiftly and quietly, like a professional. I don't know how on Earth you managed to find out about my plan, or how you followed me back in time. But now I'll have to kill you face to face... it makes no difference to me either way. Prepare to die, Diggory!

DIGGORY

W... wait! Please tell me why I have to die, at least!

(CONTINUED)

(As DIGGORY begins to talk, DR. GANK sneaks into the shadows and behind ANITA.)

ANITA

Hah! Do you really think a master assassin like me would tell you the name of her employer!

DIGGORY

B... but I have no enemies! At least, none that would want to kill me!

ANITA

Well, you know less than you...

(turns around, spotting DR. GANK, and shoots him. He goes down.)

DIGGORY

Dr. Gank! NO!

ANITA

Nice try, but such cheap tricks don't work on me! Now there's nobody to stop me! Farewell, Diggory!

(Suddenly, there is a loud noise like lots of thumping, clattering and objects breaking. Both DIGGORY and ANITA look round to see NIMROD run onto the stage.)

WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?

DIGGORY

N... Nimrod? How did you get here?

(NIMROD stops and tries to mime something long and complicated.)

Never mind. Stop that woman!

(NIMROD charges at ANITA, who tries to shoot him but the bullets just embed themselves in the clay. He knocks the gun out of her hands and swipes at her, knocking her unconscious.)

Good golem! GOOD golem! Now lets drag her back into the time machine and get out of here!

(CONTINUED)

(NIMROD grabs ANITA by the legs and drags her off-stage.)

DR. GANK

Does this mean we don't have to steal a baby?

DIGGORY

Not unless you really want to.

DR. GANK

Maybe we should steal one just in case a past or future version of Anita comes here. You never know with time travel- oh heck!

DIGGORY

What?

DR. GANK

I just remembered! We parked our time machine in Huntingdon!

DIGGORY

We'll just have to take a train back!

DR. GANK

Have you ever tried to get on a train with an unconscious woman being dragged by a golem?

DIGGORY

You have a point... what do you suggest?

DR. GANK

Well, when I have to hide an unconscious person or a dead body or something, I always take the white van. There's gotta be a white van somewhere around here...

DIGGORY

Does it have to be white?

DR. GANK

Yes, and as rusty as possible!

(CONTINUED)

(DR. GANK runs off-stage After a short pause, he runs back on again. He starts tugging on DIGGORY's sleeve.)

C'mon, I've found one! I need your help! It's in a school and I'm not allowed near schools!

(DR. GANK pulls DIGGORY off-stage After a short pause, NIMROD wanders back onto the stage. He looks very confused and searches for DIGGORY, before shrugging and standing in the middle of the stage.)

(Lights fade. End of scene 4.)

SCENE 5

(A street in Saturn Valley, outside a school. There is a large iron gate and a sign with the name of the school. DR. GANK and DIGGORY sneak along the wall.)

DIGGORY

I thought you said there was a van here!

DR. GANK

It must have driven off...

DIGGORY

Someone's coming!

(The two flatten themselves against the wall just as the school bell rings and there is the sound of rowdy children coming out of the gates. A CHILD runs on stage, also hiding behind the wall. He is about 10, wearing a black uniform, with short blonde hair.)

DR. GANK

Psst, hey, kid, have you seen a white v-

DIGGORY

(Drags DR. GANK back.)

Shhh! You'll get us arrested!

CHILD

Who are you weirdos? You look suspicious.

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

We're nobody! We're definitely not at all doing anything illegal!

DR. GANK

And we're not destroying the space-time continuum!

CHILD

What?

DIGGORY

Aaargh, stop interacting with us! You'll change history!

DR. GANK

Yeah, 1984 will never have happened!

CHILD

But its 1994!

DR. GANK

Wh... what? Are you sure?

CHILD

Look, I may be failing History but I still know what year it is!

DIGGORY

Holy Saint Kevorkian! I thought the dial on that machine looked wonky!

DR. GANK

But if we're in the wrong time, what's Anita doing h...

DIGGORY

She probably doesn't realise the machine is broken either!

CHILD

Are you rehearsing a play?

(CONTINUED)

(pauses and sighs)

Just don't tell the bullies where I am, okay?

(The CHILD walks past them, humming the tune to 'Last Moment of the Dark Fact' from Ys: The Vanished Omens.)

DIGGORY

(laughs) He's just like me when I was that age...

(pause)

Wait a minute...

(Walks up to the CHILD, who stops again.)

CHILD

What? Stop bothering me, I'm writing a song.

DIGGORY

What's your name, boy?

CHILD

Why do you want to know? I'm not allowed to tell strangers my name!

DR. GANK

He'll give you a fiver if you tell him!

CHILD

I can't take money off strangers either!

DIGGORY

(bends down) I'll give you a Game Gear if you tell me.

CHILD

Really? A real Game Gear?

DR. GANK

What the hell? A GAME GEAR? In 1994? What kind of obsolete load of crap are you trying to-

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

Ssssh! Yes, a real Game Gear with a Master System converter!

(DR. GANK sighs.)

CHILD

(mutters under his breath) Diggory... Diggory Doragor...

(DIGGORY collapses to the floor. DR. GANK crouches down next to him and feels for a pulse.)

Hey, mister, are you okay?

DR. GANK

Oh no! His personal timestream is disintegrating! Meeting his own doppelganger must have pushed the continuity too far!

CHILD

You're a weirdo. You ought to get him to the school nurse.

(DR. GANK drags DIGGORY off the stage. The CHILD follows them.)

(Lights fade. End of Scene 5.)

SCENE 6

(A school medical room. DR. DIGGORY lies on the bed with the NURSE examining him. DR. GANK lounges on a chair. The CHILD sits on the floor, doing his homework.)

NURSE

Well, your ID cards look real enough, even though I've never heard of a St. Retridin's Clinic.

(turns to the CHILD)

To think there's a famous doctor with the same name as you, Diggory!

CHILD

Shut up! I am SO going to pass my science exams!

NURSE

(CONTINUED)

(picks up the CHILD's homework)

You've spelt 'mitochondria' wrong! And what's a 'paladin cell'? You mean palisade, right?

DR. GANK

Our church had a paladin cell...

(grabs the homework off the nurse)

What kind of rubbish is this, anyway? Nobody needs to know about cells unless yours stop working, and then you're screwed anyway! Don't they teach anything useful in schools nowad... fifteen years ago? Hey, kid, where's the best place to stab someone?

(DIGGORY stirs, groans and turns over.)

Hey, how're you feeling?

DIGGORY

Where... where am I?

NURSE

You're in Saturn Valley High School medical room. Don't worry, you've just suffered a mild stroke. You'll be well enough to walk soon.

DIGGORY

Ah yes... I remember now... I must leave as soon as possible I risk terrible paradox by meeting my doppelganger!

DR. GANK

Is this really you in the past? How the hell does a kid like this become a famous doctor?

DIGGORY

I took a very indirect route of study. You wouldn't understand.

CHILD

Aww, cmon! I'm enjoying the story! Aren't you going to tell me the rest of it?

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

*(sternly) No! You can't know your own future!
You'll get paradox backlash!*

DR. GANK

*Isn't it a bit late for that, considering what
you've done to the poor kid's timeline already?*

CHILD

*Hey, if you're really me in the future, I can mess
you up by doing things differently from what I was
going to do!*

*(the CHILD grabs his textbook back, tears out a
page and eats it)*

*(in a singsong voice) Nya nya! I'm not revising
for my exa-ams! I'm not revising for my exa-ams!*

DIGGORY

(snatches the book back from the CHILD)

OK, OK, I surrender! I'll tell you everything...

(pause)

er...

(scratches his head)

CHILD

Go on then!

DIGGORY

I can't remember!

CHILD

What?

DIGGORY

*I can't remember a thing! I guess I hadn't really
thought about it before...*

CHILD

(CONTINUED)

Some prophet from the future you are!

DR. GANK

Doesn't being in your old school jog your memory?

DIGGORY

Well, I remember being here, then going to University and becoming a doctor, but not much in-between. And I might have invented the University part... I'm not sure...

CHILD

Maybe he got hit on the head. You should whack him on the head again just in case.

(DR. GANK grins, takes a sap from his pocket and sneaks up behind DIGGORY with it. He is about to bring it down on his head when DIGGORY snaps his fingers.)

DIGGORY

I've got it! I remember everything! It was about this time in my life - at ten years old - that I met a strange man dressed as a doctor who claimed to be my future self. Of course, I didn't believe him. I assumed he'd escaped from the local asylum and stolen the white coat from one of the psychiatrists.

CHILD

You know, that was exactly what I was thinking! You're pretty good-

DIGGORY

But then I remembered we didn't have an asylum in Saturn Valley.

NURSE

It got closed down due to overcrowding.

DR. GANK

What did the crazy man from the future do next?

DIGGORY

(CONTINUED)

He looked at my science homework-

(realises he still has the homework book in his hand, looks down at it and opens it at a random page)

*and was shocked by my atrocious grasp of science!
Why is this full of bad poetry?*

CHILD

*Hey, that's exilic verse in Iambic Pentameter,
that is! Let me read you my favourite. 'Oh, woe is
me, my home, my fuyodol!'*

DIGGORY

*An-y-way! He was so shocked by my poor grasp of
science that he feared something had gone so
horribly wrong with the space-time continuum that
he'd changed history so that he would never become
a doctor! So he insisted I come forwards into the
future with him, to be his apprentice and learn
everything he needs to know!*

DR. GANK

*Aaaargh! So you learnt how to be a doctor from a
future version of yourself who was a doctor, then
became a doctor? How does that even work?*

DIGGORY

*It doesn't work! Its a complete paradox! That's
why I couldn't remember any of it - once the
timestream had healed, all record of it was
erased, leaving a perfect loop!*

DR. GANK

*But by going back into the past, you opened up the
loop again and now your memories are returning?*

DIGGORY

*Indeed. I think I can remember just enough about
what I learnt to teach it to the next generation!*

CHILD

(CONTINUED)

Hang on a minute here! What makes you think I WANT to be your apprentice? I don't even want to be a doctor! I'm gonna be a famous exile! I'm the best at being exile! I get thrown off every school trip!

