Middle Grade audiobook scripts

30 practice scripts from VO Journey Academy. Free to record, free to use in your reel. Download the PDF to mark up in the booth, or print it straight from here.

The Door Behind the Vending Machine

Portal fantasy · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 1 minute

The vending machine outside the gym had eaten Priya's last dollar, so she kicked it. That was how she found the door.

It was small and green and exactly where a wall should have been.

"Do not open that," said Marcus.

"I'm not opening it. I'm looking at it."

"You're looking at it with your hand on the handle."

Priya turned the handle. Warm air rolled out, smelling of cinnamon and rain, and somewhere on the other side a bell was ringing.

"We have math in four minutes," Marcus said.

"So we have four minutes."

"Nobody goes through a mystery door and comes back in time for fractions!"

A voice spoke from the dark. It sounded tired and extremely polite.

"Excuse me. Are you the plumbers? Only we sent for plumbers two hundred years ago, and the moat is getting rather out of hand."

Priya looked at Marcus. Marcus looked at the ceiling.

"Fine," he said. "But I'm bringing my backpack."

My Brother Is Not a Science Project

Family comedy · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 1 minute

For the record, I never said I would sell my brother. I said I would display him.

The science fair was Friday, my volcano had collapsed into something that looked like soup, and Theo was six and would do anything for a fruit snack.

"Stand on the box," I told him.

"Why?"

"Because you're an exhibit."

"What's a zibbit?"

"It's a very important person who stands still."

He stood still for nearly four seconds, which was a personal best. I hung the sign around his neck. THE HUMAN SIX-YEAR-OLD: HOW MUCH NOISE CAN ONE MAKE?

Mom appeared in the doorway with a laundry basket and the face she uses for parking tickets.

"Josephine."

"It's research."

"He's a person."

"He's a loud person. I have a chart."

Theo raised his hand. "Mom, I'm a zibbit. I get nine fruit snacks."

"We agreed on five," I said.

"Nine," said Theo, and that was when I understood who was really running the experiment.

The Midnight Biscuit Club

Mystery club · Adult (25-40) · Neutral British · 1 minute

The Midnight Biscuit Club had three members, one torch, and a strict rule that nobody was allowed to say the word "spooky."

"It's a bit spooky," said Dev.

"Right," I said. "That's a biscuit you owe the tin."

We were crouched behind the bins at the back of Mr. Okafor's shop, because somebody had been stealing the newspapers every morning before he opened, and Mr. Okafor had offered a reward of one whole pound.

"What if it's a burglar?" whispered Lottie.

"Burglars don't nick the Tuesday paper."

"A burglar who likes crosswords, then."

Something rattled by the back step. Dev grabbed my sleeve. Lottie grabbed Dev. I pointed the torch, and my hand was only shaking a little.

Two yellow eyes. A bushy tail. And a newspaper, rolled up neat as anything, being dragged backwards under the hedge.

"It's a fox," I breathed.

"A fox who likes crosswords," said Lottie, and wrote it in the notebook.

Captain of the B Team

Sports · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Coach Ramirez read the A team list off her clipboard, and my name was not on it. I checked by listening very hard to the silence afterwards.

Then she said, "B team captain: Danny Osei."

The B team was eleven kids who had mostly been picked for showing up. Our goalkeeper was afraid of the ball. Our striker had once scored on us, twice, in the same game.

I found Coach by the equipment shed.

"I think there's been a mistake," I said.

"Nope."

"I'm not good enough for A, but I'm supposed to be in charge of B?"

She zipped the ball bag and looked at me for a while.

"Who stayed late Tuesday to help Wen with throw-ins?"

"That's not a soccer skill."

"Danny. That's the only soccer skill." She tossed me the armband. It was too big and it smelled like the shed. "The A team needs players. The B team needs somebody who thinks they're worth the trouble. Practice is Thursday. Bring oranges."

