

Brian Guehring
Omaha Theatre Company for Young People
2001 Farnum St. Omaha, NE 68102
(402) 502-4636
briang@rosetheater.org

The Brave Little Tailor

adapted for the stage from the Grimms fairy tale by Brian Guehring
a play for 4-10 actors

Draft # 2.07
post-production draft

Everyday, the small, meek tailor in the village is bullied by his boss, smothered by his mother, and harassed by customers. This young tailor, however, dreams of fighting dragons and saving princesses and during one vivid fantasy he manages to kill seven flies in one blow. Rumors buzz around the village until the king hears of a tailor who can kill seven giants in one blow. The tailor is brought before the cowardly king and his beautiful daughter. This meek tailor then must find his own courage (with the help of the princess) and battle a rampaging unicorn, two troublesome giants, and a fierce dragon.

The original script was further developed through improvisational workshops in the fall of 2004 with the following actors: **Amanda Kibler, Brian Priesman, Kevin Ehrhart, Janeve West, Konrad Case, Andrew McGreevey, and Michael Wilhelm.**

This play was then produced by the Omaha Theater Company for Young People for school groups and public audiences in January 2005 with the following cast and production team:

CAST

Little Tailor	Katie Grant
Master Tailor, Baker, King, Big Giant, Dragon	Andrew McGreevey
Ma, Jam Seller, Lady in Waiting, Princess, Unicorn, Dragon	Stephanie Kidd
Jester, Baker's Wife, Bigger Giant, Dragon	Konrad Case

PRODUCTION TEAM

<i>Director:</i> Janeve West	<i>Costume Designer:</i> Kathryn Neary
<i>Set & Light Design:</i> Mark Lewis	<i>Sound Design:</i> Michael McElroy
<i>Development Dramaturg:</i> Michael Miller	

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The Brave Little Tailor

Characters

Little Tailor	A small young man in his late teens. He is a dreamer, but he has been told his entire life that he is too small and too young to do anything. Therefore he has become unsure of himself. He is now an apprentice at the town's tailor shop to support his mother. He is an excellent fly swatter.
Ma	The tailor's over protective mother. She won't tell her son why her husband left, but she is terrified that her son might leave and be killed. She is also afraid to be left alone. She loves her son dearly.
King	The inept ruler of the kingdom. He exudes confidence. This King thinks of himself first and will do anything to save himself from danger or trouble. He appears brave, but is actually quite spineless.
Princess	The King's daughter. She is good hearted and positive. She believes strongly in the tailor. She will become a good ruler, concerned more about the safety of the people than herself
Jester	The court jester who speaks the truth through verse. He is also the narrator of the story who pushes the characters along
Master Tailor	The overconfident, overbearing owner of the tailor shop.
Baker's Wife	An overbearing woman who believes the customer is always right and the employee is always wrong.
Jam Seller	A pushy, poor jam seller
Baker	The shy town baker
Lady in Waiting	The terrified lady of the court
Unicorn ¹	A magical creature, normally harmless, who is on a rampage and destroying the town (and the Giant's farm)
Giants ²	Two cruel, dim giants who bully the townspeople into providing them with food. They are bitter rivals.
Dragon ³	A huge, ancient dragon who is a constant threat to the kingdom

Locations:

Ye Olde Tailor Shoppe	an old shop full of clothes and fabrics.
the Bakery	the small town bakery
The King's Court	the royal throne room
The Woods	home of the unicorn
The mountain	home of the giants
The Dragon's Lair	home of the dragon

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¹ possibly an actor in costume with canes in front to create 4 legged unicorn (a la Lion King)

² possibly actors with huge platform-esque shoes and oversized clothes or puppets

³ possibly a huge puppet with one actor manipulating head and other actors manipulating wings

The Brave Little Tailor

Scene 2: Ye Olde Tailor Shoppe
(The LITTLE TAILOR sighs and looks at the pile of clothes he must work on.)

LITTLE TAILOR

Well, I had better get back to work, or I'll never get home. *(starting to sew)* Cut the fabric, thread the needle, sew the cloth. The same thing everyday. I shouldn't complain. I have a simple life and a steady job. No big problems. Just rude customers, a mean boss, a smothering mother, and pesky flies. *(waving away the flies)*. Now, a brave knight has real problems: jousting in battles, protecting the people and fighting evil villains.