NURSE

Besides, you'd never get the legal documentation to take random pupils from this school as apprentices!

DIGGORY

Its just like a work experience placement. I'll get the hospital to do the forms. I'm sure we've got a spatio-temporal exchange placement programme form somewhere-

CHILD

Hey! Are you even listening to me? I don't want to be a doctor!

DR. GANK

I'll give you a Dreamcast if you do!

CHILD

What's a Dreamcast?

DIGGORY

Don't accept presents from Dr. Gank, boy...

CHILD

Don't call me 'boy'! I'm NOT your apprentice!

NURSE

You know, work experience week is coming up...

DR. GANK

Its a games console made by Sega in the year 2000!

CHILD

(runs up to DR. GANK and grabs him by the arm)

Really? You'd really get me one of those? Really?

(CONTINUED)

DR. GANK

We'll just have to see what the hardware store has in, won't we?

DIGGORY

Hey, what did I just tell you?

(There is a sudden loud, repetitive thump and a crash, followed by a cat yowling and a car skidding off the road and then exploding.)

DIGGORY

What the- NIMROD!

(DIGGORY runs offstage. DR. GANK follows him, the CHILD still attached to his arm. The NURSE shrugs and puts the bedsheets straight.)

(Lights fade. End of Scene 6.)

(End of Act 3.)

ACT 4

SCENE 1

(A hospital ward, Huntingdon, 2010. DIGGORY lies in the bed, while NIMROD stands at the head of the bed, looking a little like the scary woman from the Unearthly Standstill in Final Fantasy 6. DR. ANNA and DR. WILLARD walk in. DR. WILLARD sits down on a stool, takes a paper from his pocket and begins reading it.)

DR. WILLARD

Today, on the FTSE, Linux are up 2 per cent!

DR. ANNA

(snatches the paper off him and hits him with it)

Are you trying to put her in a permanent coma from boredom?

DR. WILLARD

Okay, Mrs. Smartarse, you think of something interesting to say! Its not like anything interesting has happened around here lately.

(CONTINUED)

DR. ANNA

(examines DIGGORY)

How's he doing?

DR. WILLARD

She's still suffering from exhaustion and some sort of mental trauma. The clock's acting weird around her as well. They're saying she travelled in time... but that's impossible, right?

DR. ANNA

It's that creepy doctor's fault.

(sharpens her nails with the scalpel)

It was on the security cameras. She disappeared down a back alley with him. I'm surprised she didn't get her throat cut.

DR. WILLARD

I wonder how Nimrod got out of his cupboard. He was carefully guarded. Nobody even saw him. He usually leaves a swathe of destruction when he tries to escape.

DR. ANNA

The guards probably fell asleep...

(peers at Nimrod)

Any luck trying to get him to leave?

DR. WILLARD

No, he won't leave Diggory's side. Its like his programming was altered.

DR. ANNA

I checked his chem. It looks normal...

DR. WILLARD

(Looks at his watch.)

Our lunch break is over. We'd better get back to work.

(CONTINUED)

DR. ANNA

Please recover soon, Diggory! If you don't... I get your organs, right?

(DR. WILLARD drags DR. ANNA offstage.)

(end of Stage 1)

STAGE 2

(The same hospital ward. KEITHA BEDFREY and DR. GANK walk onstage. They walk up to DIGGORY and examine her.)

KEITHA BEDFREY

Hi there, Diggory! Still unconscious?

DR. GANK

Looks like it.

KEITHA BEDFREY

She's probably beyond hope of recovery by now. Dr. Gank, do the honours.

(DR. GANK draws a fake comedy mallet and prepares to strike. Suddenly, DIGGORY sits bolt upright, awakened.)

Oh, you're well again! It's a miracle! Dr. Gank, you're a pretty good healer, did you know that?

DIGGORY

What year is it?

(looks around)

Is the assassin gone?

DR. GANK

Nimrod took her to the police station. She's being questioned right now. She won't talk, but we think we might have a link to an international assassin ring.

DIGGORY

(looks around at NIMROD, who waves at him)

(CONTINUED)

I'm glad my golem's okay...

(pause)

Is the space-time continuum in order?

DR. GANK

As far as I know... I mean, I don't really know... there hasn't been any world-shattering explosions or anything...

KEITHA BEDFREY

Did you two really go back in time? I reckon its just an excuse for you to slack off!

DR. GANK

Hey, I brought you back that newspaper, didn't you?

KEITHA BEDFREY

That could have come out of your attic for all I know!

DIGGORY

Well, whether we went back in time or not, we stopped an assassin from killing me, and...

(pause)

Holy Saint Kevorkian! My apprentice! I forgot about him!

KEITHA BEDFREY

What kind of heartless villain forgets about their apprentice?

(DR. GANK attempts to sneak into the shadows, but KEITHA BEDFREY runs over to him and hits him repeatedly.)

DR. GANK

Aaaargh! Mercy!

KEITHA BEDFREY

Shut up! Your absence is coming out of your pay!

(CONTINUED)

DR. GANK

Noooooo! How will I eat?

KEITHA BEDFREY

Eat out of the bins like the dog you are!

DIGGORY

I guess I better go and check up on him... he'll steal cakes from the canteen if you leave him on his own.

KEITHA BEDFREY

Come on, we've leaving! We're behind quota already...

DR. GANK

Er... before we go... I have something I need to talk to Diggory about... in private...

KEITHA BEDFREY

Hmph, you're useless... okay, I'll let you.

(exit KEITHA BEDFREY)

DIGGORY

I'm warning you, that golem's watching the plugs.

DR. GANK

Hey, I'm not trying to kill you! I made quota today already!

(leans closer)

Do you want to know the real reason why I helped you?

DIGGORY

I guessed there was some ulterior motive... go on, then.

DR. GANK

The truth is... I need your help. You're sort of a priest, right?

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

Whatever gave you that impression?

DR. GANK

Well, you resurrected someone.

DIGGORY

Priests only resurrect people in online games, Dr. Gank. Resurrection is for healers. Really, really good healers. And their machines. Why, do you need someone resurrected?

DR. GANK

No, I need someone married.

(pause)

Me and Keitha.

DIGGORY

What? Have you discussed this with her? You didn't drug her coffee, did you?

DR. GANK

Hey, it may not look it, but me and Keitha are in love!

(sighs)

She's such a wonderful woman. Pretty, intelligent, understanding... and she can kill a man at the front door from the attic window without even a sniper rifle!

DIGGORY

I'm not really qualified to marry people. Even if I was... are you sure you want to be married in the name of Asclepius? Wouldn't Hades be more appropriate to you two angels of death?

DR. GANK

I prefer 'Angels of Mercy'. (bows)

DIGGORY

(CONTINUED)

I could point you to a really good priest... but he lives in Ragnaphoenicia.

DR. GANK

Ragnaphoenicia's nice this time of year...

(stops)

No, Keitha would never elope to Ragnaphoenicia and leave the clinic behind with the Valkyries. They never wash the dishes.

DIGGORY

You're right... I guess your creator's too busy to do marriages, being the High Priest, hm?

(looks at NIMROD, who shrugs)

I've got a great idea! Maybe Nimrod could do the ceremony! Nimrod was built to be a High Priest's assistant, so technically he's a member of the clergy. Nimrod, would you marry this fine gentleman?

DR. GANK

(looks nervously up at the golem)

W... would you mind wording that differently?

DIGGORY

Don't worry, he doesn't respond to commands like that. Asclepius knows the other doctors have tried it on me enough times.

(shudders)

I'll program him to do a marriage ceremony for you two as soon as possible!

DR. GANK

Thanks for your help! You're the best friend I've had since St. Retridin died!

DIGGORY

You know who St. Retridin is? Hey, answer me!

(DIGGORY chases DR. GANK offstage. NIMROD shrugs, wanders over to the flowers and begins carefully rearranging them.)

(end of Stage 2)

STAGE 3

(A hospital ward. There is a large machine that beeps rhythmically next to a bed. The patient in the bed - the WARDEN - is tall and wears a plain suit. He is unconscious. A NURSE replaces the flowers on a table beside the bed. After a few seconds, DIGGORY and NIMROD walk in.)

NURSE

Ah, the technical specialist.

DR. DIGGORY

(Looks at the patient. NIMROD follows him closely, standing directly behind him at all times.)

What appears to be the trouble?

NURSE

Well, its the machines... they just...

DIGGORY

I think recognise that man. Isn't he a prison warden from America?

NURSE

Yes, he was sent here because no other hospital could cure his condition.

DIGGORY

What exactly is wrong with him? I didn't know this was a specialist hospital...

NURSE

Well, it should have been simple enough. He just collapse at work and fell into a coma. We think he suffered some head injuries after a prisoner threw things at his head. His treatment was working as normal, but as soon as we hooked him up to the machines, they went crazy!

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

Define 'went crazy'.

NURSE

Well, they... er... go on, just look at the readings for yourself!

DIGGORY

(Walks over to the machine. The beeping gets louder and more rapid. DIGGORY steps back again. The beeping goes back to normal. He walks forwards again. It happens again. He tries to walk around the machine from a greater distance and approach it from the back. The stage lights flash on and off and the machine starts playing 'Deadman's Castle' from the Dark Savior OST.)

What in Asclepius' name?

NURSE

Its never done that before! What is this eerily beautiful music?

DIGGORY

This is the soundtrack from Dark Savior!

NURSE

Dark savior?

DIGGORY

Its a role-playing game on the Saturn made by a company called Climax! This can only mean one thing...

NURSE

What does it mean, doc?

DIGGORY

(Leans closer to the patient.)

Warden?

(pause)

(CONTINUED)

Warden, can you hear me?

(pause)

Warden, have you been searching for Parallel Six?

(DIGGORY and the NURSE watch the patient but he does not wake up.)

For the machines to pick up on it like this, he must have come very close to it! He may even have seen it! If so, he's in grave danger...

NURSE

Why so? I thought you said it was a video game...

DIGGORY

Parallel Six has never been found. People spend their entire lives searching for it and never even see a vision of it. It crashed the Japanese stock market twice! And not just people... machines as well...