Cabin Nine Has a Ghost (Probably)

Summer camp, gentle spooky · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

On the first night at Camp Tamarack, a counselor named Biscuit told us Cabin Nine was haunted, and then she turned off the light and left, which I think is against the rules of being a counselor.

There were four of us. Nobody said anything for a long time.

"I'm not scared," said Jamal, from all the way inside his sleeping bag.

"Me neither," said Ezra. "Is anybody else's bunk creaking?"

"That's you. You're shaking."

"I'm cold."

"It's July."

Then we all heard it. Three slow knocks on the wall beside my head. Knock. Knock. Knock.

Nobody breathed. I counted to ten. I'd like to say I was being brave, but really I had just forgotten how to move my legs.

"Hello?" I whispered.

Knock.

"Are you... the ghost?"

A very long pause. And then a tiny voice came through the wall, shaky and thin.

"No. I'm Oliver. I'm in Cabin Eight. Are YOU the ghost?"

Jamal sat straight up. "We thought you were the ghost!"

"Biscuit said the ghost lives in Nine!"

"Well, she told us it knocks!"

We lay there in the dark, eight kids and one wall, working it out.

"So there's no ghost," Ezra said slowly.

"I don't think so," said the wall.

"Do you want to do one knock for goodnight?"

Knock.

We knocked back. I slept great. I never did find out who was knocking on the roof.

New Kid, Row Three

New-kid story · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

There are twenty-six desks in Room 12 and exactly one of them is empty, which means everybody knows where the new kid sits before I even get there.

I sit. I arrange my pencils like it's a very important job.

The girl beside me leans over. She has a bandage on her chin and a cat drawn on her hand.

"Do you like frogs?"

"I don't know," I say. "I never really met one."

She thinks about this.

"That's okay. I have four. You can meet them Saturday." She goes back to her drawing, like that's settled.

And it sort of is. I've been in this town for six days. This is the first time I've had a Saturday.

The Badger Declines

Talking-animal quest · Mature (55+) · Neutral British · 1 minute

Every quest needs a guide, and the mouse had been told, by three separate sparrows, that the badger was the finest guide in Hollow Wood. Nobody had mentioned that he was retired.

"No," said the badger, without opening the door.

"I haven't asked yet," said the mouse.

"You've got a map, a very small sword, and a look. I know what that adds up to. No."

"The river is rising, sir. By the new moon it will reach the burrows."

"Then the burrows should move."

"My grandmother is in the burrows. She is ninety seasons old and she will not move for anybody."

The door opened one inch. One black eye looked down a long nose.

"Stubborn, is she?"

"Dreadfully."

"Hm." The door opened another inch. "I knew a mouse like that once. Bit me on the ankle." He sighed, the deep sigh of someone reaching for his boots. "Well. Come in and wipe your feet. If we're saving the stubborn, we shall need sandwiches."

The Lunch Table at the Edge of Space

Science fiction · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 1 minute

School on Kepler Station is exactly like school on Earth, except the cafeteria has no gravity on Tuesdays and you have to chase your lunch.

I was halfway to catching my sandwich when the new kid floated past upside down, holding her tray very seriously.

"You have to let go of it," I said.

"Then it will leave."

"Yeah. That's Tuesday."

She let go. Her noodles drifted away in a slow, sad cloud. She had gray skin and four thumbs and she'd arrived on the supply ship that morning, and everyone had been staring so hard that nobody had said hello.

"On my world," she said, "food stays where you put it."

"Sounds boring."

"It was very boring." She watched a meatball orbit the light. "Is it rude here, to eat another person's lunch if it comes to you?"

"It's kind of the whole game."

A pudding cup bumped her elbow. She caught it, and for the first time all day, she smiled.

"I think," she said, "I will like Tuesdays."

A Stowaway on the Marigold

Historical adventure · Adult (30-45) · Neutral British · 90 seconds

The year was 1851, the ship was the Marigold, and Tom Ferris had been hiding in a barrel of dried peas for eleven hours when someone sat down on the lid.

