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325 W. 38th Street, Suite 305
New York, NY 10018

Phone/fax: 1-866-NEW-PLAY (639-7529)
Email: info@playscripts.com
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Cast of Characters

3 males / 1 female, or 2 males / 2 females

Multicultural cast

Expandable up to 12 actors

MONKEY KING, 20s, male, playful, mischievous, with a dash of earnest sincerity. Acrobatic, gymnastic, and athletic; able to perform somersaults, headstands, backflips and one-handed somersaults a plus.

A CHORUS playing the following roles:

KUAN YIN, 30s, female, comfortable with yoga and martial arts; regal and parental, but with a warm smile in her voice. Also, she doubles as a FAIRY ACOLYTE.

IMMORTAL GURU, 30s, female or male, spiritual, enlightened, mildly professorial with a quirky speaking manner; easily performs martial arts and yoga without breaking a sweat. Also doubles as the DRAGON KING, the JADE EMPEROR, a MONKEY, and a FAIRY ACOLYTE.

GENERAL FISH BELLY, 20s, male, authoritative, overbearing, and overconfident, but justifiably for his Kung Fu is strong. Also doubles as a the grunting inarticulate ONE-HORNED OGRE, the sweet HIP-HOP KID, a MONKEY, and a FAIRY ACOLYTE.

Place

Mythical China.

Time

Now.

Acknowledgements

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

Originally produced and commissioned by Denver Center Theatre for the Performing Arts and DCPA Education Director Daniel Renner under artistic director Donovan Marley and education director Daniel Renner.

Special thanks to Donovan Marley, Daniel Renner, Danny Tamez, Luanne Nunes De Char, Lee Chen, Jaspal, Elizabeth Sung, Ruth Wong, Ruth Wong, William & Betty Wong, and to my little nephew monkeys Alexander, Kevin, & Steven Wong.

AMAZING ADVENTURES OF THE MARVELOUS MONKEY KING

by Elizabeth Wong

(WOODCLAPS herald the entrance of the actors. One by one, they enter and take a pose before the Audience. Their faces are painted in the classic Chinese Opera style.)

(The last to enter is the MONKEY KING, the swaggering super hero of Classical Chinese Opera, who surveys the Audience, wagging his head.)

(Suddenly, he sticks his red tongue out at the Audience. URGENT WOODCLAPS! He waggles his head and wiggles his tongue at the Audience. WOODCLAP!)

(KUAN YIN, the beautiful goddess of mercy, points a disapproving finger at the naughty monkey, who sheepishly retracts his tongue.)

(Rapid woodclaps in succession! With sweeping grand gesture, KUAN YIN ushers everyone to their places.)

(On Mystic Mountain in China, near a flowing river—represented in abstract Chinese style. KUAN YIN causes MONKEYS to enter.)

(The MONKEYS sit, stare into space.)

MONKEY #1. So, what do you want to do?

MONKEY #2. I don't know. What do you want to do?

MONKEY #1. I don't know. What do you want to do?

(THE MONKEYS shrug.)

MONKEY #2. I don't know. What do you want to do?

MONKEY #1. I don't know. What do you want to do?

MONKEY #2. Beats me. What about the others?

MONKEY #1. *Them?*

(Refers to the Audience.)

Maybe, maybe they've got *ideas*?

MONKEY #1 & #2. Nahhhhhh.

(They sigh.)

(THUNDERCLAPS!)

(RAIN!)

MONKEY #2. I'm dripping wet.

MONKEY #1. Raining.

MONKEY #2. Ohhhhh, right! *Raining*. What should we do?

MONKEY #1. Think of something.

MONKEY #2. Okay.

(They screw up their faces hard, attempting to THINK— NOTHING comes to mind.)

MONKEY #1. Anything?

MONKEY #2. Me neither.

(KUAN YIN, the goddess of mercy, enters as if she's floating under water or in slow motion. She's in flowing white robes.)

KUAN YIN. I have an idea. So I left the Cloud Palace of the Golden Gates, and floated to Earth like a feather on the wind. I will turn into a stone by the river, and give birth to a marvelous miracle.

(KUAN YIN stretches out her arms towards a large stone, near the river. The MONKEYS surround the stone to investigate.)

MONKEY #1. Something's happening. Something unusual odd.

MONKEY #2. Something odd bizarre weird.

MONKEY #1. Something weird strange freaky, and very out of the ordinary!

(URGENT SOUND OF WOODCLAPS.)

MONKEY #2. It's got fingers. And they're wiggling. Oo-oo-oo-oo!

MONKEY #1. It's got arms. Oo-oo-oo-oo!

MONKEY #2. Calm. Be calm. Breathe. Just a silly old river rock. Just a big dumb stone, with two hairy arms!

MONKEY #1. And one furry leg!

MONKEY #2. Two furry legs! And they're kicking!

MONKEY #1. At least it doesn't have a head. No head, no worries. No head, no worries.

(A HEAD pops up, perches atop the stone. The eyes gyrate wildly. WOODCLAPS!)

MONKEY #2. It's got a head! It's got a head! It's got a head!!!

MONKEY #1. *(Overlapping:)* And eyes that go round and round!