NURSE

I still don't understand. Do you think this... quest is the reason why the patient is in this state?

DIGGORY

He could have forgotten to sleep, like online game addicts.

NURSE

Maybe, but he's showing no signs of malnutrition... its as if he just... switched off...

DIGGORY

Then what I feared most has come true!

NURSE

What? What has happened?

DIGGORY

(CONTINUED)

There is a legend among Parallel Six hunters, that several people have already found Parallel Six, but shortly after finding it, they were all silenced by Parallel Six itself. Parallel Six does not want to be discovered! It will do anything to retain its anonymity.

NURSE

So what exactly happens to them? Do they die?

(looks at the patient)

No, he's still breathing!

DIGGORY

The legend states that their souls are trapped within Parallel Six forever. After all...

(pause)

What is Dark Savior, if not a game set in a huge prison?

NURSE

Th... that's terrifying! What on Earth can we do to stop it?

DIGGORY

(snaps his fingers) The game data! If he's a sane person, he must have saved his games somewhere. If we can erase every save, maybe the game will forget what he's done and release him.

NURSE

I'll go and phone his local police!

DIGGORY

WAIT! Don't-

(the NURSE runs offstage)

Don't make international calls on our phones! Dr. Willard'll have my ass...

(suddenly, DIGGORY stops and slumps to the floor, her head in her hands.)

(CONTINUED)

(in a weak, broken voice) I'm going to delete the saved games... of an unconscious man. What have I become? I'm less than a bad doctor. I'm a bad person. Asclepius, forgive me!

(The lights fade out to the Game Over tune of Dark Savior. End of Scene 3.)

SCENE 4

(DIGGORY's office. DIGGORY is at her desk, typing on the computer. NIMROD is tinkering with a big machine. A POLICEMAN wanders in. DIGGORY jumps up, in obvious distress. Seeing his master's reaction, NIMROD stands in front of DIGGORY protectively.)

DIGGORY

I didn't do it! It was Dr. Willard and I have the bank statements to prove it!

POLICEMAN

Calm down, you're not in any trouble. I believe you were looking for this?

(takes a laptop case from over his shoulder and presents it to DIGGORY, who opens it and pulls out a laptop)

DIGGORY

What would I want a laptop for? I mean, its quite a nice laptop and mine is a bit old-

POLICEMAN

You asked for Warden Bob's Saturn saved games?

DIGGORY

This isn't a memory-

(looks at the laptop)

Oh. Saturn emulator. I'd never think for a minute that a man like him would be capable of breaking the law.

POLICEMAN

Technically, sir, if you own a real Saturn and a copy of the game-

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

Its a lot more complicated than you think.

(lifts the lid of the laptop and switches it on)

Thank you for the help. I think I can work with this.

POLICEMAN

I should think so too. It took us days to break into that house, its like a fortress. Do people really need rabid guard dogs?

DIGGORY

(gives NIMROD a pointed glance)

If I can at all compensate you-

POLICEMAN

Its okay, I'm suing my employers. Goodbye.

(storms off -stage. The sound of a slammed door in the background.)

DIGGORY

Hm...

(DIGGORY sits on the floor with the laptop on her lap.)

No, that isn't right... why isn't loading... damn Linux... now I've got no sound... DON'T DO THAT, CONTROLLER!

(hits the laptop)

Well, that's the game running... now for the saves... damn, now the memory cards aren't working!

(hits the laptop again)

Not now! Please, Asclepius, not now! Lets look at the configuration file again... no, it is working, isn't it? It's working just fine...

(clutches the laptop in both hands and holds it above his head)

(CONTINUED)

This man... didn't save his game when he found Parallel Six. That's how you find Parallel Six. You have to play through the entire game without saving. All five Parallels.

(places the laptop back on the ground)

Savestates... savestates... maybe he cheated...

(DIGGORY's hand reaches down to hit the F11 key. Before he presses the button, NIMROD runs over and knocks him away from the laptop.)

What are you doing, you stupid golem?

(NIMROD pulls on his arm insistently)

What are you trying to say?

(NIMROD points to the laptop and shakes his head vigorously)

Are you trying to warn me? Are you warning me of what will happen if I defrost that savestate?

(NIMROD nods insistently.)

Are you trying to say that I will suffer the same fate as the Warden?

(NIMROD continues nodding)

I suppose you're right. It won't be healthy, at any rate. I should have taken greater precautions.

(NIMROD wanders over and turns off the laptop before closing the lid and throwing it in the waste paper basket.)

I have another idea, Nimrod. One that will give us a chance of curing the patient without endangering us too much.

(NIMROD shrugs and wanders back to the machine it was fixing.)

Thank you, golem, for making me see sense when I was being foolish and hasty. You aren't the big stupid machine everyone thinks you are, are you?

(DIGGORY runs to his own computer and starts typing manically. The lights fade. End of Scene 4.)

(CONTINUED)

SCENE 5.

(The hospital staff canteen. DR. ANNA and DIGGORY are eating their lunch and chatting.)

DR. ANNA

... and then it just popped out!

DIGGORY

Very informative, Dr. Anna, very graphic. Just what I wanted to hear when I was eating.

DR. ANNA

You should stop eating and listen to my nice story, then.

(pauses to put food in her mouth)

What did you do at work today, anyway?

DIGGORY

My golem saved my life.

DR. ANNA

You rely on that thing too much.

DIGGORY

You rely on those scalpels for everything, don't you?

DR. ANNA

That's different. They can't go out of control and kill me.

DIGGORY

They might if you run down the stairs while carrying them and slip.

DR. ANNA

You know the difference! They're just sharp pieces of metal.

DIGGORY

(CONTINUED)

And Nimrod's just a blunt piece of clay!

DR. ANNA

Well, don't come crying to me when your skull is crushed and your brain splatters all over the-

DIGGORY

Hey, I said I'm EATING!

(DR. WILLARD runs in, pulling a struggling CHILD in by his ear.)

CHILD

Help! Diggory! He's going to kill me!

DIGGORY

What in Hippocrates' name are you doing to my apprentice?

DR. WILLARD

I found the little bugger picking the lock on the vending machine with a scalpel!

CHILD

I was hungry! Why is it always so long until lunch time?

DR. ANNA

I'm sorry, Dr. Willard, I taught him how to do it!

DIGGORY

Hey, its me you should be apologising to! Don't teach my apprentice bad habits!

DR. ANNA

What's it matter to you? You hardly ever take care of him anyway! Isn't he supposed to be working in your department?

DIGGORY

He has to have a broad overall view of every department in the hospital! A working knowledge of a hospital is important for a doctor!

(CONTINUED)

DR. ANNA

You're just too lazy to train him!

DIGGORY

So I'm allowed to train him but I'm not allowed to train Nimrod?

CHILD

Hey, can I go for a ride on Nimrod's back again?

DIGGORY

Yes, but be careful! Don't alter the words on his forehead!

(The CHILD runs offstage, cheering.)

You know what's odd?

DR. ANNA

You?

DIGGORY

Apart from me.

(pauses to eat)

That child's supposed to be me from the past, but... I don't remember ever learning anything like that! He can pick locks, he can steal from the gift shop, he can hide and sneak around the corridors... he's more like a little thief than a doctor!

DR. WILLARD

What did I tell you?

DIGGORY

Come to think of it, I don't think it was a real memory I had. I think it might have been a dream. Or something I saw in a video game.

DR. ANNA

Are you sure you weren't at Keitha's drinking the morphine? They give you really BIG doses.

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

This is serious, Dr. Anna! I've stolen a child from the past! I believed it was destined to happen, but... if it isn't, who knows what irreparable damage I've done to the space-time continuum?

DR. ANNA

Well, the world's not ended yet!

DIGGORY

There are worse things than the world ending, Dr. Anna...

DR. ANNA

Not to me, there isn't!

DIGGORY

You obviously haven't played Dark Saviour.

(stands in front of DR. ANNA)

Try it, Dr. Anna. Buy a Saturn. Buy the game. Play through Parallel 2, except don't rescue Kay. Then, when her sister asks you where she is, lie to her. Then you'll understand what is meant by a fate worse than death.

DR. ANNA

What the hell are you-

DIGGORY

Then you'll know what those nightmares I had were about. Good day, Dr. Anna. I'm going to eat with Nimrod.

(DIGGORY takes her tray and walks off stage. DR. ANNA stands up and yells after her.)

DR. ANNA

You fancy that golem, don't you?

(the lights fade. End of Scene 5.)

SCENE 5

(CONTINUED)

(A hospital ward, with the WARDEN still unconscious in a bed next to the beeping machine. The NURSE is pressing buttons on the machine. DIGGORY walks in, carrying the laptop in its case.)

DIGGORY

How is he?

NURSE

His life signs are doing absolutely nothing. The only thing keeping him alive is the machine, and even that isn't doing a very good job of it. If you don't come up with something soon... I'm afraid I'm going to have to pull the plug.

DIGGORY

Well, there's good news and bad news. The plan I came up with didn't work. That man doesn't save. Ever. Either he's a genius, an idiot or both.

NURSE

What's the good news?

DIGGORY

I have a new plan. Hopefully a better plan. You've heard of the expression 'fight fire with fire', right? Well, I'm going to fight a video game with a video game.

NURSE

Do they fight? That explains why I left two Dreamcast CDs in a box once and they were both scratched when I got them-

DIGGORY

Dark Savior is an incredibly addictive game. After seeing it once, I was hooked on it. It took me a year before I could stop playing it... stop thinking about it every waking minute of my life. I used another game to wean myself off it - a slightly less addictive game.

NURSE

(CONTINUED)

Like giving methadone to a Heroin addict? But the Warden's case isn't one of straightforward addiction-

DIGGORY

I believe the game will leave him alone if he forgets everything he knows about Parallel Six. To do so, he needs to see a game that is equally addictive but not soul-consuming, a game that will demand his full and immediate attention for a long period of time.

NURSE

A game like that? Well, it'd have to be... World of Warcraft!

('Orc 3' from the Warcraft 2 OST starts up in the background.)

