

# BEWARE THE JABBERWOCK!

Lewis Carroll's Heroic Nonsense Poem  
*AS A PLAY*



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# Scene One



## ***Enter Actors***

TUM TUM TREE, TULGEY TREES, SLITHY TOVES,  
BOROGROVES, MOME RATHS

### ***Freeze Frame***

Actors create a still life scene of a moment in the Tulgey Woods. Use three levels: TUM TUM TREE stands or kneels on a chair or stool, TULGEY TREES stand on the floor, MOMERATHS, SLITHY TOVES, BOROGROVES are poised to move around on the forest floor.



### ***Action***

TULGEY TREES sway, creatures bound around, stopping to play with each other, digging at roots of trees, reaching up to branches for fruit, perhaps shaking the tree for fruit to fall, munching, lapping water from a designated stream.

## ***CHORUS***

TWAS BRILLIG AND THE SLITHY TOVES

DID GYRE AND GIMBLE IN THE WABE,

ALL MIMSY WERE THE BOROGROVES

AND THE MOMERATHS OUTGRABE.



Characters continue in their peaceful scene.....





## **Enter JABBERWOCKS**

*Suddenly*

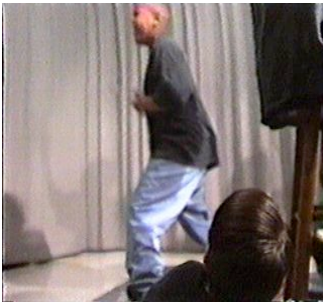
The JABBERWOCKS growl, showing their teeth and claws, chasing the little animals who run and hide, screeching in terror. A variation is to place stuffed animals among the TULGEY TREES and, when the JABBERWOCKS attack, they victimize the stuffed animals by biting them, stepping on them, crushing them, throwing them around, "eating" them, etc. This is where pure evil can be expressed. Another variation is to have one of the JABBERWOCKS stalk into the audience and threaten several members.



## **Music of the Royal Procession**

*Play regal, stately, courtly music*

When the JABBERWOCKS hear the Music of the Royal Procession, they know the KING and QUEEN and their WARRIORS are coming. The JABBERWOCKS turn to each other in panic, rush off in different directions, come together, crash into each other, all for comic effect as the Tulgey Woods creatures delight at their distress.



## **Exit Jabberwocks in panic**

The little creatures and TULGEY TREES cheer.

## **Exit All except TUM TUM TREE**



# Scene Two

## **Enter Actors**

KING, QUEEN, OLD PRIME MINISTER,  
YOUNG WARRIOR, SWORD BEARER,  
Procession Characters as the Music of  
"The Royal Procession" continues

## **Increase Music Volume as Procession nears.**

The Royal Procession moves across stage with great dignity and seriousness in step to the regal music. Behind the KING and QUEEN is the OLD PRIME MINISTER, who uses a walking stick. Behind the OLD PRIME MINISTER is the YOUNG WARRIOR, upright, arms folded, resolute. The other Procession Characters are behind. Decide their order and what their gestures are as they move forward.

## **Stop Music**

The Royal Procession comes to a halt. The SWORD BEARER and YOUNG WARRIOR step out from behind and move to the head of the line. The SWORD BEARER bows, holding up the vorpal sword. The YOUNG WARRIOR takes the sword then makes some ceremonial moves and cuts into the air with it, all to the pride and delight of the Procession characters, especially the KING and QUEEN. The YOUNG WARRIOR now holds the sword with a courageous pose and listens to the Elders.