MONKEY #1 & #2. *(Overlapping:)* Ay, ay, ay, ay, ay, aiiiiii!

(THE MONKEY KING pops out from the rock. Stretches.)

MONKEY KING. Oh yeah! I feel goooood! Hey, it's raining. Don't just stand there and get all drippy. Come on! I see a dry spot. Under that big overhanging cliff right over there. Follow me. *(Aside:)* I hate being wet.

(Under a sheltering cliff.)

MONKEY KING. Huddle up. Get closer. Not bad, huh? Except, it's getting way too windy. Stop with the wind! *(Aside:)* Too much wind plays crazy with my cowlick. O-ooo-o! Listen up, my wet furry brethren, this sheltering cliff is a nice temporary fix, but what we need is a house.

MONKEY #1. A what?

MONKEY #2. Huh?

MONKEY KING. A house. It's a nice cozy warm place to live. Out of the wind and rain and hail. You know, house. A place safe from big creatures with big teeth. Tables, chairs, a nice roof, maybe a skylight, maybe a gigantic cookie jar in the kitchen. Rain's over. Let go climb that tree. Last one to the bamboo grove has to kiss my mongoose!

(Hanging from a tree limb.)

MONKEY #2. That was fun. I've never climbed a tree before.

MONKEY KING. I'm hungry. Let's eat.

(MONKEY KING combs through his companion's fur.)

MONKEY KING. Now hold still.

MONKEY #2. *(To Audience:)* What's he doing?

MONKEY KING. Aha! Crunchy. Deee-licious. Oo-oo-oo. Hold still. Don't know what they're called, but when you bite down, they *squirt.* *(Offers to Audience:)* Have one?

MONKEY #1. Saaaay, I'm not so itchy anymore.

MONKEY #2. Me neither. Oo-oo-oo, that feels goooood. A little to the left. Ahhhh.

MONKEY KING. *(Patting his satisfied tummy:)* I've been thinking. This place needs a name. I'm going to call this place, Mystic Mountain, the mountain of fruit and flowers, in the kingdom between above and below, the kingdom in the middle. Yes, has a nice ring to it. Mystic Mountain in the Middle Kingdom.

(To MONKEYS:)

What a nice river. Where does this river go? Don't you know?! Where does it start? Let's find out. I want to see where it begins. Or ends. Come on, what you waiting for?!

MONKEY #1. Why should we go with you?

MONKEY #2. Yeah, why should we follow you?

MONKEY KING. Because I have ideas. My head is filled with crazy excitement, that's why! Because I was a bunch of sand held together by a rock, and now I'm alive, that's why! Come on, let's play, "Follow The Leader."

MONKEY #2. *(To MONKEY #1:)* What's a leader?

MONKEY #1. *(To MONKEY #2:)* I have no clue.

MONKEY KING. We'll follow the river, see where it leads. It'll be fun. It'll be an adventure!

MONKEY #1. An adventure!

MONKEY #2. Adventure! What's adventure?

MONKEY #1. Let's find out. I'm going!

(WOODCLAPS! KUAN YIN enters.)

MONKEY KING. Come on!

KUAN YIN. And so they went, the monkeys followed him, and he followed the river.

(WOODCLAPS accompany their travel.)

MONKEY KING. Watch your step! Don't fall in.

MONKEY #2. Whoa.

MONKEY #1. Oh oh. Don't let go.

MONKEY KING. I got ya. *(Aside:)* Watch this. *(Announces deliberately:)* Ohoh, someone is very slippery. Ooops.

MONKEY #1. I'm falling in!

MONKEY #2. Now that's funny.

MONKEY KING. In you go too.

(MONKEY KING uses a stylized "push.")

MONKEY KING. Ohoh, I'm losing my balance. Oh well. Make way for the belly floooooooppooooooooooooo!

KUAN YIN. The monkeys splashed with happy abandon. Until suddenly, they came upon a roaring falling curtain of dangerous water and could go no further.

MONKEY #2. *(Shouting:)* It's so loud. It hurts my ears!

MONKEY #1. *(Shouting:)* This is the end of our adventure.

MONKEY KING. I think not.

KUAN YIN. Monkey put his hands above his head, and disappeared into the heart of that terrible waterfall. Surely, he's dead and drowned, smashed by that rushing torrent. But no. He was very much alive.

MONKEY KING. I'm aliiivve! I'm inside a dry cozy cave.

KUAN YIN. There, inside, I placed stone tables, stone chairs, even stone beds. I parted the curtain of water, just enough for the head of a monkey.

MONKEY KING. Hey look, I punched a hole in the water. (*Sticking his head through it:*) Come on through. Here is the house I was telling you about. Come on! Come on through!

KUAN YIN. No more would the monkeys sleep in the rain, or be easy food for tigers, dragons or ogres with nasty dispositions. Here, for the first time ever, they felt safe.

MONKEY KING. My furry brothers and sisters, welcome to your new home!

MONKEY #1. I've never had a home before.

MONKEY #2. I feel a fuzzy feeling. Here.

MONKEY KING. It means too many bananas. Or, that you are happy.

MONKEY #2. Oooooooh.

KUAN YIN. The monkeys were so pleased, they threw a banana banquet in his honor and hailed him their brave leader. And so he was called, THE MONKEY KING. Everyone was so happy.