DIGGORY

That silly little online game? You're thinking way too small-scale. But that's not to blame. I'm guessing you've never experienced the majestic wonders of...

(The previous song fades out and Teiris' theme from the Dragon Force OST starts up. The lights dim.)

NURSE

What is this? This... force of nature? Just listening to the theme tune makes every gaming experience I've had fade in comparison!

DIGGORY

This, my friend, is Dragon Force.

NURSE

Dragon... Force?

DIGGORY

Can you hear that voice in your head, beckoning you onwards? Her name is Astea and she is your new Goddess. Bow down and worship her!

(The NURSE falls to her knees. The music fades out after a few seconds.)

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

As an immigration officer said to me once, long ago... welcome to Legendra, land of opportunity!

NURSE

So, this is the force that will allow us to combat that ancient evil?

DIGGORY

All we need to do is hook a Saturn up in the room.

NURSE

But how's he going to even know its there? He's in a coma.

DIGGORY

Gaming doesn't always have to be an active process. Even just listening to the sound test is just as effective as trying to finish the game. People have even showed signs of receiving the positive effects of video games after watching other people play them.

NURSE

Okay, then, we need a Saturn and some headphones.

(looks around)

Where are we going to get such things in a hospital?

DIGGORY

Fortunately, I keep a Saturn in my office at all times.

NURSE

Why?

(pause)

Are you playing video games instead of working?

DIGGORY

Its very therapeutic for the patients!

(CONTINUED)

NURSE

For you, you mean!

DIGGORY

While we argue, the patient is dying! I will go and fetch the Saturn at once!

(DIGGORY runs off stage. He reappears a few seconds later carrying a Sega Saturn under one arm and a pair of headphones under the other arm. He rests the Saturn at the foot of the bed, near the machine. Then he takes the headphones and puts them on the WARDEN's head.)

NURSE

Okay, what do we do now?

DIGGORY

All we can do is wait... and pray to Asclepius!

(DIGGORY switches on the Saturn. Goldark's theme from Dragon Force starts up. NIMROD suddenly shows interest in the Saturn and stands in front of it, staring.)

DIGGORY

In the name of Asclepius, Panacea, Hygeia, Machaon-

(music stops)

NURSE

Who?

DIGGORY

One of Asclepius' sons. He had a lot of kids.

NURSE

*Its amazing what people will do for decent healin-
OW!*

(DIGGORY stands on the NURSE's foot.)

Hey! Nurse abuse! I'm telling the manager!

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

You're ruining my prayer! Carry on like this and you'll be charged with incitement to religious hatred AND serious professional malpractice, because THE PATIENT IS GOING TO DIE!

NURSE

I'm not staying here to be insulted! I'm off for a tea break!

(runs offstage)

DIGGORY

Looks like its just you and me again, Nimrod.

(NIMROD shrugs, takes the controller and starts playing. The music starts up again. DIGGORY mutters a prayer, now inaudible. After the first loop of the song, the lights fade out. End of Scene 5.)

SCENE 6

(A grassy field. The WARDEN, a wig of long purple hair on his head and a plastic sword in his hand, stands facing DIGGORY, a plastic sword in one hand and a white flag in the other. NIMROD stands behind DIGGORY, dressed in fur and blue face paint. In his hand is a collection of large cardboard signs.)

DIGGORY

So, at last we meet on the battlefield, Prince Mikhal.

WARDEN

Surrendering already?

DIGGORY

A Highland Prince NEVER surrenders!

(raises his sword)

WARDEN

What's the white flag for, then?

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

Churlish knave! This is Prince Wein's fearsome Highland battle standard! Bow down before it!

WARDEN

Your battle standard is a white flag?

DIGGORY

(sighs) Look, I don't like it either, but it was my father's and his father's before that and now my auntie won't let me change it and she's a dragon. Literally.

(pause)

Hey, its not like you can talk anyway! Your battle standard is pink!

WARDEN

Purple!

DIGGORY

And that's any better?

WARDEN

Purple is the colour of royalty!

DIGGORY

And white is the colour of your impending DOOM! En garde, varlet!

(DIGGORY charges at the WARDEN, hacking with the sword. The WARDEN parries. The duel goes on, neither man abating. Then, suddenly, Diggory's apprentice runs on, dressed in a red robe.)

CHILD

STOP! STOP IN THE NAME OF DADDY... oops, I meant Valhart...

(the duel stops, both men turning to the CHILD)

WARDEN

Why would the God of war want to stop us hitting each other with swords?

(CONTINUED)

CHILD

Because I wanna join in! Can I, Diggory, can I? I love Dragon Force! I bet I can beat you all!

DIGGORY

How exactly would you beat me, hm? I'm you with sixteen years more experience.

CHILD

Yeah, but Wein's a rubbish character and I've got Reinhart!

DIGGORY

But I have an unbreakable alliance with Gongos!

CHILD

Gongos? Who's playing Gon-

(walks over to NIMROD)

Oh!

(NIMROD turns over a sign and holds it up for the audience to read. It says 'RAWR!'. After a few seconds' pause, he turns over the next two signs. They say 'ME GONGOS!' and 'GONGOS SMASH!'.)

WARDEN

Reinhart! Ally yourself with me! Then it'll be 2 vs 2. Together we will crush these infidels!

DIGGORY

Who're you calling an infidel? I'm a paladin! Apprentice, don't trust him. He's never even played the game before. You'll lose if you ally with him.

CHILD

Hah. I just told you I could crush you all single-handedly!

WARDEN

Impudent little kid! Okay, then, bring it on! I'll be your first opponent!

(CONTINUED)

(The WARDEN raises his sword and charges the CHILD, who hides behind NIMROD and waves his arms, chanting. There is a flash of lightning and smoke rises from the stage. The WARDEN is thrown to the floor.)

CHILD

See? My magic is invincible!

(NIMROD grabs him.)

AAARGH! NO! PUT ME DOWN!

DIGGORY

He only takes orders from me, I'm afraid.

CHILD

I'm warning you! Put me down or my magic will destroy you!

DIGGORY

Gongos, if he starts chanting or waving his hands, rip his arms off!

CHILD

That's not fair! I'm playing as Junon next time...

WARDEN

This argument is stupid!

(folds his arms)

Instead of quarrelling like children, we should be uniting against our true enemy... the Crazy Lion of Fandaria, Leon!

CHILD

Umm... you mean Goldark, don't you?

DIGGORY

I'm happy with defeating both.

CHILD

Yeah, I hate Leon, too... can I go down now?

(CONTINUED)

(DIGGORY nods and NIMROD lets go of the CHILD.)

WARDEN

Okay, so we're all agreed? We should strike now, while we have the advantage!

DIGGORY

W... we have an advantage?

WARDEN

Haven't you seen the news? Junon sent a huge army against Goldark! While he's busy defending himself, we can sneak around the back and take Fandaria.

DIGGORY

So, we'll have to fight both Goldark AND Junon?

CHILD

I'm not sure which is scarier.

WARDEN

I never said this wasn't a risky enterprise! But we're heroes, aren't we?

(raises his sword to the heavens)

We're the DRAGON WARRIORS!

DIGGORY

If we're going to stage an assault against Fandaria, we're going to need at least one healer...

(DR. ANNA runs on-stage, wearing a blue wig and carrying a staff.)

DR. ANNA

Did someone ask for a healer?

CHILD

Um...

DIGGORY

(CONTINUED)

Um... h... hello Dr. Anna... h... how surprising to s... see y-

DR. ANNA

That's Teiris of Palemoon to you! What are you gawping at, you idiots?

DIGGORY

Well, its j... just that-

(DR. ANNA stands there, glaring and hewing her staff with a scalpel. The CHILD hides behind NIMROD.)

WARDEN

I think they're trying to say that we didn't think you the Teiris type.

CHILD

Yeah, you'd make a cool Junon.

DR. ANNA

What did you say?

(points the staff at the WARDEN)

CHILD

Why would anyone play as Teiris? She's like the weakest character ever!

DIGGORY

But if you've already finished the game with several characters, its a good challenge. The game isn't that difficult really, otherwise.

(looks at NIMROD)

Unless you're playing as Gongos.

DR. ANNA

You don't understand!

(folds her arms)

I want to be an Elven princess and wear a pretty dress! Why do I always have to be the dragon?

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

I hadn't thought of that. You'd make an interesting Gigg...

DR. ANNA

Come here and say that!

(drops her staff and chases after DIGGORY brandishing a scalpel. The two run off-stage.)

WARDEN

(sighs) I guess we're down a healer and a paladin now.

CHILD

Oh well, we don't need either. Come on, Gongos.

(NIMROD doesn't move.)

COME ON, GONGOS!

WARDEN

Bloody golems. Come, we march on Fandaria now!

CHILD

To Fandaria!

(The WARDEN and the CHILD march off-stage. Lights fade. End of Scene 6.)

SCENE 7

(The staff canteen. DR. WILLARD, the NURSE and DR. GANK sit at a table. DR. WILLARD has a plate of chips and the other two have cups of tea.)

DR. WILLARD

So, how are they progressing?

NURSE

The patient seems to be alive.

DR. WILLARD

They've been in there for days. They only come out to fetch more coffee. What's happening?

(CONTINUED)

NURSE

That game is truly addictive. I only escaped because I was blinded by the light of the screen.

DR. WILLARD

Is it really helping the patient?

NURSE

Well, the machine's acting less erratically. It seems to be joining in.

DR. WILLARD

I don't see how a video game can heal people.

NURSE

(shudders) You have to have experienced it.

DR. WILLARD

I guess it must just be the Diggory touch. They say Diggory can heal anyone of anything with a machine in her hands.

DR. GANK

Tell her I'll give her a fiver if she makes a cure for cancer using a toaster and a waffle iron.

DR. WILLARD

Remind me what you're doing here again.

NURSE

You haven't been using our bin again, have you? I went out back to have a ciggy and there was a flipping corpse in the bin!

DR. GANK

I came to check up on my... I mean, Diggory's apprentice.

DR. WILLARD

You know that little brat? Why am I not surprised?

DR. GANK

(CONTINUED)

I heard he was just sitting around playing video games all day, so I was worried. If its part of work, that's okay.

