



Dear Parent,

We hope you have fun talking, sharing and doing the activities with your child. The suggestions were designed for kids from 3 to 10 years old. The talking points and activities are designed for children of different ages and maturity levels. Please use the age appropriate discussion suggestions as a starting point for dialogue with your child. TAKE TIME TO TALK can be used while driving, walking, bath time, bedtime chat or any time that singing a song, asking a question or sharing is appropriate. The conversation, sharing and activity when your child is 3 years old will be completely different when your child is 8-9 and 10 years old. We hope you use this guide as a window into your child's mind and heart. Listening to your child is a wonderful way to raise your child's self-esteem. We didn't include the reverse of the talking points however, it is important for you to talk about your thoughts, ideas and experiences for every talking point below. It's an opportunity to share some of your life and history with your child, as well as your feelings on various subjects. You are your child's first and best teacher! Have fun!

#### SYNOPSIS

"The Dragon Singer" is a play that explores the themes of:

- Cooperation
- Integrity
- Organization
- Courage
- Communication & negotiation
- Utilizing hidden talents
- Initiative Awareness & care of the environment

The story opens at a merry festival in the village of Back-of-Beyond. The crop of their famous razzl-plum-nectarberries is the best it has been in years. The harvest is just around the corner.

A dragon, Firebreath, lives in the Dark Forest next to the village but has not bothered the villagers in a long time. Since it has been so long since anyone has seen the dragon, Firebreath, the people are not certain if he is still alive.

A one-eyed Orc-giant named Blunderbore has been raiding other villages, but so far, Back-of-Beyond has been spared. The Orc-giant is an environmental nightmare. He tears out the crops, rips up the land, and pulls the branches off the trees. Orc-giants are afraid of one thing however: dragons.

Betty Bubblefroth sees that Blunderbore is traveling in their direction. The people must figure out how to stop him. Wanda Widepockets, the wealthiest person in the village, says that money will solve their problem. She hires soldiers to go and fight Blunderbore. Her plan fails.

Sally Sliderule, the smartest person in the village, says that brains will solve their problem. She designs a pit to be dug and filled with water. Blunderbore will surely fall in and drown. Her plan fails.

Ivan Ironfist, the strongest person in the village, says that strength will save them. He will throw a big piece of wood into the water, and roar like a dragon. Surprised from sleep, with water in his eyes, Blunderbore will think a dragon is attacking him and run away. But his plan fails too.

Crispin Costermonger, the humble village huckster, suggests several times that if the villagers construct a plan together and pool their talents they would be able to defeat the Orc giant. The villagers do not listen and decide to flee. Crispin begins to formulate a plan, she leaves for the Dark Forest to find the dragon to help them. She tells the other villagers that it is their responsibility to complete the plan.

Crispin goes to the Dark Forest. She's very frightened. To calm herself, she does the one thing that she enjoys the most, sing. Her song gives her courage. Firebreath stirs, angry to have been disturbed after so many years of sleeping. He hears Crispin's voice and is enthralled by the music.

Crispin sees Firebreath and is terrified. She cannot afford to hire soldiers to protect herself, she cannot think of anything brilliant to do, and she is not strong enough to throw pieces of wood at the dragon. She is only a huckster.

Firebreath comes closer. Crispin summons her courage and speaks. She asks the dragon to help her. She tells Firebreath of the plight of Back-of-Beyond and the goodness of the villagers. She tells him how Blunderbore is going to destroy everything.

The dragon tells Crispin that he admires her courage and enthusiasm and he loves her song. Crispin wishes that she had the dragon's strength. Firebreath wishes that he could sing like Crispin. The dragon tells Crispin that he is bored with life. He has all the

strength, gold, and wisdom that he could ever need. And yet, with all that, something has been missing. He had put his head down 5 years ago to try and figure out what it was when he fell asleep.

Crispin conceives a plan and whispers it to Firebreath. Firebreath agrees.

Crispin returns and tells the people that together they will save the village. She announces that she is The Dragon Singer. They all laugh at her, especially Braggadocio, the village tough guy.

Blunderbore enters the village. The people are frightened, but together, they come up with a plan to have the giant chase them and lead him to the dragon.

Crispin steps forward. Blunderbore laughs at her. She sings her huckster song. The rest of the villagers join in. When the dragon hears the singing, he approaches the giant, breathing fire and smoke. Blunderbore is frightened into submission. Firebreath tells him to stop destroying things and to use his talent for tearing up things to help the villagers.

The villagers have learned that, by combining their talents, they can achieve almost anything. They decide to build a concert hall in the village. Everyone agrees to help. Even Braggadocio has a part in the plan. He will be the music critic. The story ends with dancing and merriment.