MONKEY KING. I'm miserable! I'm king of the monkeys, but I don't have a crown for the top of my head. How can I be a real king, without a crown?! Give me a crown!

KUAN YIN. Monkey, to be a true king, you must earn your crown.

MONKEY KING. I want a crown like yours! Then, I'll be an immortal like you! I want to live forever, just like you. Kuan Yin, goddess of mercy, lady of the heavens with the big flow-y white dress, hear me! You have the power. Give me your crown, right now!

KUAN YIN. Patience, little monkey. First, you must study very hard.

MONKEY KING. Study?! Yyyuuuuuck!

KUAN YIN. You must go to school.

MONKEY KING. Alright! I will. I will go to school. And (*Grimacing:*) study.

KUAN YIN. Monkey Goes To The School For Immortality!

(GONG! URGENT WOODCLAPS.)

(A MASTER IMMORTAL GURU TEACHER TEACHER enters with his FAIRY ACOLYTES.)

IMMORTAL GURU. Students! Sit, yes, sit comfortably. Like this. Or like this. Or like this.

MONKEY KING. I feel like a pretzel.

IMMORTAL GURU. Lotus position is my personal favorite. (*To Audience:*) What are you all waiting for? Foot up here by the knee, foot here by the other knee. Do it now! Move it! Move it! Hup, hup, hup! Ahhhhh, we are all now sitting *perfectly*.

MONKEY KING. This is torture. I think my foot just went numb.

(Shakes and stomps his sleeping foot.)

FAIRY ACOLYTE. Sssssh. Listen.

IMMORTAL GURU. Students, you are here with me under this shady bodhi tree for a very special lesson. The lesson you are about to learn is the most important lesson you will ever learn. Plus, it's kinda catchy. Repeat after me. And do what I do.

IMMORTAL GURU. Love before me. Love behind me.

(They mimic the simple zenlike gestures. MONKEY KING tries to revive his foot.)

FAIRY ACOLYTES & MONKEY KING. Love before me, love behind me.

IMMORTAL GURU. Love to my left, love to my right.

FAIRY ACOLYTES & MONKEY KING. Love to my left, love to my right.

MONKEY KING. (*Interrupting:*) What a silly song! It's baby stuff. Can we skip this part? I want to learn how to ride a cloud. I want to learn how to turn into a bird soaring in the sky, dive kerplunk

splash to catch a fish. Immortal guru teacher teacher sir, show me how to change into fish that breathes fire or even a building. A pagoda with windows for eyes, and a tongue for a carpet! Show me how to travel to the future, or go into the past. Show us the good stuff. I hate sitting still.

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. *(To MONKEY KING:)* You are going to be in such big trouble!

FAIRY ACOLYTE #2. *(To Audience:)* He's not even a fairy. He's a monkey! Why did the Master Immortal Guru Teacher Teacher let a monkey into our class?

IMMORTAL GURU. Monkey, stand up. Since you insist on interrupting, clearly you know today's lesson. Can you repeat today's lesson?

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. I know today's lesson. Pick me! Pick me!

MONKEY KING. Blah blah BLAH. Who cares? Master Teacher Teacher, when are we going to learn something fun? All we ever do is sit in perfect lotus and chant stupid lullabies. What a snore!

(SNORES and SNORTS.)

IMMORTAL GURU. Class dismissed. Monkey! You stay!

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. Now you are going to get it, Monkey.

IMMORTAL GURU. Monkey, you are impatient, arrogant and bossy. Stand still when I speak to you.

MONKEY KING. My foot is still asleep!

IMMORTAL GURU. For your impatience, you will sit on this rock under this bodhi tree for five minutes.

MONKEY KING. Five minutes, pffft. I can do it for five days! Saaaaay, Master Teacher Teacher Immortal Guru, I have a proposition. If I sit still for five days, will you teach me what I want to know?

IMMORTAL GURU. You sit still for five days? Anyone here believe monkey can sit still for five minutes?

MONKEY KING. I can and I will. Do we have a deal?

IMMORTAL GURU. (*Considering, then:*) Deal. Students you keep an eye on monkey, make sure he stays put on that rock.

(He sits on the rock.)

MONKEY KING. Piece o cake. All I have to do is sit on this nice old rock. Easy as pie. Ohoh, my bum feels bumpiness, also sharp edges too. This is not good.

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. Day one. I put little red biting ants on the rock, but still monkey didn't budge.

FAIRY ACOLYTE #2. Day two. I started a big bonfire and the smoke blew in his face, and he choked on the thick blackness, he got burned by the red hot embers. And still he didn't move.

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. Day three. I turned into a buzzing insect, and I flew into his ear, and looked around. Nothing in there but ear fluff! I stung him on his nose, but still he didn't get off that dumb rock.

FAIRY ACOLYTE #2. Day Four. I brought him food and drink. I like monkey. Even though sometimes he's a little bossy.

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. Day Five. I was reading a book, and walking at the same time. I fell down a big hole made by a very big snake.

MONKEY KING. Well, this is quite the dilemma.

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. I fell quite a long ways down. Help.

MONKEY KING. I don't hear that. Don't hear a thing.