## **KING AND QUEEN** **BEWARE THE JABBERWOCK, MY SON**

### **KING** **THE JAWS THAT BITE**

### **QUEEN** **THE CLAWS THAT CATCH**

### **OLD PRIME MINISTER**

pushes aside KING and QUEEN, points finger at YOUNG WARRIOR

### **BEWARE THE JUBJUB BIRD**

### **Whole Procession**

*also pointing at WARRIOR*

### **AND SHUN THE FRUMIOUS BANDERSNATCH!**

### **Play Music, Exit Actors**

*Last GUARD puts down basket, then exits.*





# Scene Three

## **CHORUS**

HE TOOK HIS VORPAL SWORD IN HAND.  
LONG TIME THE MANAXOME FOE HE SOUGHT.  
SO RESTED HE BY THE TUM TUM TREE,  
AND STOOD A WHILE IN THOUGHT.



## **YOUNG WARRIOR**

Having sword in hand, he picks up the basket and goes forth deeper into the Tulgey Woods. He rests by the TUM TUM TREE, who reacts actively with face and limbs to all that goes on. Warrior's facial expressions progress from thinking, to deep thoughtfulness, to fear, to resolve, then to courage.



## **Chorus**

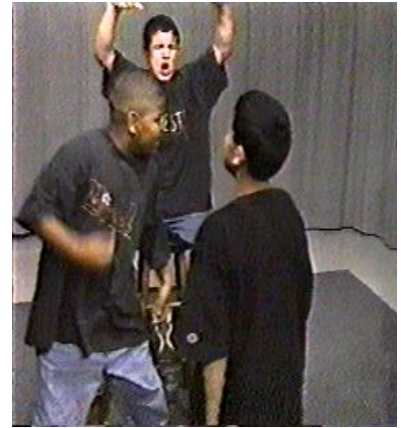
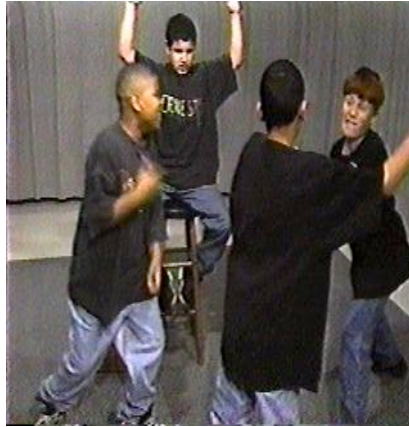
AND, AS IN UFFISH THOUGHT HE STOOD,  
THE JABBERWOCKS, WITH EYES OF FLAME,  
CAME WHIFFLING THROUGH THE TULGEY WOOD  
AND BURBLED AS THEY CAME!

## **YOUNG WARRIOR**

As he steels himself for battle, summoning up his courage from within, the YOUNG WARRIOR is surprised by the JABBERWOCKS, who have snuck up from behind, initiating a pre-emptive strike.

At the last possible moment, the YOUNG WARRIOR turns around just as the creatures' claws are about to descend. He foils their sneak attack!





### **CHORUS**

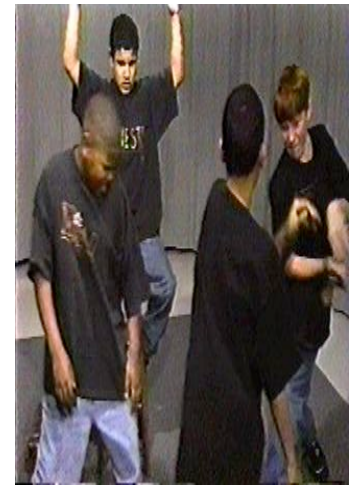
ONE TWO, ONE TWO AND THROUGH  
AND THROUGH THE VORPAL BLADE  
WENT SNICKER-SNACK!

HE LEFT IT DEAD, AND WITH ITS HEAD,  
HE WENT GALUMPHING BACK.

### **YOUNG WARRIOR**

slays and acts out the decapitation of the ferocious JABBERWOCKS, putting their heads in the basket.

After the deed is done and the trophies collected, he is filled with relief and joy.