Above him, a girl's voice said, "You may as well come out. You sneezed at four o'clock and again at six."

Tom said nothing. Peas, he reasoned, do not talk.

"I'm the captain's daughter. If I wished to tell, I'd have told. I've brought bread."

It was the bread that did it. He pushed up the lid and came out with peas down his collar.

She was about his age, with ink on her fingers and a telescope under her arm.

"Name?"

"Tom, miss."

"Running from something or to something?"

He thought about the workhouse, and about his brother, who had gone to the gold fields and written one letter.

"To," he said.

"Good. Running from is no use at sea. There's nowhere to go." She handed him the bread. "I'm Harriet. Can you climb?"

"Like a cat."

"Can you read?"

"...Like a cat."

Her mouth twitched. "Then here is my offer. You'll teach me the rigging, which my father says is no place for a girl. I'll teach you your letters, so you can read what your brother wrote. And neither of us shall tell."

Tom looked at her hand, held out in the lantern light. It was the first bargain anyone had ever offered him that he could afford.

He shook it.

Hall Monitor Log, Day One

Funny diary · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

Monday. I have been hall monitor for four hours and I would like it written down that I did not ask for this power.

So far I have stopped two runners, one skipper, and a second grader who claimed to be "walking fast for medical reasons."

I gave out zero tickets. I have the tickets. They're pink. I just keep picturing someone's face when they get one, and then I say "please slow down" in a voice like a sad librarian.

Mr. Abbott says a good monitor is firm but fair.

I am fair but squishy.

Tomorrow I'll be tougher. Tomorrow I'm bringing a whistle. I will probably not blow it, but they won't know that.

The Lighthouse Keeps Its Own Hours

Gentle spooky · Adult (30-45) · Scottish (light) · 1 minute

My grandmother's lighthouse had not worked since before I was born. So when the lamp came on at midnight, all by itself, I did the sensible thing and went to wake her.

She was already up, in her dressing gown, putting the kettle on.

"Gran. The light's on."

"Aye, it does that."

"Nobody's up there!"

"Well, not nobody." She set out two cups, then a third. "Your great-grandfather kept that lamp for forty years. He never missed a night. I don't suppose he sees why he should start now."

I looked at the third cup. I looked at the stairs.

"Is he... is it scary?"

"Old Fergus? He was scared of geese." She poured the tea. "He only lights it when there's fog coming, pet. He's looking after the boats. Some folk just can't leave a job half done."

Out the window the beam swung slow across the water, steady as breathing.

"Take him his tea, then," Gran said. "Leave it on the top step. And mind you say thank you."

Things I Did Not Tell My Mother

Funny diary · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 30 seconds

Things I did not tell my mother today. One: the dog can open the fridge now. Two: I taught him. Three: it was for science, and also for cheese.

Four: there is no more cheese.

Five: the thing she is about to step in used to be the butter.

I'm telling you, diary, because you can keep a secret, and because in about nine seconds I'm going to need somebody on my side.

The Great Goat Escape

Adventure, farm comedy · Adult (25-40) · Southern US (light) · 1 minute

There were supposed to be nine goats in the pen. I counted eight, and then seven, which is when I figured out the goats were not the ones being counted. I was.

"Lupe!" I yelled. "They're leaving in order!"

My cousin came around the barn with a bucket. "What do you mean, in order?"

"Smallest to biggest. Like a fire drill."

The gate was shut. The latch was down. And one by one the goats were strolling to the back corner, ducking behind the water trough, and not coming out again.

"There's a hole," said Lupe.

"There's a tunnel. Goats can't dig tunnels."

"Tell them that."

The last one was Big Reggie, who was the size of a sofa. He looked at the gap. He looked back at us, chewing.

"Don't you do it," I said.

He did it. He got stuck halfway, with his back end in our yard and his front end in Mrs. Dalton's prize tomatoes.