(The Little Tailor starts to get into his fantasy and starts acting out the part of a knight with the needle as his sword).

Take that and that, you evil rogue! The brave knight shows no fear. He's not afraid of anything. *(starts thrusting the needle at mannequin)*. Ha! HA! The evil villain is losing. You are intimidated by my awesome power and bravery. Wait? What is this? I am now being attacked by flying dragons. *(TAILOR starts treating flies like dragons)* I am surrounded. There are too many to fight all at once. There is no hope! *(TAILOR ducks down away from flies)* No, a hero never gives up! *(TAILOR pops up and swats flies)* I will divide and conquer. I will take them one at a time. *(swatting flies)* I will sneak up on them... *(picks up fabric bread with jam)* and... *(he squishes the flies)*.

(LITTLE TAILOR looks at the dead flies)

Hey, look at that! I killed seven in one blow! I killed seven in one blow! *(TAILOR shouts it out the window)* I killed seven in one blow!

JAM SELLER *(on street)*

What was that, kid?

LITTLE TAILOR

I killed seven in one blow.

JAM SELLER

Seven what?

LITTLE TAILOR

Oh...flies. Just flies. I just killed seven flies in one blow. Sorry. I should get back to work. *(LITTLE TAILOR closes window)*

LITTLE TAILOR

I guess I got a little carried away there. Maybe Ma is right. I should probably stop reading those stories and putting crazy thoughts in my head. I'm such a little guy. I wouldn't stand a chance against a real dragon. I could never be that brave. Oh, well, back to work.

(BAKER's WIFE walks by in the town square by the Tailor Shop and sees JAM SELLER laughing. BAKER's WIFE is stuck up and in a hurry. She doesn't want to talk to dirty JAM SELLER)

BAKER's WIFE

What's so funny?

JAM SELLER

Do you know the little tailor?

Unfortunatley. BAKER's WIFE

He says he killed seven flies in one blow. JAMSELLER

Well, that shop is infested with flies. BAKER's WIFE

Can you imagine that little runt attacking anything? He's scared of a mouse. JAMSELLER

Those, too? Indeed. BAKER's WIFE

Would you like to buy some jam? Just try it... JAM SELLER

No. BAKER's WIFE

Good day, then. JAMSELLER

(JAM SELLER leaves laughing. BAKER's WIFE is shaking her head as she enters the BAKERY. BAKER is working very hard and not paying a lot of attention to his wife's latest complaints)

Are you even going to greet me? BAKER's WIFE

Sorry, dear. BAKER

How many times do I have to tell you to talk to the customers. Make them feel welcome. BAKER's WIFE

If you say so, dear. BAKER

That is why our sales are so poor. BAKER's WIFE

I'm sorry, dear. BAKER

Its not all your fault, htough. The new king keeps raising the taxes. Things are so bad in this kingdom now, nobody can afford to buy anything. BAKER's WIFE

As you say, dear. BAKER

BAKER's WIFE

I just came back from the tailor's shop. It's dreadful. The tailors are incompetent. The shop has an awful smell, and the place is infested with flies and mice. Are you listening?

BAKER

Of course, dear.

BAKER's WIFE

The master tailor makes the little tailor take care of them. He just killed seven mice in one blow.

BAKER

Yes dear.

BAKER's WIFE

Its the only thing he's good for. He's a terrible tailor.

BAKER

If you say so, dear

BAKER'S WIFE

Did I tell you the tailor tried to rob me? They're both crooks.

BAKER

I'm sorry, dear.

BAKER's WIFE

Are you even listening to me?

BAKER

Of course dear.

BAKER's WIFE

Hmph....Well, make sure you talk to the customers....

BAKER

Yes, dear.

*(BAKER's WIFE exits to the back of the bakery where she lives with the Baker.
A very nervous LADY IN WAITING enters)*

LADY IN WAITING

What a quaint, little, safe shop.

BAKER

Yes, dear....Oh, I mean...May I help you?