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. Help. There's a big snake in here.

MONKEY KING. Just ignore it. Not my problem. I didn't sit here five days for nothing.

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. It's wrapping around me, it's squeezing very tight. Hellllppppp!

MONKEY KING. Aaaaaargh. Fine. I'm throwing you a rope. Here it comes. I'm pulling you up. Hang on! Don't let go. Boy, for a little fairy, you sure are heavy! Now get out of my sight. You ruined my chances to learn fun stuff like turning into a bird and traveling into the future. I wonder what the future is like? (*Sighs:*) After all that

hard work, sitting on that hard rock. Sitting still isn't easy, you know. My bum is sore, and it's all for nothing.

(WOODCLAPS.)

(IMMORTAL GURU enters.)

IMMORTAL GURU. Not all for nothing. Monkey, I'm proud of you. You were unselfish!

MONKEY KING. Oh sure. I was unselfish! So does this mean, you'll teach me anyway?

IMMORTAL GURU. When you got up from that rock, you learned a great lesson.

MONKEY KING. I did? Sure, of course, uh huh I did. So show me how to travel near and far. I want to be an immortal, like you, and only immortals can travel on a cloud, show me!

IMMORTAL GURU. Do a somersault.

MONKEY KING. I can do that. Easy.

(He does several.)

IMMORTAL GURU. Do a cartwheel. Keep going. Try it one-handed! Gooood! Keep going!

(He does several.)

IMMORTAL GURU. Try a backflip. Gooood. Now mix it all up. Excellent. Keep going. Yes!

(MONKEY KING does a tumbling combination.)

MONKEY KING. Wow. I'm back!

IMMORTAL GURU. Now you know how to travel near and far, past, present, and future. Monkey dismissed.

MONKEY KING. Master Immortal Guru Teacher Teacher, that was amazing. I was on the other side of the world in one somersault. I saw ice as far as the eye could see, and funny-looking birds that waddled like this. *(Waddles like a penguin.)* With one cartwheel, I flew over strange tall towers called New York City, with curious creatures carrying things called backpacks and briefcases. With one

backflip, I saw the birth of the universe. So messy! A few more cartwheels, one flip, and I found myself here again. Teach me! I want to know all your secrets. Everything. Please, teach me. Teach me, teach me, teach me teach me teach me!

IMMORTAL GURU. You are an enthusiastic monkey. You love to learn. However, you tend to study the wrong lessons. But you do have potential.

MONKEY KING. I do! *I* have potential. Teach me how to be immortal. Teach me to live forever!

IMMORTAL GURU. Aiiiiiiyah! You try my patience. You are not ready. You have learned enough for now. Go sit under the bodhi tree, and meditate.

MONKEY KING. Oooh no, no more sitting. I hate sitting. I hate to meditate. Oh all right, I'll go. Sit under the stupid bodhi tree. Well, if I have to meditate, I'll do it upsidedown!

(He does a headstand under the sacred tree.)

IMMORTAL GURU. Aiiiiiiiiyah! Kuan Yin! Why do you torture me?! This monkey is impossible!

Look how he meditates!? That woman may be a goddess, but if she thinks this creature can reach enlightenment, she's nuts!

(KUAN YIN enters.)

IMMORTAL GURU. Kuan Yin, beautiful goddess of mercy, you are looking radiant as always. What brings you to the School of Immortality?

KUAN YIN. Master Teacher, look favorably on monkey.

IMMORTAL GURU. My dear, I'm tearing my hair out over your little monkey. He's so undisciplined. He's not worthy of you, my dear. Take one of my fairy students as your champion, they will suit your purpose much better.

KUAN YIN. I prefer the monkey. Please train him, as a favor to me.

IMMORTAL GURU. No, it's an impossible task. He's quite unteachable. See how he meditates under the sacred tree of knowledge. Outrageous!

KUAN YIN. Great teacher, please prepare him for a great task ahead. One day, monkey will help bring enlightenment to the world.

IMMORTAL GURU. But...

KUAN YIN. But his road will be hard and difficult, prepare him so he may serve the world well.

IMMORTAL GURU. But...*(relenting:)* for Kuan Yin, I'll teach a roomful of mischievous monkeys. Namaste.

KUAN YIN. Peace.

(They both bow to each other. KUAN YIN exits.)

IMMORTAL GURU. Monkey.

MONKEY KING. Yes, Immortal Teacher Teacher Guru, sir.

IMMORTAL GURU. I have decided to teach you.

MONKEY KING. Yeeehaaaa! I knew you'd see it my way! Which at the moment is upsidedown! You know, upsidedown you don't look so ugly.

(Exasperated, IMMORTAL GURU looks to KUAN YIN, but she flashes him a coy smile, and again he relents.)

IMMORTAL GURU. I'll ignore that remark. Now I agree to teach you, but you must promise to keep our secrets secret. Do you promise?

MONKEY KING. All secrets will be secret. I, the monkey king, have spoken.

IMMORTAL GURU. You must also promise to be humble. Do you know what it means to humble?

MONKEY KING. It means, to be a doormat and let people walk all over you?

IMMORTAL GURU. Noooo it means, you have lots to learn.