"You take the front," Lupe said. "I'm not explaining this to Grandpa."

Robot Needs a Permission Slip

Science fiction, comedy · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Unit 7 had been built to explore the ocean floor, so nobody could explain what it was doing in the back row of Ms. Paredes's fifth-grade class with its hand up.

"Yes... Unit 7?"

"QUERY. Will the field trip to the aquarium include the octopus?"

"It will."

"THEN I WISH TO ATTEND."

Ms. Paredes rubbed her forehead. "You need a signed permission slip. From a parent or guardian."

The robot's eye-lights flickered. "I do not have a parent. I have a manufacturer."

"Then from them."

"They are a factory. A factory cannot hold a pen."

Beside it, Nora Kim leaned over and whispered, "My dad signs anything if you ask during the game."

"That would be dishonest," the robot whispered back, at the volume of a lawn mower.

"It's not dishonest if he adopts you first."

Unit 7 was quiet for almost a full second, which for Unit 7 was a long think.

"Ms. Paredes," it announced. "I will return tomorrow with a slip, a guardian, and possibly a new last name."

The Map in the Library Book

Adventure · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

The map fell out of a library book nobody had borrowed since 1974. Ines knew that because the card in the back said so, and because the book was called A Complete Guide to Drainage.

She unfolded it on the floor between the shelves.

"That's our town," said Felix, pointing. "That's the school. That's the pond."

"And that's an X."

"It's probably a drain."

"Felix. Nobody draws a skull next to a drain."

He looked closer. There it was, small and grinning, in faded red ink. Underneath, someone had written five words. Not until the pond freezes.

It was the ninth of December. Outside the library window, it had just begun to snow.

Last Pick

Sports · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 30 seconds

I am always picked last. I'd like to say it doesn't bother me, but I've had a lot of time to stand here and think about it.

Today it's down to me and a kid with a cast on his arm.

They pick the cast.

So I walk out to left field, where nothing ever happens. I punch my glove. And I decide that today, just this once, something is going to happen in left field.

The Dragon Who Failed Fire

Fantasy, school · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 1 minute

Ember was the only dragon at Cinderpeak Academy who had ever failed Fire, and she had now failed it three times.

"Again," said Master Scorch.

She breathed in. She thought hot thoughts. She breathed out, and a small wet cloud drifted across the cave and rained on his clipboard.

The class snickered. Master Scorch shook his notes dry.

"Stay behind, please."

When the others had gone, he lowered his great gray head until it was level with hers. Up close, he looked less angry than tired.

"Tell me what happens. Inside."

"I don't know, sir. It comes out wrong."

"It comes out water."

"Yes, sir. Sorry, sir."

"Ember." He nodded toward the valley, where the summer forest lay brown and brittle for a hundred miles. "Every dragon in this mountain can start a fire. Do you know how many of us can put one out?"

She had not thought of that.

"None," he said. "Until, apparently, Tuesday. I'm not failing you. I'm moving you to a class of one."

Operation Grandma's Birthday

Family, sibling comedy · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 1 minute

The plan was simple. Bake a cake, hide the cake, surprise Grandma. We had forty minutes and three people, and one of the three was Benji.

"I want to crack the eggs," said Benji.

"You can stir," said my sister Camille.

"Stirring is a baby job."

"You're five."

"I'm five and a HALF."

I gave him one egg. One. He held it in both hands like a baby bird, tapped it on the bowl so gently that nothing happened, and then tapped it so hard that everything did.

"There's shell in it," Camille said.

"That's crunch," said Benji.

"Cakes don't have crunch."

"Mine do."

The front door opened. We froze. Grandma's voice floated down the hall, cheerful and much too early. "Hello? Why does it smell like eggs?"

Camille looked at me. I looked at the bowl. Benji, who had never frozen in his life, ran straight out of the kitchen with yolk on his elbows, shouting, "DON'T COME IN, IT'S NOT A CAKE!"