LADY IN WAITING

I thought I'd spend a day here in the country to calm my nerves. It's getting too dangerous near the palace. First there were wolves, then giants. Now a dragon is stirring again. I needed to get away from it all.

(Pause)

BAKER

Uh...Its no safer here.

LADY IN WAITING

Really?

BAKER

I heard the tailor shop was just robbed.

LADY IN WAITING

Robbed? Oh, dear. What happened?

BAKER

Seven crooks tried to rob it. Seven big men. The little tailor apprentice killed all of them in one blow.

LADY IN WAITING

Seven in one blow?

BAKER

Yes.

LADY IN WAITING

I thought it would be safe here.

BAKER

Would you like to buy some bread?

LADY IN WAITING

Its not safe anywhere.

(LADY IN WAITING leaves the bakery as BAKER shrugs. JESTER comes bounding on and taps the LADY IN WAITING on the shoulder. SHE jumps and shrieks.)

LADY IN WAITING

Don't scare me like that!

JESTER

There once was a lady in waiting
Whose fears were quite devastating
She jumped at each sound
Each rumor she found
And the jester found her fascinating.

LADY IN WAITING

Why are you following me? Is there more bad news?

JESTER

Calm your fears, now don't lose your head!
To here I just came to buy gingerbread.

LADY IN WAITING

What has happened to this kingdom? It used to be safe. The old king knew how to deal with problems. Now there are wolves and robbers and dragons. Even the small villages aren't safe. The tailor shop here was attacked by seven giants.

JESTER

Now why would the giants steal from that shop?
Do they make jumbo pants that are tip-top?

LADY IN WAITING

No, you buffoon! Don't you realize? The giants are going to kill us all! The tailor's apprentice killed all 7 giants in one blow. But I'm sure there are more of them out there. We're all going to die!

(LADY IN WAITING runs off screaming)

JESTER

Seven giants in one blow? It must be a lie.
That small little boy could barely hurt a fly.
But could there be more to him than I see
Could the solution to all of our problems be he?
I will bring him to court, that's what I'll do
We'll test his courage and his intelligence, too.

(JESTER scampers off)

SCENE 3: The King's Throne

(KING is addressing the commoners)

KING

So have no fear, little peasants. I am a strong, fearless king. Since I took over for my father 5 years ago, our kingdom has faced many problems, but we will meet these troubles and conquer them! I assure you I will not rest, until this kingdom is safe! Now return to your homes and sleep in peace knowing that I am in charge.

*(CROWD roars and KING enters his private throne room away from the crowd
HE is immediately nervous)*

KING

Oh, did you see the look on the peasants? They hate me! As soon as they find a strong leader, I know they'll storm the castle to overthrow me. *(taking out his escape plans)* Now if they attack from the north, I can try to escape through the secret passageway in the basement. If they storm the castle from the south, I could only use the escape route from the library. But if they attack from the north and south, I'd be trapped.

*(JESTER comes in. KING screams in fear and hides. Then he realizes its the
JESTER and he relaxes)*

Oh, its just you.

JESTER

Here is our inferior king
Who is bad at almost ev'rything
He can not fight beasts
Or even hold feasts,
But he's excellent at escaping!

KING

Ha! Ha! Tell me again why I don't behead you.

JESTER

How could a king feel threatened by a poor joker?
Unless, as a ruler, he were only mediocre?

KING

I don't feel up to your confusing poetry, today, Jester. Report to me your findings of the villagers. How do they feel? Are they getting ready to revolt? Is there any one who is a threat to storm the castle? Any strong leaders out there?

JESTER

The peasants are frightened, depressed and scared
But not one traitorous plan have they dared
But rumors abound of a brave tailor, though
Who killed seven giants in one single blow.

KING

Seven giants in one blow? Well, bring him here, Jester. I must meet this braggart and see what everyone is talking about.

JESTER

I'll bring him to you as quick as a wink
And you can judge if he's a hero or fink

(JESTER scatters out)

KING

A brave warrior? That's the last thing I need. I'll need to get rid of him, but without the people getting suspicious. I wonder how big he is. Seven feet tall? 4 feet wide?
(PRINCESS enters)

PRINCESS

Father, terrible news!

KING *(very scared)*

What?

PRINCESS

A unicorn is loose!