MONKEY KING. Oh, is that all? Okay, it's a deal. I will be humble, and you will teach me the secrets of long life.

IMMORTAL GURU. For long life, eat a peach from the peach blossom garden at the Cloud Palace of the Golden Gates, in the Treasured Hall of the Holy Mists.

MONKEY KING. I eat a peach from the peach blossom garden at the Cloud Palace of the Golden Gates, in the Treasured Hall of the Holy Mists. Got it. Tell me how to turn into a snake! Or a tiger! So I can eat my enemies and spit them out. Grrrrr, grrrrr.

IMMORTAL GURU. We do not eat our enemies. We *love* our enemies. Only then, do we reach true enlightenment. Repeat after me, *we love our enemies*.

MONKEY KING. *I think it's better to pulverize 'em, but okay, anything you say. I want to be a dragon. Teach me to turn into a dragon! This is so exciting.*

IMMORTAL GURU. Come, let us talk as we walk to the Cave of the Slanting Moon Under the Three Stars On the Mountain of the Holy Terrace. There is much to teach and much to tell about the art of turning into something else.

(TEACHER gives instruction to MONKEY KING. WOODCLAPS and CYMBALS accompany the lesson.)

IMMORTAL GURU. Iron Horse stance!

(GURU and MONKEY do it.)

IMMORTAL GURU. Coiled Snake stance!

(GURU and MONKEY do it.)

IMMORTAL GURU. Silver Dragon stance!

(GURU and MONKEY do it.)

IMMORTAL GURU. Crane stance! Lion Pose! Twin Dragon Stance! Dragon Clutches The Pearl.

(Finally, THE IMMORTAL pats his protégé on the head, exits. Exhausted MONKEY KING, sits in lotus position, happily sated with knowledge. Enter Fairy Acolyte #1.)

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. I don't believe it. The Master Immortal taught *you* 72 different transformations? *You* a mere monkey. I don't believe it!

MONKEY KING. Believe it. I can turn into anything. Anything.

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. I can turn into a buzzing insect, and it took me 100 years to convince master teacher to show me. I don't believe he taught you what he has so keenly guarded.

MONKEY KING. Of course, he told me. And I didn't have to wait 100 years. Afterall, *I'm* the Monkey King.

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. So where's your crown? Hah. Okay, Monkey King. Turn into an eagle.

MONKEY KING. I will not. A promise is a promise.

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. Turn into a tiger.

MONKEY KING. My lips are sealed. You're just jealous. Because I know all, and you know zip.

FAIRY ACOLYTE. Prove it. Turn into a flaming mountain. Or a basket of bananas. Or a one-horned ogre. No? Some monkey king. Where's your crown, monkey king? Some king without a crown. You're not a true king, if you don't have a crown!

MONKEY KING. You better stop, or I'll turn you into a pine tree!

FAIRY ACOLYTE. Hah! I triple dog dare ya!

MONKEY KING. You asked for it. One pine tree coming up.

FAIRY ACOLYTE. Oh I'm scared, I'm shaking. NOT!

(KUAN YIN enters.)

MONKEY KING. Eck on kar, sut nam! Eck on kar, sut nam!

KUAN YIN. You are perfect as you are. Truth is your identity. Silly monkey.

(KUAN YIN places a pine cone in the hand of the MONKEY rather abruptly.)

MONKEY KING. Oops. I think I goofed.

FAIRY ACOLYTE #1. Someone is a pine tree, and it ain't me.

(WOODCLAPS. Enter IMMORTAL GURU.)

IMMORTAL GURU. Outrage! This is an outrage! Monkey, you disappoint me. Do you know why? Because you broke your promise! Breaking a promise is worse than boastfulness, worse than pridefulness. Look at me when I talk to you. Did you make a promise? What was your promise, the promise you *failed* to keep? Speak!

MONKEY KING. I was not humble. I promised to be humble and I wasn't. I'm very sorry Master Teacher Teacher. And I spilled the beans on all your secrets. It won't happen again.

IMMORTAL GURU. Every action has its consequence, young monkey. I expel you from school!

MONKEY KING. No please. I like school. Actually, I don't like school. But I like learning.

IMMORTAL GURU. The goddess Kuan Yin has picked a breaker of promises for a champion. Go back from whence you came. Go home to Mystic Mountain. You are expelled from school. *(To FAIRY:)* And you, mind your own business, or I'll turn you into a toad. Monkey! Leave now! Go home!

(The FAIRY ACOLYTE exits. MONKEY does a tumbling pass, exits to LOUD GONG BANGING. IMMORTAL GURU walks in a small circle to WOODCLAPS, then exits.)

KUAN YIN. Monkey arrived at Mystic Mountain, sad and dejected.

MONKEY KING. Life *stinks*.

KUAN YIN. But home was home no more.

MONKEY KING. Hello, anyone home? I'm back. It's me! Hello? Where is everyone?

(Enter ONE-HORNED OGRE WITH BIG HANDS.)

KUAN YIN. A great monster had taken over the Cave of the Water Curtain, and vanquished all the monkeys to live as slaves. Or a worse fate. The one-horned ogre has a voracious appetite, and loves to eat monkeys.

