

You Are Standing at the Mouth of a Cave

Story and music by Michael Johnson.
Libretto by Michael Johnson & Ross Tandowsky

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Michael Johnson
715 SW King Ave. #1
Portland, OR 97205
(503) 933-5435

Cast of Characters

MICHAEL: A Dungeon Master
MATT: A Half-elf
NICK: A Dwarf

Scene

A small studio apartment

Time

Evening, present day

ACT I

Scene 1

JOE and MATT stand on either side of the stage facing the audience, looking off into the distance with determined gazes. MICHAEL, The Dungeon Master, stands between them. MUSIC UP.

MICHAEL

SUDDENLY YOU SEE IT:
THE ORCISH HOST
OF MORTEGHAST,
POURING OVER THE HILL.
THEIR LEADER ASTRIDE
A BLACK DRAGON RIDES
DIRECTLY AFTER YOU.
HE'S COMING IN FAST!
WHAT WILL YOU DO?

MATT

I'LL RUN MY SWORD THROUGH HIM!

JOE

I'LL BARBECUE HIM
WITH MY FLAMING ARROWS
OF DEATH!

MICHAEL

SO BE IT.
HE NARROWS
HIS EYES
AS YOU BRING DOWN YOUR BLADE
AND YOUR ARROW FLIES.
NOW ROLL!

MUSIC continues as MICHAEL hands MATT and JOE each a 20-sided die. They shake their die in one hand. JOE and MATT throw their dice.
HE'S TOAST!

JOE and MATT high five.
WELL PLAYED.
NOW GASPING HIS FINAL BREATH.
HE FALLS LIKE A WITHERED TREE
INTO A BLOODY HEAP.

MATT

AND HIS MINIONS?

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

THEY FLEE
LIKE STARTLED SHEEP.
NOW OUT OF DANGER
YOU COME TO A VILLAGE.

JOE

LET'S GORGE OURSELVES
AT AN INN.

MICHAEL

VERY WELL. YOU SIT DOWN TO FEAST
WHEN FROM OUT OF THE SHADOWS
THERE EMERGES A STRANGER.
"ADVENTURERS", SAYS HE,
"THIRST YE FOR GLORY?"

MATT

DO WE!

MICHAEL

"THEN HEAR YE MY STORY:
THE LORD OF THE DARK ELVES
FROM THE MURKY WOOD
THUNDERED THROUGH HERE
ON A GALLOPING BEAST.
HE BROUGHT PILLAGE
AND SLAUGHTER.
HE RODE OFF WITH MY DAUGHTER.
THEN DISAPPEARED
OVER THE MISTY MEADOWS
TO HIS FORTRESS IN THE BOWELS OF THE WORLD."
THEN HE DESCRIBES
HER DARK HAZEL EYES,
HER SKIN LIKE PEARL,
HER HAIR LIKE GOLDEN SMOKE...

JOE

REALLY? NO JOKE?
SHE SOUNDS JUST LIKE THAT GIRL WE MET LAST NIGHT.
(to MICHAEL)
REMEMBER?

MICHAEL

Yes.

JOE

A GIRL SO LUMINESCENT SHE OUTSHINES THE SUN.

MATT

OH, YES! WHAT A GIRL! IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

MATT & JOE
I THINK SHE'S THE ONE!

JOE
AN ANGEL WITH BLOND HAIR.

MATT
SO LONG, SO BLOND!

JOE
WITH SKIN SO FAIR.

MATT
LIKE MOONLIGHT ON A POND.

Looking at each other, the realization dawning on them.

JOE & MATT
SMOLDERING EYES!
WAVY HAIR LIKE FLAME!
MUSIC IN HER NAME:

RAMONA! RAMONA! RAMO-

MATT
WAIT!

JOE
WHO?

MATT
WHAT?

JOE
YOU?

MATT
YOU'RE KIDDING!

JOE
YOU'RE JOKING!

MATT & JOE
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN SMOKING?

MATT
DID YOU SEE HOW SHE SCOPED OUT THESE GUNS?

JOE
SHE WAS CHECKING OUT MY GEAR!

MATT

SHE WANTED THESE BUNS.

JOE

I'LL KILL YOU! COME HERE!

JOE and MATT reach for each other across the table, but MICHAEL restrains them.

MICHAEL

HOLD IT, YOU TWO!

JOE

LET ME GO.

MATT

I'LL RIP OUT HIS EYES!

MICHAEL

GUYS, GUYS, GUYS!