The Tide Pool Detectives

Mystery club · Adult (25-40) · Australian · 1 minute

Somebody has been building things in the tide pools at Wattle Cove, and it is not the tide.

I show Kirra the first one. A ring of white shells, set out in a perfect circle around a single blue stone.

"Crabs?" she says.

"Crabs don't do circles."

"You don't know every crab."

Fair. But there's a second ring ten steps on, and a third, and they lead in a line round the point to where the rocks get slippery and Mum says we're not to go.

Kirra's little brother, Jasper, has followed us again. He's seven. He is holding a bucket and looking at his feet.

"Jasper," I say, "do you know anything about this?"

"No."

"What's in the bucket?"

"Nothing."

Kirra tips it. White shells. One blue stone.

"They're for the octopus," Jasper says, very fast. "She's got no garden. Everyone else

down there has a garden." He looks up. "Are you going to arrest me?"

I close the notebook. "Depends. Can we meet her?"

Rain Delay

Sports, friendship · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

It was the last game of the season, we were losing by six, and then the sky did us the biggest favor of the year and opened up.

We sat in the dugout watching the infield turn to chocolate milk.

"If they call it," said Mateo, "do we still lose?"

"Yeah."

"Oh." He spat a sunflower seed into the rain. "I thought maybe it'd be a tie."

"We haven't tied anybody all year."

"I know. That's why I was excited."

I started laughing and couldn't stop. Then he was laughing too. We lost fourteen games that summer and won none. I'd sign up again tomorrow.

The Night the Power Went Out

Family · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 1 minute

The power went out at 7:42, right in the middle of my show, and my dad said the four most dangerous words in our house. "Let's play a game."

"The tablets still have battery," said my sister Rosa.

"The tablets are going in the drawer."

"Dad!"

"In the drawer."

He found one candle, a flashlight shaped like a duck, and a board game missing half its pieces. We used whatever we could find. Rosa was a button. I was a paper clip. Dad was a grape, until he ate himself by accident and had to start over.

"That's cheating," Rosa said.

"That's a snack."

Somewhere around the second hour I noticed something strange. Nobody had looked at a clock. Rosa was laughing with her whole face, the way she used to before she turned thirteen.

Then the lights slammed back on. The fridge hummed. My show came back, loud, in the other room.

Nobody moved.

"One more round?" said Dad.

Rosa reached over and switched off the lamp.

Letters From Camp Wobbly Pine

Summer camp, letters · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

Dear Mom and Dad. Camp is fine. Please do not believe anything in the letter from the camp director, which you may get before this one.

The canoe was already sinking a little when I got in it.

The food is good if you like beige. My counselor is called Moose and he can burp the alphabet up to Q. I have a friend named Tobias who has also never been away from home, so we are being homesick together, which works surprisingly well.

I only cried once, and it was at a campfire song, so it doesn't count.

Send socks. Not because I lost mine. Just send socks.

Love, Gus.

The Fox Who Kept the Gate

Talking-animal quest · Adult (40–55) · Neutral British · 90 seconds

At the end of the old stone road there was a gate, and at the gate there sat a fox, and nobody passed without answering her question.

The three travelers stopped. There was a hedgehog with a walking stick, a young rabbit carrying far too much luggage, and a crow who had opinions.

"One question," said the fox. Her voice was soft as snowfall. "Answer true, and the gate opens. Answer false, and you may go home and try again in a year."

"A riddle!" said the crow. "I'm excellent at riddles."

"It is not a riddle."

"Is it sums?" whispered the rabbit. "I'm only up to my sixes."

"It is not sums." The fox looked at each of them in turn. "The question is this. Why do you want to go through?"

"To find the Silver Spring," said the hedgehog stoutly. "To bring back water for the wood."

"That is what you are going to do. I asked why."

Nobody spoke. The rabbit set down her bags, one by one, and when she finally answered, it was almost too quiet to hear.