ONE-HORNED OGRE. Roooooooooaaaaa. Roooooooooaaaaa. Ack!

MONKEY KING. Get out of my house, you nasty one-horned thing. Free my brothers and sisters at once. I am the Monkey King and I order you to leave at once. I am the Monkey King!

ONE-HORNED OGRE. Roooooooooaaaaa. Roooooooooaaaaa. Pffffuuuug. Rrrrrrrrack.

MONKEY KING. Translation: I'm lunch! Ohoh!

(OGRE lunges, catches MONKEY.)

MONKEY KING. Hot. Hot. This ogre has hot hands. He's cooking me with every squeeze. If I don't do something quick, I'm going to be well done sunnyside up. Ek on kar, sut nam!

KUAN YIN. The clever monkey turned himself into a buzzing insect. And the one-horned ogre...

MONKEY KING. ...who is none to bright.

KUAN YIN. ...missed his furry lunch.

Fly away, little monkey. Fly away. Go to the Dragon King of the Eastern Ocean. Ask him for a weapon to help you vanquish the one-horned ogre. Fly, and know that I'm with you always.

MONKEY KING. As I flew high above the head of the ogre, in the sky, I saw this beautiful goddess, dressed all in white. Kuan Yin. She told me to see my neighbor...

KUAN YIN, MONKEY KING. ...a dragon who lives deep under the ocean waves...

MONKEY KING. ...and from him, I can get a weapon to free my friends, take back my home, and kill the monster.

(CHINESE DRUMMING. THE DRAGON KING enters, with simpering minion GENERAL FISH BELLY.)

KUAN YIN. The Monkey Annoys The Dragon King!

(KUAN YIN visits the DRAGON KING.)

DRAGON KING. Who dares disturb my slumber? I was having a wondrous dream. A beautiful lady in white asked me for a favor.

She whispered in my ear, “Help me, O Dragon King of the Eastern Ocean, help me.”

KUAN YIN. *(Simultaneously with DRAGON KING:)* Help me, O Dragon King of the Eastern Ocean, help me.

DRAGON KING. Then you woke me up. This better be good, General Fish Belly. Or I shall have a morning snack of Fish Belly on cinnamon toast.

GENERAL FISH BELLY. The Monkey King sir. He asks to see you. A monster has invaded his cave, and he seeks an audience with you.

DRAGON KING. This has nothing to do with us. I’m going back to sleep. Monkey wants a weapon. This is a dragon’s lair, not some hardware emporium. Tell him to go away.

(MONKEY enters, with a few cartwheels and handstand.)

MONKEY KING. Hey Dragon! Give me a weapon!

GENERAL FISH BELLY. Insolent monkey. How dare you make demands of the dragon king? Have you no manners?

MONKEY KING. No, not really. Stand aside Fish Butt, I’ll handle this. Give me a weapon.

(To WOODCLAPS, DRAGON KING uses a red sash from his royal robes, walks around MONKEY, tying him up. MONKEY struggles.)

DRAGON KING. I have you now, my little breakfast!

MONKEY KING. Let. Me. Go.

DRAGON KING. General Fish Belly!

GENERAL FISH BELLY. With pleasure.

MONKEY KING. Lady in White Goddess of Mercy, why did you send me here?

(FISH BELLY chases MONKEY, who barely eludes the tip of FISH BELLY’s sword.)

MONKEY KING. Mercy! Yikes! Help!! Kuannnnn Yinnnnnn!

(FISH BELLY raises sword. KUAN YIN appears, but no one sees her.)

THE DRAGON KING. Kuan Yin!? Stop! Why didn't you say so? Fish Belly, do not skewer the monkey. Harm not a hair on that monkey's head. The goddess of mercy came to me in a dream, she told me her champion would come. I didn't realize you were he. You are so scrawny and a most unlikely hero. Next time, speak up! Untie him. Fish Belly, release him.

MONKEY KING. *(To FISH BELLY:)* You heard what he said. Release me.

DRAGON KING. General, give him your sword.

GENERAL FISH BELLY. But it was my great great great great great great grandfathers', a treasured heirloom passed from father to son.

MONKEY KING. Your sword, Fish *Butt*.

DRAGON KING. Give him your sword.

(FISH BELLY hands over his sword, MONKEY takes it.)

MONKEY KING. Oo-oo-oo.

(He tries it out, way too heavy, waves it clumsily; nearly clips DRAGON KING and FISH BELLY, both duck to save themselves.)

Nope. What else you got?

(Tosses the sword away.)

DRAGON KING. Well, we have wheels of wind & fire.

MONKEY KING. What else?

GENERAL FISH BELLY. We have hatchets? Butterfly knives?

MONKEY KING. Uh uh.

GENERAL FISH BELLY. Mallets? Whip chains? Hammers of destruction?

MONKEY KING. Pass.

GENERAL FISH BELLY. We have axes, tridents, snake spears, meteor missiles? Cannons, harpoons, tiger head hooks, water balloons?

MONKEY KING. What else?

GENERAL FISH BELLY. I give up.

DRAGON KING. You have rejected our entire arsenal, and given me a headache. Choose your weapon, and be gone.

MONKEY KING. Give me your royal scepter.

GENERAL FISH BELLY. But it's not even a weapon.