I KNOW

YOU'RE IN LOVE,

BUT LAY DOWN YOUR GLOVES.

I HAVE THE PERFECT SOLUTION.

THAT IS, UNLESS YOU LACK THE CONSTITUTION.

MATT

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

JOE

WHAT GAME ARE YOU PLAYING?

MICHAEL

SOME MIGHT CALL IT A GAME, LET'S CALL IT A TEST:

A JOURNEY,

A TOURNEY.

IT'S LIMIT: THE SKIES.

A WINNER-TAKE-ALL WITH RAMONA THE PRIZE!

WE'LL GIVE DIBS ON RAMONA TO THE ONE OF YOU TWO KNAVES

WHO SAVES

THE STRANGER'S DAUGHTER AND SURVIVES MY LITTLE QUEST.

MATT

SO THIS MISCREANT GIVES HER UP AFTER I BEAT HIM?

JOE

THIS LOSER FORGETS HER ONCE I DEFEAT HIM?

MATT

YOU'RE DEAD MEAT.

IT'S ME WHO'LL ADVANCE!

(CONTINUED)

JOE

NOT UNLESS YOU CHEAT!
YOU DON'T STAND A CHANCE!

MICHAEL

SO IT'S DECIDED.

The three guys seal the deal with a handshake.

WIZARDS AND GOBLINS AND FAIRIES AND ORCS.
GUZZLING WINE AND DISCARDING THE CORKS.
HOARD SOME FOR LATER IN YOUR OWN LEATHER FLAGON
THIS IS THE WORLD OF DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS.

JOE

BRANDISH A BROADSWORD, A KNIFE, OR AN AX.

MATT

MAKE WITH THE PWNAGE WHEN YOUR ENEMY ATTACKS.

JOE & MATT

SLICE HIM AND DICE HIM AND REALLY FIX HIS WAGON!

MICHAEL

THIS IS THE WORLD OF DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS.
DO YOU WANT A NEW CHARACTER?

JOE

YES, A KLINGON LIKE WORF!

MATT

YOU CAN'T BE A KLINGON!

MICHAEL

BETTER STICK WITH YOUR DWARF.

MATT

I'LL KEEP MY A HALF-ELF.

MICHAEL

NICE.

LET'S CHECK YOUR DICE.
ROLL THE TWENTY-SIDED DIE TO SEE IF YOU HIT
THE TEN SIDED'S FOR DAMAGE.

MATT

WE GOT IT.

MATT & JOE

GET ON WITH IT!

ALL

FEATHERY BEDS FULL OF SIRENS FOR SHAGGIN'.
BIG WOODEN CHESTS TO DEPOSIT YOUR SWAG IN.

NICK & MATT

FINISH THE QUEST AND NEVER GO STAG AGAIN!

MICHAEL

THIS IS THE WORLD OF DUNGEONS AND DRAG-AGAINS.

NOW THEN, BOYS. BACK TO THE QUEST.

MOUNTING YOUR STEEDS

YOU LOOK TO THE WEST.

THERE, BEYOND THE MEADOWS, SHROUDED IN MIST

ACROSS THE SWAYING REEDS,

ATOP THE ASHEN CLIFFS OF MYTHERIN...

MATT

OKAY, OKAY, WE GET THE GIST!

MICHAEL

(giving them a conciliatory look)

BEHOLD: THE DARK ELF'S CASTLE. THE DAUGHTER IS
SOMEWHERE THEREIN...

JOE

(growing impatient)

I CHOP OFF MATT'S HEAD!

JOE rolls a die.

MICHAEL

WHAT?!

MATT

HA, YOU MISSED. NOW YOU'RE DEAD.

I RIP JOE A NEW ONE.

(picking up the dice)

IS IT THE RED ONE OR THE BLUE ONE?

MICHAEL

NEITHER. YOU CAN'T KILL EACH OTHER.

MATT & JOE

WHY NOT?

MICHAEL

WHAT ABOUT THE DAUGHTER? HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?

MATT & JOE

(wistful)

HOW COULD I FORGET HER?

MATT & JOE

BACK OFF, YOU JERK!

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

NOW LISTEN. YOU BOTH HAVE TO WORK
TOGETHER. AT LEAST FOR NOW PLAY AS FRIENDS.
TRUST ME, YOU'LL BOTH NEED TO BE IN ONE PIECE
WHEN YOU COME TO HER RESCUE.

MATT

WHEN'S THAT?

MICHAEL

AT THE END.