DR. WILLARD

Its not like you to care about the welfare of children.

DR. GANK

Alfonso is... special.

DR. WILLARD

His name's Alfonso? Diggory says his name is Diggory! He's Diggory from the past!

DR. GANK

I've said too much. I must leave now.

(DR. GANK stands up, drains his coffee and walks off-stage.)

NURSE

Alfonso. Stupid name for a boy.

DR. WILLARD

Nurse, I want you to keep that boy away from Dr. Gank at all times! I don't trust the guy as far as the security guards can throw him!

NURSE

Handle it yourself. I'm not getting between that psychotic killer and what he wants.

(The NURSE stands up and walks off-stage in the opposite direction to DR. GANK)

DR. WILLARD

Maybe I should just give up and play Dragon Force.

(DR. WILLARD walks off-stage, following the NURSE. Lights fade. End of Scene 7.)

SCENE 8

(CONTINUED)

(A rolling field. DIGGORY, the WARDEN, the CHILD, DR. ANNA and NIMROD, all dressed in their Dragon Force costumes, stand around in the field, looking battle-weary. DIGGORY's flag is less white-looking than before and NIMROD's paint is smudged.)

WARDEN

Finally, we defeated the evil forces of Fandaria!

DIGGORY

But, halt! All is not as it seems! Possessed by the dark sword Eclisis, Goldark was not the ultimate evil but a pawn of it! This makes me worry about...

CHILD

Junon!

DIGGORY

Well, I was thinking of Madruk, but come to think of it, Junon's scarier when she gets one on her.

DR. ANNA

We shall slay the Dark God Madruk and restore peace to Legendra!

(raises slightly bent staff)

May Astea be with us!

DIGGORY

Hark, I hear the dreadful clarion calls of Madruk's generals, Gaul and Scythe!

(There is a rhythmic beep from the background.)

I said, DREADFUL CLARION CALLS! What's that supposed to be? Katmando on drugs?

NURSE

(O.S.) Everyone! The patient's vital signs are returning!

DIGGORY

(CONTINUED)

Ah yes, I forgot I was actually in a hospital for a moment. That sound would be the dials on the machine!

(runs offstage)

WARDEN

I'm... going to live?

DR. ANNA

Yeah, isn't Diggory a genius?

CHILD

Well, he's the weakest party member.

(pause)

But, to be fair, he IS playing Wein.

(DIGGORY returns.)

DIGGORY

Its true! We've saved the patient!

DR. ANNA

That means all we need to do is finish the game.

CHILD

In that case, get a move on!

(runs off-stage)

WARDEN

To battle!

(runs after the CHILD brandishing his sword)

DR. ANNA

*Hey, where are they going without healer or tank?
Men are such kids.*

DIGGORY

Hey, Dr. Anna?

DR. ANNA

(CONTINUED)

What?

DIGGORY

I've made a decision. I want to open a specialist clinic for people with video game related illnesses like this. I think it's my new calling from Asclepius. You understand, right, as a fellow healer?

(pause)

There's something I haven't told anyone before. When I was a small child, I almost died. I got lost in the forest-

DR. ANNA

Was there a bear involved? 'Cause I have nightmares about bears-

DIGGORY

No, I walked around and around until I exhausted myself, then fell asleep. When I woke up, I realised I was suffering from severe video game deficiency syndrome.

DR. ANNA

Holy Saint Kevorkian!

DIGGORY

It turns out I was a dailyist and I hadn't realised it.

DR. ANNA

A what?

DIGGORY

It means you have to play a video game for a certain length of time every 24 hours, or you become dangerously ill and die within hours. Its very rare. There's no cure, but if you diagnose it early enough, you can prevent it from becoming a problem by making sure you get your recommended dosage of video game time per day.

DR. ANNA

(CONTINUED)

How did you survive?

DIGGORY

A strange hairy man helped me. He just happened to have a Game Gear. Come to think of it, maybe it was Asclepius. I was lucky it wasn't a rapist.

DR. ANNA

Or a bear.

(pause)

And now you want to help other kids with Dailyism?

DIGGORY

Not just that, but I want to better understand the relationship between human and machine, using the most important machine of all - the games console.

DR. ANNA

Are you sure this isn't just an excuse to play video games?

(The CHILD runs back on-stage.)

CHILD

Heal pls!

(DR. ANNA sighs.)

DR. ANNA

I TOLD YOU!

(DR. ANNA follows the child off-stage. DIGGORY and NIMROD run after her. End of Scene 8. End of Act 4.)

ACT 5

SCENE 1

(The staff canteen. DIGGORY and DR. ANNA are eating and chatting.)

DIGGORY

... and then he said 'I've lost my enthusiasm to play games at all.'

(CONTINUED)

DR. ANNA

What did you do?

DIGGORY

I asked him if he'd played Super Hydlide. He said 'no', so I started the game up. In the first few seconds of the title theme, he collapsed to the floor.

DR. ANNA

Oops.

DIGGORY

No, no, that's a perfectly normal reaction. Hydlide's a strong sound test.

DR. ANNA

Did he regain his drive?

DIGGORY

Well, he bought a copy from me on the way out!

DR. ANNA

You could make a fortune like that! You should get people addicted to, say, the Shining Force 3 Premium Disc.

DIGGORY

Hey, this isn't a moneymaking scam! Besides, how in sweet Panacea's name do you get addicted to-

(DR. WILLARD runs on stage, dragging the CHILD behind him.)

Dr. Willard! What are you doing to my poor apprentice now?

DR. WILLARD

What have I told you about keeping an eye on the little bastard?

CHILD

It wasn't me, guv, I swear!

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

Okay, what didn't you do this time?

DR. WILLARD

I caught him swapping around the signs pointing to the bulk erase machine and the disabled toilets!

CHILD

I didn't do it!

DIGGORY

You wouldn't lie to Dr. Anna, would you?

(DR. ANNA plays with her scalpel idly.)

CHILD

Dr. Gank told me to do it!

DR. WILLARD

I thought I told you never to go near that man again!

DIGGORY

I need to have a talk with that man.

DR. WILLARD

Too right you do!

(glares at DIGGORY)

You're going to Keitha's right now and you're going to tell him if he doesn't stay away from this hospital and all our apprentices, we'll get the police on him for child abuse!

DIGGORY

Come on, Diggory, I think we'd better do as he says.

CHILD

Are we going to Keitha's? Can I pull the lever on the big machine? Can I? Can I?

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

If you're good.

(DIGGORY takes the CHILD by the hand and leads him off-stage.)

DR. WILLARD

(shouts off-stage) And get someone to put the signs back!

(End of SCENE 1)

SCENE 2

(The waiting room of St. Retridin's Clinic. The two VALKYRIES lounge on the chairs, drinking from horns. The second VALKYRIE reads a leaflet.)

First VALKYRIE

This is nice mead.

Second VALKYRIE

Not as nice as the stuff we had in Valhalla.

First VALKYRIE

Talking of Valhalla, how many souls did you get today?

Second VALKYRIE

Only three.

First VALKYRIE

Business is drying up, isn't it? We should have another trip to that fun place where they're always having wars.

Second VALKYRIE

YAY! ROAD TRIP!

(Raises the drinking horn, almost spilling mead all over the place. Just then, DIGGORY and the CHILD walk in.)

CHILD

Hey look, an opera singer!

(CONTINUED)

(points to the first VALKYRIE)

First VALKYRIE

Didn't anyone teach you its rude to point?

CHILD

Is that a real sword? Can I hold it?

Second VALKYRIE

Oh, hello, its that healer we were supposed to protect in battle!

(offers the horn to DIGGORY)

Want some mead?

DIGGORY

(shakes her head)

No thank you, I'm still technically at work. May I speak to Dr. Gank?

Second VALKYRIE

Sure, he's upstairs with Keitha. I'll just go and get him for you.

(runs off-stage)

First VALKYRIE

Damn it, I'm out of mead.

(follows the second VALKYRIE off-stage. DIGGORY and the CHILD sit down. After a pause, DR. GANK runs on-stage.)

DR. GANK

Yeah, whaddayawant? I'm busy.

DIGGORY

I need to talk to you urgently. Its about my apprentice.

DR. GANK

Oh... hi, kid.

(CONTINUED)

CHILD

Hi, Dr. Gank!

(waves cheerfully)

I did what you told me to do!

DR. GANK

Good boy! Did you get caught?

DIGGORY

I want you to stop teaching my apprentice bad habits!

DR. GANK

Didn't you say yourself he needs a well-rounded education? You can't give him a sheltered life forever.

DIGGORY

Dr. Gank, I did not learn any of this! I couldn't pick the lock on the vending machine if my life depended on it! Don't forget that the boy is a past version of me. You're altering my personal timeline!

DR. GANK

And the whole thing isn't already a massive paradox?

CHILD

Hey, you two are talking weird again! Weirdos!

DIGGORY

Go upstairs and play with the Valkyries.

CHILD

YAY!

(runs off-stage)

DIGGORY

Why are you doing this, Dr. Gank? Is there something you want?

(CONTINUED)

DR. GANK

*There's something you need to know, Diggory.
You're in great danger and I'm trying to avert it.*

DIGGORY

What do you mean?

DR. GANK

*On my day off, I went back to the time machine.
Its still in the basement. I went into the future
this time. I can't say exactly what I saw without
causing you to act differently and altering the
timeline dangerously, but you need to know one
thing: the child cannot stay. His existence will
put you in great danger.*

DIGGORY

And you're solving this how?

DR. GANK

*I went back in time and swapped the children.
That's not you from the past. That's me.*

DIGGORY

But he doesn't look any different!

DR. GANK

*I used a Wein wig left over from the Dragon Force
performance to disguise his looks. I also taught
him to lie as well as me, so he would convince you
that it was the same child. I even stole the other
child's passport so we could perform a little
identity theft.*

DIGGORY

So that's where my passport went that time!

DR. GANK

Its lucky that you look so much like Wein.

DIGGORY

(CONTINUED)

There's only one problem with this! Even if your story is true, if I don't teach myself everything I know about medicine, I won't become a doctor in the future!

DR. GANK

Believe me, your fate will be worse if that child remains!