### **Exit** **YOUNG WARRIOR** *galumphing*

*(Actor determines appropriate galumphing steps.)*



### **Exit** **TUM TUM TREE**





# Scene Four



***Play Music***  
*"The Royal Procession"*

## ***Enter Procession***

Procession Characters are all are beaming with pride. As music plays, YOUNG WARRIOR gives basket of heads to KING, who looks into the basket, delighted. KING gives basket to QUEEN who looks in politely, but with a sense of revulsion. She gives it back to the YOUNG WARRIOR who turns it over to a GUARD.



***Stop Music***

***KING***  
**AND HAST THOU SLAIN**  
**THE JABBERWOCK?**

***QUEEN***  
**COME TO MY ARMS**  
**MY BEAMISH BOY.**

***All***  
**OH FRABJOUS DAY!**

***KING AND OLD PRIME MINISTER***  
**CALLOO CALAY!**

***GUARD***  
**THEY CHORTLED**  
**IN THEIR JOY.**



# Scene Five / Grand Finale



**Entire Cast, including TECKIE**  
spreads out into two or three rows, facing audience

**Play Music**  
*Royal Procession*

**All**

Move in place to the music in character,  
with very concentrated focus.

**Stop Music**

All characters stop, freeze in place

**All**

TWAS BRILLIG AND THE SLITHY TOVES  
DID GYRE AND GIMBLE IN THE WABE.  
ALL MIMSY WERE THE BOROGROVES

*Pause*

AND THE MOMERATHS OUTGRABE.



**All Bow to Audience**

**Play Music**  
*"The Royal Procesion"*

**Exit All**



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# Job Descriptions

## Cast of Characters

**Tum Tum Tree-** The tallest tree in the Tulgey Wood, sort of a leader among the trees. Maintains a very serious attitude with straight, stiff limbs.

**Tulgey Trees-** Other trees of the Tulgey Wood. Their limbs are held more limply than Tum Tum Tree, but they have comic, expressive faces.

**Chorus-** Recites poem. The chorus can recite the poem live with the action, or can pre-record the reading and play it with the action.

**Slithy Toves, Borogoves, Momeraths-** Little creatures on the forest floor, sweet, innocent, vulnerable, walk on knees or on all fours.

**King, Queen-** Hold heads high, dignified, dutiful, somber.

**Young Warrior-** Brave, upright, confident yet anxious, listens to advice seriously, thoughtful, courageous, skillful sword-user.

**Sword Bearer-** Carries the Vorpall Sword bowing with awe and respect for it and for the Young Warrior. Steps out of line with Warrior to present the sword with ritualistic movements.

**Old Prime Minister-** Has been a trusted advisor to the family for generations. Bossy, even to the King and Queen. Like to points and lecture.

**Guards-** Always on the lookout for anything that might endanger the royal family. Strong, brave, loyal, serious, upright.

**Servants-** Holding out trays of food, tempted often to grab some food while no one is looking and gobble it up quickly.

**Ladies-in-Waiting-** Fan themselves, snobby, stretch necks, high noses, eyes looking down.

**Jabberwocks-** Stalk with striding steps, arms close in to chest like Tyrannosaurus rex. Show teeth. Must attack and then fall down.

**Prop Manager-** In charge of distributing and collecting all props. Must be responsible.

**Technician- (Tekie)** Play the Procession Music and, if needed, a pre-recorded Chorus.

# Beware the Jabberwock!

## Cast of Characters

*IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE*

Tum Tum Tree \_\_\_\_\_

Tulgey Trees \_\_\_\_\_

Chorus \_\_\_\_\_

Slithy Toves \_\_\_\_\_

Borogroves \_\_\_\_\_

Momeraths \_\_\_\_\_

King \_\_\_\_\_

Queen \_\_\_\_\_

Young Warrior \_\_\_\_\_

Sword Bearer \_\_\_\_\_

Old Prime Minister \_\_\_\_\_

Guards \_\_\_\_\_

Servants \_\_\_\_\_

Ladies in Waiting \_\_\_\_\_

Jabberwocks \_\_\_\_\_

Prop Manager \_\_\_\_\_

Technician \_\_\_\_\_