JOE

FINE! SKIP TO THAT PART.

MATT

YEAH! SKIP TO THE GIRL. Jeez!

MICHAEL

Alright: YOU ARE STANDING AT THE MOUTH OF A CAVE.
IT'S COVERED IN IVY AND DARK AS YOU ENTER.
QUIETLY AND QUICKLY YOU MOVE TO THE CENTER.
THERE LIES A KEY.

JOE

I PICK IT UP.

MICHAEL

IT BURSTS INTO FLAMES.

JOE

I THROW IT TO HIM.

MICHAEL

THIS IS THE KEY OF TRAFALGAR: FORGED INTO AN ODD
SHAPE BY THE DWARVES OF FALKRISH
HAVING STOLEN IT FROM XENON THE MOUNTAIN GOD.
YOU NEED IT TO SAVE THE GIRL.

JOE

GIVE IT BACK!

MATT

YOU WISH!

MICHAEL

THE KEY WAS THEN SNATCHED BY THE DARK ELVES OF GLIMM.
THEY LOST IT AND THEY WANT IT BACK.

MATT

WHO ARE THEY?

MICHAEL

YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT: THEY ATTACK!
FIFTY DARK ELVES COME RACING TOWARD YOU.
DO YOU RUN OR DO YOU FIGHT?

JOE

IS THIS GOING TO TAKE ALL NIGHT?

MATT

YEAH! WHERE'S THE FREAKIN' GIRL?

MICHAEL

FINE. SUIT YOURSELVES.
FORGET THE DARK ELVES.
WE'LL GO BACK TO WHERE YOU FOUND THE KEY.
YOU PICK UP THE KEY FROM THE FLOOR
AND ARE STARTLED BY THE CREAK OF A SECRET DOOR.
AS A SWARM OF BATS SCATTER IN A RAGE,
THERE EMERGES FROM THE PASSAGE A GREAT GOLDEN CAGE.
INSIDE LIES RAMONA. SHE LOOKS HOT AS EVER.
THOUGH LOOKS AS THOUGH SHE'S BEEN TRAPPED THERE
FOREVER.
SHE'S NAKED, EXCEPT FOR A SHACKLE 'ROUND HER THROAT.

MATT

AND THE DARK ELF DUDE?

MICHAEL

HE'S GONE, BUT HE LEFT YOU THIS
NOTE:
"HEED THESE INSTRUCTIONS, LEST YE BE DEAD:
TO UNLOCK THIS HERE CAGE, YE MUST STAND ON YOUR HEADS.
THEN, TOGETHER WITH ONE HAND EACH TOUCHING THE KEY,
YOU MUST SLIP IT IN THE LOCK AND TURN IT TO SEE
THE GILDED BARS RISE AND YOUR INGENUE GO FREE!
WHAT WILL YOU DO?

JOE

STAND ON OUR FREAKIN' HEADS, I GUESS!

MATT

AND STICK IN THE KEY!

MICHAEL

STICK IN THE KEY?

MATT & JOE

YES, DUDE, YES!

MICHAEL

YOU STAND ON YOUR HEADS. YOU STICK IN THE KEY.
IT SLIDES RIGHT IN. NOW, LET ME SEE..

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL rolls a die.

MICHAEL

JUST AS I THOUGHT.

MATT & JOE

WHAT?

MICHAEL

YOU'RE TOAST.

MATT & JOE

WHAT?

MICHAEL

(showing them the die.)

YOU'RE BOTH DEAD.

MATT & JOE

WHAT?

MICHAEL

YOU STUCK THE KEY IN AND HEARD A CLICK,
AND YOU BOTH WERE ENGULFED IN FLAMES.

MATT

THAT'S IT?

MICHAEL

BURNED TO A CRISP.

YES. YOU

JOE

YOU DICK!

MICHAEL

DON'T BLAME ME. YOU MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE, PERHAPS,
BUT NEITHER OF YOU THOUGHT TO CHECK FOR TRAPS.

JOE

SO, WE CAN'T CALL RAMONA?

MICHAEL

NO.

MATT & JOE

THIS TOTALLY BLOWS.

MATT and JOE leave the stage in a huff. Music holds a tense chord as MICHAEL makes sure the two are gone. He picks up his phone and dials a number.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

(sounding suave, spoken)

Hello? Ramona. Hi, it's Michael. Listen, I was wondering what you're doing tomorrow night...

MUSIC plays some closing chords as MICHAEL continues his conversation. Black out.

Curtain.