MONKEY KING. The lady in white won't be happy to hear you refused to help me. I am her champion.

DRAGON KING. Take it. And get out of here! You are a troublesome troublemaking mischievous monkey. Here. Take it and go.

(MONKEY catches staff easily.)

MONKEY KING. This feels goooood. Teach me how to use it, Fish Head.

GENERAL FISH BELLY. I'll teach you, you annoying furry land beast. You have no right to wield the royal scepter of the dragon king. Sire, may I pulverize this creature within an inch of his life?

DRAGON KING. Teach him well.

GENERAL FISH BELLY. Twin Dragons Go to Sea.

(They spar.)

MONKEY KING. Twin Dragons Go Where? Oh To the Sea!

GENERAL FISH BELLY. Twin Dragons Fight For The Pearls! Tiger Leap From Forest!

MONKEY KING. Oh this scepter is too top heavy. I'll just remove this shiny expensive-looking jewel.

(He does.)

DRAGON KING. Insolent monkey. General teach him a lesson he'll never forget!

MONKEY KING. Oh oh.

(They fight— staff against sword.)

GENERAL FISH BELLY. Tiger Leap From Forest! Dragon Peeks Through Clouds! Chase The White Rabbit! Well monkey, you are quick. But you have no style. No harmony. No feeling in your soul. You will never be good without a sense of rhythm.

MONKEY KING. I am the Monkey King. I do so have rhythm!

GENERAL FISH BELLY. Thunder blade! Sweeping Horizon! Dragon Eye Thrust!

MONKEY KING. HA! And now, one better, dragon tail sweep! Dragon Ascends The Mountain.

(MONKEY finishes off the GENERAL.)

This will do nicely. Now to save my home, and my friends.

(MONKEY exits, to URGENT CYMBALS. URGENT WOOD-CLAPS.)

DRAGON KING. General, go to the Jade Emperor and lodge a complaint. Give an earful to the Jade Emperor about this obnoxious monkey. Go!

(GENERAL FISH BELLY exits. KUAN YIN enters.)

(Grumbling:)

DRAGON KING. Woke me up from a perfectly beautiful dream. Begs for a weapon, insults my court with his picky choosy ways. Then takes my royal scepter! And he breaks it. And he throws away the royal jewel. I liked that scepter. Out of control. That monkey is out of control. Well, soon enough, Jade Emperor will deal with our dear Monkey.

KUAN YIN. But that's another story, for another play.

DRAGON KING. For now, what can I do to make things *interesting* for our hero?

KUAN YIN. The Dragon King of The Eastern Sea devised a terrible and sneaky plan.

DRAGON KING. I'll fix him. I'll go to Mystic Mountain and warn the monster myself, and that will be the end of The Monkey King!

(DRAGON KING exits, to WOODCLAPS. HIP HOP MUSIC. Enter HIP HOP CHILD, with a boombox. THE CHILD plops on the steps of the school, head in hands. Head down.)

KUAN YIN. Monkey Travels To The Future Accidentally!

(GONG!)

KUAN YIN. But nothing is ever truly accidental.

(MONKEY enters, with cartwheels, backflips and somersaults. Then falls down.)

MONKEY KING. Oooops. I think did one cartwheel too many. This doesn't look like mystic mountain. Is this the mountain of fruit and flowers?

HIP HOP CHILD. No fool. This is school.

MONKEY KING. School. I went to school once, but I was expelled for telling secrets.

HIP HOP CHILD. If I got expelled, my pops would go crazy.

MONKEY KING. Pops? What is a pops?

HIP HOP CHILD. He's my dad. My father. Sheesh. What a dumb question.

MONKEY KING. What is a father?

HIP HOP CHILD. Don't you know? He's the guy who makes me clean my room, coaches the worst team in the league, takes ya to the dentist AND he's supposed to pick me up after school. School was over one whole hour ago. Oh man. I wanna go home.

(CHILD begins to cry.)

MONKEY KING. I want to go home too. You are a very emotional creature. What are you?

HIP HOP CHILD. What a stupid question. I'm just a kid. Who are you?

MONKEY KING. I am the monkey king!

HIP HOP CHILD. If you are a king, where's your crown?

MONKEY KING. *(He yelps, then recovering:)* I must go home to Mystic Mountain to fight a terrible one-horned ogre who eats monkeys. I was on my way, when I heard this strange and terrible noise. The sounds had fingers. It grabbed me by the ears. Pulled me right out of the sky.

HIP HOP CHILD. Oh you mean this.

(Turns on his boombox. HIP HOP MUSIC!)

It's music.

MONKEY KING. Music?

HIP HOP CHILD. Yeah, you dance to it. Like this.

(THE CHILD demonstrates a hip hop move.)

MONKEY KING. I can do that.

(MONKEY tries it. He's terrible.)

HIP HOP CHILD. Wow, you stink. You're all tense.

MONKEY KING. Tense?

HIP HOP CHILD. Uptight. You'se got no rhythm.

MONKEY KING. I need rhythm! Show me.

HIP HOP CHILD. Well, okay. But first you got to get loose. Shake like this. Now like this.

(They shake.)

Now you just listen to the beat. Nothing to it. Just listen. That's the rhythm. Now, watch this.