**PLEASE NOTE: Adult! Please remember to interject your thoughts, feelings, ideas and additions to make this a conversation.:**

- Crispin learned some things when she went into the Dark Forest. What did she learn?
- Have you been afraid? What did you do?
- Crispin thinks because she is a huckster she's not important, but it's through her that the village is saved. Do you know people in history or today who because of courage, hard work and determination made things happen? The villagers assume that dragons hate people and won't help them. They stereotyped Firebreath. That means because Firebreath is a dragon and he is very large and breathes fire that he is fierce and frightening like other dragons that the villagers have heard about. Yet Firebreath helps them. So he doesn't fit the stereotype. He is different than they thought he would be. What are some stereotypes that people have about other people? How can these beliefs hurt us? How can you stop believing stereotypes?
- What made Crispin's plan different than other plans? How did the villagers take responsibility for Crispin's plan? Do you think the villagers will work together to build the concert hall? Will there be problems? What problems? How will they solve the problems?
- Braggadocio gives Crispin a hard time. How does she deal with him? What convinces him to stop bothering her? What does he learn?
- Different people try to stop Blunderbore from coming to Back-of-Beyond and hurting their village and trees. What are people doing in your community to try and stop destruction of our environment? Is it working? How do you know? What are people doing in the U.S. to try and save the nation's environment? Is it working? How do you know? What are you personally doing to make a difference with the environment? Is it working? How do you know? What more can you do than you are doing now? (Create a "Make-a-Difference Book": set environmental behavior goals and keep a weekly log.)
- A major theme of "The Dragon Singer" is the threat of environmental destruction. Can you think of places in the world today where there are actual threats or real destruction of the soil, water, trees, crops, animals, people or atmosphere? What is the cause of these threats or destruction? How did they start? What happens when this destruction occurs? Will they have any effect on you, your parents, your school or your community? Why or why not?

### ADDITIONAL TAKE TIME TO TALK DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

(The following questions may be best suited to age 6 and up listeners)

1. Wanda Widepockets has money, Sally Sliderule has brains, Ivan Ironfist has strength, and Crispin Costermonger has singing talent. Alone, they couldn't solve their problem with Blunderbore. When have you had to rely on other people's talents to accomplish something? Can you identify the talents of some of the people in your school that make the school a wonderful place to be? How about your home? What are the talents of the people in your home that make it a wonderful place to be? (Don't forget yourself!) How about sports teams, musicians, movie makers and other businesses that must rely on a rich variety of talents to accomplish things? Give examples of each of these. (ADULT: Talking about your own work in relation to the above discussion would give your child a view into your work life.)

2. Crispin Costermonger discovered something about herself when she went into the Dark Forest alone. What did she discover? Can you think of any books, short stories, or movies that you have seen where people had the determination and courage to stand apart from the crowd and follow their own beliefs? Who were these people? What happened to them? Have you ever had to face something alone? What did you do? (ADULT: Going to the library, seeking out and reading together stories about this kind of person is an activity that you can share with the child.) This could be the basis for an examination of presidents (Lincoln, Truman, Obama), world leaders (whomever you admire. Suggestions: Christ, Ghandi, King), national heroes (Whomever you admire. Suggestions: Harriet Tubman, Astronauts, Franklin Delano Roosevelt) and performers (Whomever you admire: Suggestions: Rev. Martin Luther King, Beyonce, Bruce Springsteen, Bonjovi).

3. As the play progresses, each of the characters begins to understand the others a little better, regardless of whether a character's plans worked or not. Even with the best of planning, have you ever had a good idea not work? What happened? How did you react? Like a good scientist, did you learn from the results? Is it all right if things do not turn out just the way you want them? Would things get boring if you succeeded in everything that you tried? You can explore the following:

- The Microwave - Percy L. Spencer.
- Slinky - Richard James.
- Play-Doh - Kutol Products.
- Super Glue - **Harry Coover**.
- Teflon - Roy Plunkett.
- Bakelite - Leo Baekeland.
- Pacemaker - Wilson Greatbatch.

(ADULT: Age appropriate examples from your own life)

4. Blunderbore goes from village to village, not thinking about what his actions are doing to others. Why do you think Blunderbore is like this? When Wanda Widepockets offers Blunderbore half of the strawberry-whipped, chocolate cream and tofu pie, Blunderbore reveals that no one had ever shared anything with him before. What might this tell you about Blunderbore's background? Does sharing and showing kindness to others make a difference, even to someone like Blunderbore? What do you think Blunderbore's life will be like now that he's learned to use his talents in a positive way?

5. Firebreath says that something was missing in his life? What was it? Since he had knowledge, money and strength, why was this missing thing so important? How important is it to have a balance in your life? Is life all sports? All studying? All TV and computer games? All playing and having fun? What is the balance that Firebreath was looking for and Crispin helped him to find? What is the balance that you should have in your life now? What happens if a life is too unbalanced?

6. Betty Bubblefroth is the person in the play who always seems to have the correct information. Where do you go to get correct information about homework, school rumors, local news and national news? How do you find out about the latest good books, the latest good music, movies and videos, and the latest fads? How do you find reliable information about someone or something? How do you know when to trust the information that you receive?

7. Describe how well you think the villagers will work together when they build the concert hall. Will there be any problems? What might they be? How would they get solved? Who would resolve them? (The students could draw the concert hall, complete with each villager's contribution.)

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