KING

Oh, I thought it was something scary.

PRINCESS

This is terrible. The unicorn is on a rampage. By the north woods.

KING

I was hunting in the north woods this morning, and I saw no rampaging unicorn.

PRINCESS

She just trampled the village farm. She destroyed the all the crops!

KING

Well, that's not my problem. The royal garden is still safe.

PRINCESS

We have to do something. The villagers are low on food as it is.

KING

I thought unicorns were supposed to be nice and kind.

PRINCESS

They are. Normally, they would never do harm to us. Something horrible must have happened. We have to do something about it. She may harm the villagers next.

KING

Don't worry, princess. There is a brave warrior in town. He killed seven giants in one blow. A brave man such as that would seem like the perfect candidate to solve this unicorn problem.

(JESTER enters with LITTLE TAILOR. The LITTLE TAILOR bows)

LITTLE TAILOR

Your majesties!

JESTER

I'm back with the tailor as you can see
He's a bit smaller than I thought he would be

KING

This is the man whom you spoke of? (*KING laughs*) Jester, you know how to tickle my funnybone.

LITTLE TAILOR

Your majesty?

KING

Sorry young tailor! So, I have heard of your incredible exploits.

LITTLE TAILOR

You mean my tailoring skills?

KING

No, your extermination efficiency. I heard that you killed seven in one blow. Is this true?

LITTLE TAILOR

Oh, why yes I did kill seven in one blow. It's not that impressive, though.

KING

Oh come now, if it is true, it is quite impressive.

LITTLE TAILOR

Oh it is true. I killed seven in one blow. It is the most I've killed in one wave of the arm, but I've killed that many before. It usually takes me two or three swings.

PRINCESS

Really?

JESTER

Don't be so modest, tell them your tale
How against those foes, you did not fail

LITTLE TAILOR

Well, OK. Last evening, I was working in the tailor shop, when I heard them come in. They can be really noisy and its hard to work when they are around.

PRINCESS

You weren't scared?

LITTLE TAILOR

Naw, I fight them all the time. The tailor shop seems to attract them.

KING

Really?

LITTLE TAILOR

I find the best technique is to just ignore them. Let them get comfortable, then they'll settle in and let their defenses down. Then when they least expect it, attack! I didn't mean to yell it out the window that night. I usually don't tell people about it.

PRINCESS

Why not?

LITTLE TAILOR

I didn't think anyone would care. But even I was excited that night. Seven in one blow. That was a first. Even for me.

KING

But you're so small.

LITTLE TAILOR

I am small. But I guess I never thought you had to be really big to stop them. Maybe being small makes it easier for me.

KING

Well, it is an impressive story. I'm not sure I believe you, though. You may have made it up.

LITTLE TAILOR

No, its the truth.

KING

Well you can prove it by helping me.

LITTLE TAILOR

Anything you say.

KING

There is a rampaging unicorn in the village farm. It is very dangerous. I want you to kill it.

PRINCESS and LITTLE TAILOR

What?

KING

I'll give you 2 bags of gold to kill the unicorn.

PRINCESS

You can't kill the unicorn. It is a magical creature. My grandfather declared that anyone who harms a unicorn will be locked away in the dungeon.

KING

Well, I am the king now and I decree that this unicorn is a menace to the kingdom and needs to be killed.

PRINCESS

No! We must find out why it is so angry and upset!

KING

I have made up my mind. The unicorn must be killed!

PRINCESS

You are a terrible king!
(PRINCESS runs out)

KING

Children. What do they know about ruling a kingdom? So, take this royal bow and arrow and be off with you, little tailor. Go kill the unicorn.

LITTLE TAILOR

I couldn't.

KING

Of course you can, unless you've been lying.

LITTLE TAILOR

No, sir, I don't lie.

KING

Well if you can kill seven giants in one blow, then you can capture one unicorn.

LITTLE TAILOR

Seven giants? SEVEN GIANTS!

KING

Bring me back the unicorn horn, or never show your face in my kingdom again!

(JESTER drags out the scared, dumbstruck LITTLE TAILOR)

Now that little runt will either run away scared or be killed by that mad unicorn. Either way, I won't have to deal with him again.