**CHARLES, LEADING PLAYER, NOBLES, PIPPIN**

LEADING PLAYER

The royal court of Charles the Great. Enter Charlemagne. *(CHARLEMAGNE enters on his throne unit)*

CHARLES

This part is to be portrayed by an actor of enormous power.

LEADING PLAYER

We join Charlemagne in the midst of his Royal Council. It’s been a long day.

*(As a NOBLE steps forward, CHARLES slumps down on the throne. Clearly he has been there a LONG time)*

NOBLE

… And that is why, sire, I humbly beseech you to reduce my levy of foot soldiers and cattle...

CHARLES

Denied. Next.

SECOND NOBLE

Oh, great leader, blessed by God, sent to us from Heaven to protect us from the Infidel…

CHARLES

Oh, not all that bullshit again! What is it?

SECOND NOBLE

Sire, due to a famine, my fields are barren. I ask you to –

CHARLES

Denied. Next.

*(A THIRD NOBLE steps forward, bows, but as he opens his mouth to speak …)*

THIRD NOBLE

Sire…

CHARLES

Denied.

THIRD NOBLE

But sire, I protest! That is unjust and tyrannical!

CHARLES

Take that man away and hang him! *(The THIRD NOBLE is dismissed)* Out! Out! Everybody out!

PIPPIN

Father. I know what I want to do now.

CHARLES

What? Oh, good. Good …

PIPPIN

I want to be a soldier.

CHARLES

What? Denied!

PIPPIN

Father, I’m your oldest son. That means I’ll be King one day. And fighting wars is an important part of

being King, isn’t it?

CHARLES

Fighting wars is the most important part of being King. After all, the Pope and I have dedicated ourselves

to spreading Christianity throughout the entire world, even if we have to kill every non-Christian to do it.

PIPPIN

Exactly. So, I want to join you in your campaign against the Visigoths.

CHARLES

Denied.

PIPPIN

But that’s not fair! You're taking Lewis.

CHARLES

Yes, well, your brother Lewis is an ideal warrior. He is fearless and stupid. You, on the other hand, are

educated.

PIPPIN

And for what? Father, you’re dedicated to something. I just want to be dedicated to something too, with

all my heart and soul. And whatever I do, I just want to do it as well as I possibly can. Otherwise my life

won’t have any meaning at all.

CHARLES

Oh, you want your life to have meaning.

PIPPIN

Yes, I do.

CHARLES

Well, that’s very ambitious of you, Pippin. Denied! Denied!

PIPPIN

Father, you created an entire kingdom out of nothing. And now I want my chance … My chance to fight

for my country… for my family … (*kneels*) And for my King.

*(CHARLES is taken aback, moved and impressed. )*

CHARLES

Get yourself a decent helmet and come along.

PIPPIN

Yes! I’m a soldier.

LEADING PLAYER *(as if indulging a child)*

Yes, you are.

PIPPIN

Me a warrior. Finally, a chance to be part of something important. A chance to use my sword…my

arm…and maybe even my blood…