(He demonstrates.)

Now you try it.

(MONKEY tries.)

Not bad. Try this.

(More moves. MONKEY joins in.)

(More moves. They're dancing!)

MONKEY KING. Now try this!

(MONKEY does moves that resemble martial arts. Soon they are doing a martial arts "kata"—fists and feet flying furiously—all set to HIP HOP MUSIC.)

HIP HOP CHILD. Allllwright.

MONKEY KING. Come home with me. You can make Mystic Mountain your new home, and bring your music with you.

HIP HOP CHILD. Why not! My big brothers are always mean to me. My moms always yelling at me. And my pops, says I'm lazy and I won't amount to anything. Maybe, he's late on purpose.

MONKEY KING. Maybe he's not coming, not now— not ever.

HIP HOP CHILD. Maybe they don't want me anymore.

MONKEY KING. Come with me.

(Horn of a car, HONKING.)

HIP HOP CHILD. Yo, you're late! I thought you forgot about me.

MONKEY KING. Tell him to keep his promises!

HIP HOP CHILD. But try to keep your promises from now on, okay Pops?

(Before THE CHILD runs off, he gives the boombox to MONKEY.)

MONKEY KING. I wish I had a father.

(THE CHILD exits. CYMBALS, punctuated by WOODCLAPS. KUAN YIN, enters. MONKEY hugs her happily.)

KUAN YIN. Monkey King Goes To Battle The One-Horned Ogre! Monkey! Pop quiz!

(They spar. Her sword against MONKEY's staff.)

Chase the bumblebee. Mary had a little lamb. Pop goes the weasel. Green eggs, and ham!

(With a deft move, she wins.)

Monkey, you still have a lot to learn. Now go, save your friends. Meanwhile, in the Cave of the Water Curtain on Mystic Mountain! The One-Horned Ogre and the Dragon of the Eastern Sea plot the end of the Monkey.

(THE ONE-HORNED OGRE, THE DRAGON OF THE EASTERN SEA *enters.*)

ONE-HORNED OGRE. Grrrrrrawwwwwww. Graowwwwwwwwwww. Arrrrrfoofff.

DRAGON KING. Let me explain it more slowly. What an oaf! The monkey. Is coming. To kill you. Got it now?

ONE-HORNED OGRE. Grrrrrrraowwwwwww. Pffffufttttt. Annnnnnck, annnnnnck, pffffuftttt.

DRAGON KING. Right, at last we understand each other. Finally. One-horned ogres are a bit slow, but rather lovable once you get used to their odor.

ONE-HORNED OGRE. Akkkkkkkk, akkkkkkkkk, rrrrrraooo, ak!

DRAGON KING. Yes, yes. With the two of us here, we will together destroy the monkey, and I'll get back my royal scepter.

(MONKEY *sneaks in.* THE OGRE *sniffs the air.*)

ONE-HORNED OGRE. Akkkkkkkk, akkkkkkkkk, grrrrraooo, ak!

DRAGON KING. You smell monkey? He must be here.

ONE-HORNED OGRE. Akkk, akkkk, akkk!

(THE OGRE *goes to blow out a candle.*)

DRAGON KING. No no, if you do that, we won't be able to see. Don't blow out the...light. Idiot!

(MONKEY *scurries to a better position.*)

ONE-HORNED OGRE. Pfffffffaaaaak! Ak!

(OGRE *and* DRAGON KING *draw their weapons.*)

MONKEY KING. Get out of my house. I am the Monkey King and I'm ordering you to get lost.

(CYMBALS! CYMBALS! Chinese rhythms, with cymbals and drums.)

(A double sword fight in the dark ensues. This is a classic Monkey King fight, and emphasizes comedic elements. Often the adversaries stand back to back, facing no enemy at all, swinging away at thin air.)

ONE-HORNED OGRE. Grrrrrrrao. Pffffffuak, akkkk! Grrrrraooooo, akkk, akkk, akkkkk!

DRAGON KING. He's behind you, you moron!

ONE-HORNED OGRE. Howwwwoooooooooooooo, Howooooooooooooo!

MONKEY KING. These one-horned ogres make a lot of noise when you smack them on the backside. I wonder what dragons say when you crack them over the head with their own royal stick?

DRAGON KING. *(In MONKEY's ear:)* They say, I got you.

MONKEY KING. Oh sorry, I think it's the other way around.

(MONKEY ties up the DRAGON KING with his own long red sash.)

MONKEY KING. And now for the monkey killer. You are now all mine, you one-horned devil! I will kill you and then cook you. And then feed you to the Dragon King? How's that for a gourmet meal? How do you like your one-horned ogre? Sliced or diced? Come meet your fate!

(MONKEY KING uses his hip hop/martial arts moves, thoroughly confusing the Ogre, disarms him. CHINESE DRUMS.)

(He grabs a sword, and is about to use it when KUAN YIN enters in her signature fashion, as if underwater, with an elegant flourish of her flowing sleeves.)

KUAN YIN. *(Silently mouths the following:)* Love before me, love behind me. Love to my left, love to my right.

Love above me, *love...*

MONKEY KING. *(To OGRE:)* This is the end for you!

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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