DIGGORY

No fate is worse than not being a healer! My devotion to Asclepius is my entire life!

DR. GANK

Then have faith that Asclepius will somehow find a way for you to become a doctor!

DIGGORY

Is... is my fate really that bad?

DR. GANK

Worse than anything I could do to you with all the weapons we've got in here. Even if I botch!

DIGGORY

Then you don't need to keep pretending. I'll co-operate with you. After all, you saved my life from the assassin before.

DR. GANK

The disguise is kind of important. The outside world has to think that the child is still Diggory. I can't say any more without causing paradox.

DIGGORY

Okay, tell me something about the present. Did the police ever find out who hired that assassin?

DR. GANK

I'm afraid she decided she would rather kill herself than give away her employer.

DIGGORY

(CONTINUED)

Then... my enemy could still be out there somewhere...

DR. GANK

Ah, what've you got to worry about? You have a golem, two Valkyries and a world class euthanasist to protect you.

DIGGORY

Not to mention Dr. Anna!

DR. GANK

Is she really as fearsome as the legends would have it?

DIGGORY

The legends don't do her justice!

DR. GANK

I want to meet this lady some day!

DIGGORY

Well, if you're going back to the hospital, I wouldn't let anyone catch you.

DR. GANK

Heh, don't worry about those stupid guards. They couldn't catch a mouse.

(yawns and stretches)

Well, I have to be back off to work now. See you later!

DIGGORY

Goodbye. And thanks for the help.

(DR. GANK and DIGGORY walk off-stage in opposite directions. Lights fade. End of Scene 2.)

SCENE 3

(CONTINUED)

(The staff canteen. It is bedecked with colourful ribbons and balloons. There is a cake on the table. DR. ANNA and DR. WILLARD sit at the table. DR. ANNA is cutting the cake with a scalpel. The CHILD hides under the table. After a few seconds, DIGGORY walks on.)

DIGGORY

Has anyone seen the superglue? Nimrod's nose fell off-

(all but DIGGORY)

SURPRISE!

(the CHILD climbs out from under the table)
DR. ANNA

Happy birthday!

DIGGORY

Hm? It's my birthday? R... really?

(looks at his watch, confused)

How old am I?

DR. WILLARD

We THINK you're 27. But its hard to say.

DR. ANNA

It doesn't matter anyway! Everyone needs a birthday, even people who can't remember when they were born! We took the liberty of making it up.

DIGGORY

W... well, if its good enough for Jesus, its good enough for me.

(sits down and takes a slice of cake)

DR. ANNA

We got you presents as well!

(DR. WILLARD pulls out a parcel from under the table.)

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

From Dr. Seminar? Wow!

(opens the parcel. It contains two books. DIGGORY picks up the first one and reads the title aloud.)

'Golem Repair: A User's Manual'

(reads the title of the second book)

'The Divine Book of Soleil'

There's a photo as well! Look, there's Dr. Seminar and his grandfather standing outside the Temple of Centy! I guess he become a monk after all.

DR. ANNA

The guys from St. Retridin's got you something as well! This is from the Valkyries!

(DR. WILLARD brings out two bottles of mead from under the table.)

DIGGORY

Tell them thank you.

DR. ANNA

They said sorry they both got you the same thing. I'm sure you can find someone to help you finish it all off!

DR. WILLARD

And this is from Dr. Gank. I... er... hope you like it.

(reaches under the table again and brings out a scythe)

DIGGORY

(sighs) Just what I always wanted.

CHILD

Hey, I got you something as well!

(hands DIGGORY a chocolate bar)

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

Was that stolen?

CHILD

Me? Steal? I wouldn't do a thing like that, guv!

DIGGORY

If the catering staff come after me, I'll... I'll tell Dr. Anna!

(DR. ANNA hands the CHILD a slice of cake, smiling a creepy smile. The child takes it then darts behind DIGGORY.)

CHILD

Show Diggory your presents! Go on! Go on!

DIGGORY

Oh, you got me presents too?

DR. ANNA

We saved up our money to buy you a special combined present!

DR. WILLARD

You have no idea how long it took me to teach Dr. Anna to save money.

(DR. WILLARD reaches under the table and takes out a Saturn game. He hands it to DIGGORY.)

DIGGORY

Oh wow! Dragon Force 2!

DR. ANNA

Its in Japanese, but we figured you'd understand what was going on from context anyway. Its a straight sequel and the game engine is the same.

DR. WILLARD

It was a vicious battle on eBay, the likes of which will never be seen again in human history!

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

Thanks, guys! This is the best birthday ever! I think...

(sits and eats the cake. After cake is finished, DIGGORY stands up and scratches his head.)

DIGGORY

I'd better go and put Nimrod's nose back on.

DR. ANNA

My department's got glue. I'll go and get some for you.

(moves to leave the stage, then turns around and grins)

You know, we should have a party. Tomorrow is Saturday.

DIGGORY

(sadly) Nimrod rests on Saturdays, so I have nobody to talk to. I guess I can come.

CHILD

(jumps up and down)

YAY! PARTY!

DR. ANNA

Now where would be fun for a party?

CHILD

KEITHA'S!

DR. ANNA

Well, a euthanasia clinic isn't the ideal party venue, but... I'd like to meet those Valkyries you keep going on about.

(DIGGORY sighs and walks out. DR. ANNA follows him.)

(lights fade. end of scene 2.)

SCENE 3

(CONTINUED)

(Waiting room, St. Retridin's Clinic. There are lots of glasses of mead on the table. The VALKYRIES are busy drinking it all. The lights are dimmed and 'Solemnity in Space' is playing at a loud volume in the background. Dr. Gank is break-dancing to the music while DIGGORY, KEITHA and the CHILD watch. After a loop, the music fades and the CHILD claps.)

DIGGORY

I never knew that Dr. Gank could dance!

KEITHA

He has all sorts of hidden talents.

DR. GANK

(bows elegantly) It's my natural agility.

Second VALKYRIE

(in drunken voice) Ah, y'dance like a Dwarf!

First VALKYRIE

Yeah, Freya could kick your butt up and down the hall!

DR. GANK

Oh yeah? Well, if you're so knowledgeable, YOU dance!

Second VALKYRIE

You're on! C'mon, Gunnhild!

First VALKYRIE

I don't want to! I've got mead!

Second VALKYRIE

C'MON!

(drags her sister out of her chair, spilling the mead all over Diggory. They both stand in front of the table and start headbanging to the Uklangor theme from 'Dungeons and Dragons: Warriors of the Eternal Sun'. After a few seconds, the songs fades, although the VALKYRIES carry on dancing in

(CONTINUED)

the background, and the CHILD bursts out laughing.)

KEITHA

Oh dear, now look what we've started!

CHILD

Diggory's turn next!

DIGGORY

What? This isn't-

CHILD

(chants) DIG-GO-RY! DIG-GO-RY!

DIGGORY

I can't dance!

CHILD

*It doesn't matter! Everyone needs to at least try!
That's the rules of the game!*

DIGGORY

Hey, who decided that?

CHILD

(folds his arms) THAT'S THE RULES OF THE GAME!

KEITHA

Okay, who votes Diggory should dance next?

(Everyone except DIGGORY puts their hands up.)

DR. GANK

*You're outnumbered five to one. Can't turn the
battle around with those odds. You lose,
gnomey-boy! (blows Diggory a kiss)*

DIGGORY

What did you call me?

KEITHA

(CONTINUED)

Just dance, Diggory.

DIGGORY

(sighs) Okay, but I meant it when I said I'm not very good.

(The VALKYRIES leave the dance floor and go back to their seats, to resume drinking.)

Now, I'll need some props to do my dance. Does anyone have anything I can use to represent a mortarboard and gown?

(One of the VALKYRIES grabs a leaflet and puts it on DIGGORY's head. DR. GANK goes off-stage and reappears with a bedsheet, which he wraps around DIGGORY like a robe.)

CHILD

You look stupid. Why do you have to dress like a moron?

DIGGORY

This is a special graduation song! I sung it when I left University for the last time. I call it...

(walks onto the dance floor and raises his arm)

New! Improved! Hippocratic! Oath!

(The lights dim and 'Shadow of the Dark Fact' from the YS soundtrack starts up. DIGGORY sings along to it and dances.)

[SONG]

*Maybe I'm/
No Final Guardian/
But by Asclepius/
I swear I'm genuine/
In restoration/
Do my thing/
Without no editing/
That's why I can sing*

*I JUST WANT TO RESTORE!/
BECAUSE I CAN RESTORE!*

(CONTINUED)

And I won't negatis/
 Even for gratis/
 If there's a download I'll/
 Try not to cancel it/
 No, I won't negatis/
 Even for gratis/
 All I'll say after is NEXT!

Don't you find/
 That restoration/
 Replaces everything/
 Even religion/
 Even my family/
 Now consists/
 Of those who taught me this/
 Oh, Asclepius

I JUST WANT TO RESTORE!/
 COME ON LET ME RESTORE!

And I won't negatis/
 Even for gratis/
 If there's a download I'll/
 Try not to cancel it/
 No, I won't negatis/
 Even for gratis/
 All I'll say after is NEXT!

[END SONG]

(The music fades out and the lights go back on.
 DIGGORY's dance ends and he bows. The VALKYRIES
 clap.)

DR. GANK

I don't get it. What's a Hippocratic Oath?

CHILD

Do I have to sing and dance like that when I leave
 University?

DIGGORY

You just concentrate on getting INTO University,
 boy!

CHILD

Who hasn't been yet?

DR. GANK

(CONTINUED)

Keitha.

KEITHA

And you, kid!

CHILD

Hey, who said I have to go?

KEITHA

You said EVERYONE had to go!

CHILD

I'm the judge!

DIGGORY

Hey, Keitha?

KEITHA

Yeah?

DIGGORY

Who was St. Retridin?

KEITHA

I don't know. Dr. Gank invented hi-

DR. GANK

He's not made up! He's the holy protector of Huntingdon! He wears dazzling silver plate mail and has a flaming broadsword and a pure white charger!

CHILD

My charger's white too! It doesn't work, though. Sometimes my phone batteries are still only half full after a day.

DIGGORY

Why is this clinic named after him? It isn't exactly a holy place.

DR. GANK

(CONTINUED)

Long before this place was a euthanasia clinic or even a Co-Op, there was a temple to St. Retridin. They say that St. Retridin himself was buried in a grave underneath this building. There's a legend that if this place is ever threatened, he will rise from the grave to protect his resting place.

DIGGORY

There's a grave under here?

CHILD

Cool!

(yawns)

You know, when I'm older, I want to work at St. Retridin's.

DIGGORY

(Looks uneasy.)

Its past your bedtime, boy. I should get you home before we both get in trouble.

(The others wave goodbye. DIGGORY and the CHILD leave the stage. The others continue chatting and drinking for a few seconds before the lights fade. End of Scene 4.)

SCENE 5

(A dark alley in the back streets of Huntingdon. An owl hoots in the background. DIGGORY and the CHILD carefully walk along the stage, looking around them.)

CHILD

I'm scared!

DIGGORY

Don't worry, we'll be home soon.

CHILD

Dr. Gank told me not to go down dark alleys, or you'll be robbed and murdered!

(DIGGORY laughs.)

(CONTINUED)

What's so funny?

DIGGORY

Dr. Gank's always sneaking around in the dark!

CHILD

He is?

DIGGORY

It's one of his favourite hobbies. I'm surprised he hasn't taught you how to do it yet.

CHILD

I'll make him teach me!

DIGGORY

Oh, don't worry, he will. Maybe he's waiting until you're a little older.

CHILD

What would you do if a robber jumped out of that side alley there and pulled out a gun?

DIGGORY

Well, I'd... er-

(The noise of a dustbin lid clattering.)

What's that noise?

(ANITA and DR. HESMENDALSCH run out of the shadows. DR. HESMENDALSCH grabs the CHILD and ANITA puts a gun to DIGGORY's head. The CHILD struggles and tries to bite DR. HESMENDALSCH.)

ANITA

Don't resist - either of you - or you both die.

CHILD

I haven't got any money, you idiots! Diggory's got it all! Kill him and spare me!

DR. HESMENDALSCH

(CONTINUED)

It isn't money we're after, you little brat.

DIGGORY

Be careful! These are the people who plotted to assassinate me!

DR. HESMENDALSCH

Its such a shame you found out about that. It would have made things so much easier if you'd just died quietly.

DIGGORY

I thought the assassin died!

DR. HESMENDALSCH

We found another Anita. It doesn't matter any more. My orders have changed and, unfortunately, I'm not allowed to kill you unless you cooperate. Now, will you cooperate with us?

DIGGORY

What do you want from me?

DR. HESMENDALSCH

First, you will come with me back to the Institute.

DIGGORY

The Institute.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

Ah, it appears I have another confession to make. You see, all those years ago, when I said I didn't experiment on children, I was lying. I've been working for the hospital as a spy for a long time. I was recently recalled to the Institute rather urgently.

DIGGORY

So that's why you disappeared so suddenly!

DR. HESMENDALSCH

(CONTINUED)

Indeed. The Institute is very powerful, Diggory. The Anitas aren't the only ace we have up our sleeve. I suggest you don't cross us.

DIGGORY

(looks nervously at the gun)

I guess I have no choice.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

I'm glad we agree. Let's get a move on, shall we?

(DR. HESMENDALSCH drags the CHILD off the stage. ANITA leads DIGGORY away in the same direction. After a few seconds, DR. GANK and DR. ANNA runs on stage.)

DR. ANNA

*So Dr. Hesmendalsch really was evil! I knew it!
(shakes fist)*

DR. GANK

I'm going to keep following them! I'll have to be quick. Dr. Anna, go back to the hospital and get Nimrod.

DR. ANNA

What about the Valkyries?

DR. GANK

They're protecting the Clinic and Keitha. Besides, they'd be no use on a stealth mission.

DR. ANNA

Neither would a damn golem!

DR. GANK

Trust me, it'll be quieter than those two in battle. Now, I have a rooftop to jump on.

(DR. ANNA and DR. GANK run away in separate directions. End of Scene 4.)

SCENE 5

(CONTINUED)

(Inside the Institute building. A small room with a single barred window too high to reach. The only furniture is a spartan bed with a single sheet. DIGGORY lies on the bed, staring at the ceiling and humming the Columns theme under his breath. After a few seconds, there is the click of a key opening a lock and the creak of the door opening. DR. HESMENDALSCH walks in.)

DR. HESMENDALSCH

Good morning, Diggory.

(DIGGORY ignores him and changes to the Tetris theme.)

Don't be like that now. I've brought you food.

DIGGORY

Not hungry.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

What about a Game Gear? You're a clinical Dailyist, aren't you?

DIGGORY

Tanked up before I went out.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

Ah well. Suit yourself.

(waves an arm in the general direction of the room)

Answer me a question, Diggory. Do you recognise this room?

DIGGORY

I've been here before, yeah.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

It was where you came for the clinical trial, wasn't it? We still have your HP on record.

DIGGORY

That's nice. (coughs)

(CONTINUED)

DR. HESMENDALSCH

You know, there's only so much you can tell about a person, even from his HP. The soul, for instance, remains as ineffable and intangible as ever. A man's relationship with the divine is still out of the domain of science.

DIGGORY

Look, what is it you want with me.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

You can do amazing things, Diggory. We specialise in amazing things. The psychic children were only the beginning. As you have already discovered, we have a working time machine!

DIGGORY

Good for you.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

We want to know the secret of resurrection, Diggory. We want to know how to cure cancer, how to summon Valkyries, how to wake coma patients with games consoles.

DIGGORY

Hey, I can NOT cure cancer!

DR. HESMENDALSCH

Don't be so modest, Diggory. We know what you're capable of. Anita was there that night.

DIGGORY

Its not something I can just pass down to another, like a new surgery technique or a wonder drug. Asclepius gives me this power.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

Oh? Then it really is divine intervention?

DIGGORY

Not exactly, but close. Imagine being taught medicine by the God of Medicine. For fifty years. I've learnt things that I can't even describe, let alone teach. It only makes sense if you believe Asclepius exists. If he's there with you.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

Then make him be here with us.

DIGGORY

Pardon?

DR. HESMENDALSCH

Summon him. Here. Now.

DIGGORY

What... in the middle of the room?

DR. HESMENDALSCH

If you need a more atmospheric place to perform the summoning, we could relocate. We could even transport you back to ancient Athens. A real Asclepiad temple, Diggory, with your own priests. All we want in return is to be taught the secret of resurrection.

DIGGORY

I'm afraid I can't trust you with such knowledge.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

What do you mean? What makes you more worthy of it than us? We are both mortals, are we not?

DIGGORY

If you and your Institute have the knowledge, what's to stop you putting patents on it and blocking its use and distribution? There are cures for cancer that aren't being researched because the big pharmaceutical companies are charging too much.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

I thought you said you didn't know the cure for cancer!

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

You know what I mean! I won't be responsible for a company having a monopoly on resurrection!

DR. HESMENDALSCH

But its okay for a god to choke the supply of resurrection?

DIGGORY

What are you talking about?

DR. HESMENDALSCH

Asclepius knows how to bring people back from the dead. How many people does Asclepius resurrect a day? For that matter, how many people do his disciples resurrect? Millions of people die every day and what do you do about it, Diggory? What?

DIGGORY

Hold on a minute. For one thing, resurrection takes five minutes and physically exhausts me. Secondly, its forbidden by Zeus. I'm working around the law here.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

Then we, the Institute, shall overthrow Zeus and topple the throne of the Gods in the name of the people!

(throws up his arms and laughs manically)

DIGGORY

Are you completely insane? You might annoy Freya!

(folds his arms)

Besides, even if I agreed with your philosophy, I wouldn't trust you to bring about the new order. You're just some corporation!

DR. HESMENDALSCH

So you won't co-operate? Even knowing the situation you're in?

(the CHILD walks on stage and sneaks up behind DR. HESMENDALSCH as he is making this speech)

(CONTINUED)

You do remember that we have the child, don't you? We have no moral qualms about killing a child. Paradox backlash is a nasty way to die, Diggory. You won't just be killed. You'll be erased from existence. Ripped from the space-time continuum suddenly and brutally.

DIGGORY

You understand less than you realise about that child.

DR. HESMENDALSCH

What is there to realise? The child was brought back through time. He is a past instance of yourself.

DIGGORY

And where is he at the moment?

DR. HESMENDALSCH

He's in his cell, I expect, with this Game Gear.

CHILD

It's run out of batteries, you dork.

(The CHILD hits DR. HESMENDALSCH over the head with a Game Gear. DR. HESMENDALSCH falls over. Lights fade. End of scene 5.)

SCENE 6

(An unmarked white corridor, the Institute building. DIGGORY and the CHILD run on stage, looking around carefully.)

CHILD

All the corridors look the same! How'm I supposed to find the way out?

DIGGORY

I can't just leave!

CHILD

You want the creepy guys to experiment on you and kill you?

(CONTINUED)

DIGGORY

On the contrary, I need to put a stop to their experiments. There are evil things happening in this building!

CHILD

But we're just a kid and a stupid old doctor!

DIGGORY

Who are you calling stupid and old?

(There is a puff of smoke and ANITA appears.)

ANITA

Hold it! Where do you think you're going?

DIGGORY

Anita! I thought you said you locked her in the cell and swallowed the key!

CHILD

I did! Honest, guv!

ANITA

That was Anita number 2! I'm number 3!

CHILD

How many of you ARE there?

ANITA

Does it matter? You're all going to die anyway!

(Draws two rapiers and points one each at DIGGORY and the CHILD.)

Switching the children was a remarkable piece of foresight on your behalf. Unfortunately, all you have achieved is to irritate me.

DIGGORY

The work in this Institute must not be allowed to continue! It goes against every principle of humanity!

(CONTINUED)

ANITA

I'm not human. The Anitas... all of us are clones. We don't even have human rights yet. Why should we grant you rights in return? We gave you a choice of co-operating. Now I'm going to vivisect you.

CHILD

Hey, fat cow, do you know what Game Gears have lots of?

ANITA

Pardon?

(The CHILD reaches into his pockets and begins throwing batteries at ANITA. Stunned, ANITA does not know how to react. After around the thirtieth battery, the CHILD turns and runs off-stage. DIGGORY follows.)

You won't get out of here alive!

(shakes her fist, before picking herself up and running off-stage after them)

DIGGORY

(after a few seconds, both DIGGORY and the CHILD run back on-stage)

Hurry! I can smell daylight! It must be this way!

(suddenly, they are both knocked off their feet. There is a loud rumbling noise.)

What was that tremor?

(there is a load roar like a huge animal)

CHILD

AAAAAARGH! What the heck was that?

DIGGORY

No swearing, boy.

(There is another roar. The head of a Tyrannosaurus Rex pokes its way on stage.)

SHIT SHIT SHIT SHIT SHIT!

(CONTINUED)

CHILD

Cool. Is that a real dinosaur?

DIGGORY

Quite probably. They *HAVE* got a time machine.

CHILD

How does a dinosaur fit in the building?

DIGGORY

It's a... er... a genetically engineered mini-dinosaur!

(The dinosaur roars again.)

We don't have time to stand here talking about it!
It wants to eat us!

CHILD

But where are we going to go? It's blocking the exit, and we can't go backwards without running into Anita again!

DIGGORY

Isn't there a ventilation shaft we can hide in?

(Suddenly, the dinosaur roars again and the head darts for DIGGORY. He darts backwards and falls to the floor. Then there is a flash of light and a man in white plate armour carrying a huge broadsword walks on-stage to the tune of 'Decadence of God' from Breath of Fire 2.)

Sweet Asclepius! Its...

CHILD

Saint Retridin!

SAINT RETRIDIN

(points his sword at the dinosaur)

I will smite thee, foul dragon! Thou hast befouled this fair town of Huntingdon!

CHILD

(CONTINUED)

Wow, he's real!

(SAINT RETRIDIN rushes at the dinosaur and begins slashing at it, dodging out of the way of its bite.)

DIGGORY

Quick, run past it while its distracted!

CHILD

I wanna see the fight!

(Sound of footsteps.)

DIGGORY

The Anita clones are coming! We must flee! Now!

CHILD

But a paladin can't fight a dinosaur AND ninjas!

DIGGORY

We must have faith! Saint Retridin isn't just a paladin, he's a saint!

SAINT RETRIDIN

SMIIIIIIIIIIIIIIITE!

(cleaves at the dinosaur's head with a mighty swing. The dinosaur is hit and roars, its head flailing around. DIGGORY grabs the CHILD and drags him past the dinosaur and off-stage. The paladin presses the advantage, swinging furiously at the dinosaur. Suddenly, a shuriken whistles past his head. ANITA runs on-stage.)

Hold, foul aberration of nature!

ANITA

I fear no servant of an unjust God who forsook my people! DIE!

(ANITA draws a katana and rushes the paladin. SAINT RETRIDIN dodges out of the way of the dinosaur's teeth but is struck by the katana. It lodges in his armour.)

Damn you! You big clanky moron! How dare you call ME a freak of nature, wearing THAT much armour!

(CONTINUED)

SAINT RETRIDIN

Why... unf... do you think this battle is taking so long?

ANITA

THEN WHY THE HELL ARE YOU CALLED SAINT RETRIDIN?

SAINT RETRIDIN

My name is actually Retridin.

(turns around and parries a katana blow aimed at his head. The dinosaur snaps at him, almost taking his arm off.)

Bob Retridin.

(Whirls around and thrusts his sword into the dinosaur's mouth, slaying it. It gives one final screech and the head falls to the ground. ANITA slashes at him again. There is a crack and SAINT RETRIDIN falls to the ground.)

Heh... I lied... I'm not... prot... spec... after all...

(SAINT RETRIDIN is slain. The lights fade and the spotlight focusses on the paladin. The two VALKYRIES appear. The first VALKYRIE offers SAINT RETRIDIN a hand. He allows her to help him up and the two of them walk off-stage. The second VALKYRIE turns to ANITA.)

Second VALKYRIE

You're next, lady.

ANITA

Hah, I will never die!

DR. ANNA

(O.S) NO! BAD GOLEM! THROUGH THE DOOR! THE DOOR!

(There is a sound of crunching stone. Seconds later, NIMROD lumbers in and hits ANITA on the head. She falls to the ground.)

ANITA

(CONTINUED)

I will... live on... through my sisters...

(ANITA collapses, slain. NIMROD drags her off stage.)

Second VALKYRIE

Hey, come back! I wanted that soul! Bloody golems.

(She runs after NIMROD. The lights fade. End of SCENE 6.)

SCENE 7

(The staff canteen. DR. WILLARD, DR. ANNA and DR. GANK are sat at the table. DR. WILLARD has his usual strong coffee, while DR. ANNA is nervously fiddling with a scalpel.)

DR. WILLARD

So, explain again EXACTLY why we're being sued by a huge corporation?

DR. ANNA

You see, they kidnapped Diggory, so we went to rescue him.

DR. WILLARD

Hm-Hm? So you've been committing corporate slander as well as property damage.

DR. ANNA

I can so get proof! We have witnesses! That kid saw it, didn't he, Dr. Gank?

DR. GANK

I'm afraid I had to return the child to his own time. His work is done here.

DR. WILLARD

Oh, so you abducted a child too?

DR. ANNA

What about the time machine?

DR. GANK

(CONTINUED)

I decided to destroy it. The Institute will only use it for evil.

DR. WILLARD

Your only possible defense is gonna be to plead insanity. Fortunately, you're damn good at it.

DIGGORY

(O. S.) There is one witness whose testimony cannot be disputed.

(DIGGORY walks on, followed by NIMROD.)

DR. WILLARD

Diggory! You were ordered to rest!

DIGGORY

This is no time to rest. Besides, a nice bowl of chips will do me good.

DR. GANK

What do you mean about indisputable testimony?

(stares at NIMROD)

You can't mean-

DIGGORY

A golem cannot lie. It cannot even speak. Machines cannot be deceitful.

DR. WILLARD

I dunno about that, I had a computer once that swore it was connected to a printer.

DIGGORY

That was an error with the commands given to it. It was programmed to see a printer. This golem's commands have not changed since it was created. It was told to protect the hospital and its staff. It is clearly demonstrable that its chem hasn't been altered.

DR. WILLARD

(CONTINUED)

But the damn thing disobeys instructions all the time!

DR. ANNA

Yeah, it won't leave your side, even when its supposed to be working. Its not programmed to protect you personally!

DR. WILLARD

Besides, surely legal protection counts as protecting the Hospital. What's to stop us teaching it to lie in order to defend us in court?

DIGGORY

You have a point.

(scratches his head)

Maybe if I gave them more HP...

(ASCLEPIUS appears in a puff of smoke.)

ASCLEPIUS

(in a loud, booming voice)

This has gone far enough!

DR. GANK

AAAAAARGH! Forgive me!

(prostrates himself before ASCLEPIUS.)

ASCLEPIUS

(Puts his hand upon DR. GANK's head.)

Do not worry, little negative restorer. You are my child as much as any doctor who restores HP. Your services are necessary and noted by me.

(points to DR. WILLARD)

It is HE who does not command my respect!

DR. WILLARD

What? What did I do?

(CONTINUED)

ASCLEPIUS

You know what you did. You put the acquisition of money above the art of medicine.

DR. WILLARD

I'm just trying to keep the hospital open!

ASCLEPIUS

Pah, you do not understand, mortal. But! I come not to judge souls. I came to take back my disciple!

DR. ANNA

Diggory has to leave again?

ASCLEPIUS

I will not make the same mistake as a certain other god! If you mortals even show signs of persecuting my disciples, I'm removing them immediately!

DR. ANNA

Gotta do what the boss says, I guess.

(Hugs him.)

We'll miss you, Diggory.

ASCLEPIUS

I will return when the Human race has evolved to the level where they can use my final teachings responsibly!

DIGGORY

Can I take Nimrod?

ASCLEPIUS

Of course! You look very distinguished with your holy protector standing beside you.

(points his staff at DR. GANK)

You have reached the level of experience and moral discipline to become my disciple as well, if you so desire.

(CONTINUED)

DR. GANK

Me? R... really?

ASCLEPIUS

Although your appearance is of a rogue, you alone have truly been friend to my disciple. And your skill as a negative restorer is unmatched!

DR. GANK

Can I take Keitha?

ASCLEPIUS

To become a true healer, you must have no attachments to anyone or anything but your art! Your teacher of medicine is your family, your patient is the one you care about, you have no religion but the Art itself!

(Thumps his staff on the ground.)

DR. GANK

Hm... I'll need time to decide.

ASCLEPIUS

Very well. When you decide, pray to me and I shall be there! May Saint Kevorkian be with you.

(Another puff of smoke and ASCLEPIUS and DIGGORY disappear.)

DR. WILALRD

Well, that's that.

DR. ANNA

Things are gonna be less interesting around here.

DR. WILLARD

Ah, he'll come back.

DR. ANNA

What am I gonna do without the golem to help out?

DR. WILLARD

(CONTINUED)

We'll just have to hire new staff.

DR. ANNA

Can we afford new staff?

DR. WILLARD

We'll find a way. We always do. It's like Huntingdon's blessed. Cursed at the same time, but blessed.

DR. ANNA

Maybe you're right.

(pause)

Hey, Dr. Willard. What d'you think's gonna happen next?

DR. WILLARD

After Gods, zombies, ninjas, golems, paladins, time travel and dinosaurs? Whatever it is, it's got a big lead to follow.

DR. ANNA

I bet you a tenner it's pirates.

DR. WILLARD

Hey, you know I don't gamble.

(pause)

Besides, it's gonna be aliens.

DR. ANNA

Pirates!

DR. WILLARD

Aliens!

DR. ANNA

Pirates!

DR. WILLARD

(CONTINUED)

Aliens!

DR. ANNA

Pirates!

DR. WILLARD

Aliens!

(This continues for several seconds while the light fades. End of Scene 7.)

THE END