"Because everyone at home says I'm too little. And I'm tired of them being right."

The crow stared. The hedgehog cleared his throat and looked at his feet.

The fox stood, stretched, and nudged the gate with her nose. It swung open without a sound.

"That," she said, "is the first true thing anyone has told me all year. Mind the nettles."

Spelling Bee, Round Six

School story · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 1 minute

There are four of us left on the stage, and one of us is going to throw up. I'm fairly sure it's me.

"Number nineteen," says the judge. "Your word is 'rhythm.'"

Rhythm. Of course it's rhythm. A word with no real vowels, invented by somebody who hated children.

"May I have the definition?"

"A regular, repeated pattern of sound or movement."

"May I have it in a sentence?"

"The drummer kept a steady rhythm."

I am out of questions. Somewhere in row five, my grandfather is holding up both thumbs. He practiced with me every night for a month, and he can't spell either, so we mostly just laughed.

R. I know it starts with R.

"R," I say. "H."

The judge's pencil stops.

"Y. T. H." My heart is doing a rhythm of its own. "M?"

A pause that lasts about a year.

"That is correct."

I don't hear the clapping. I just see two thumbs, way up, shaking.

The Clock That Ran Backwards

Historical adventure · Mature (55+) · Neutral British · 1 minute

On her first morning in the clockmaker's shop, Agnes was given a broom, a stool, and one rule. She was never, ever to wind the tall clock in the corner.

Naturally, by Thursday, she had to know why.

"Because it runs backwards," said old Mr. Penhallow.

"Clocks can't run backwards, sir."

"That one does. Made it myself in 1790 and got it wrong." He blew dust from a gear. "It was meant to be my masterpiece. It loses a minute where it should keep one."

"Then why keep it?"

He set down his tweezers. He was quiet for so long that she thought she had been rude.

"Because the fellow who made that mistake was nineteen and thought he knew everything. I like to have him where I can see him." He peered at her over his spectacles. "You'll make worse, girl. I hope you do. Nobody ever learned a thing from a clock that worked. Now. Fetch the small file, and I'll show you where I went wrong."

What the Scarecrow Saw

Gentle spooky · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 30 seconds

The scarecrow in the Hadleys' field had not moved in thirty years. That was the job, and he was good at it.

But on the last night of October, when the moon came up round and orange, he turned his head. Just a little. Just enough to watch the children go by in their costumes.

One of them waved.

He had been waiting thirty years for that. He waved back.

Mr. Zib Takes Attendance

Science fiction, school comedy · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Our substitute teacher wrote his name on the board upside down, and that was the most normal thing he did all day.

"Good morning, small humans. I am Mr. Zib. I am a regular Earth teacher from the regular Earth."

Kayla's hand went up. "Which part of Earth?"

"The middle."

"Why is your tie on your head?"

"It is the fashion. In the middle."

He took attendance by sniffing each of us. He asked what a Wednesday was for. When the fire alarm rang for a drill, he dropped to the floor, covered his head, and yelled, "They have found me!"

We all looked at each other. Then Omar, who never talks, stood up.

"Mr. Zib. It's just a drill. You line up and walk outside."

"And then?"

"And then you come back in."

"Nobody is taken away?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Zib got up slowly. He straightened his head-tie. His eyes had gone a bit shiny, all six of them.

"Small human Omar," he said. "You may line up first."

The Crush Problem

School story, first crush · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

I do not have a crush on Elliot Park. I just happen to know where he sits at lunch, what's in his sandwich, and that he's left-handed.

"That's a crush," says Bea.

"That's observation."

"You drew his name in bubble letters."

"I draw everything in bubble letters."

"You shaded them."

I have no answer for the shading.

Across the cafeteria, Elliot drops his whole tray, looks around to see who noticed, and catches me looking. He does a little bow. I laugh so hard milk comes out of my nose.

"Smooth," says Bea, handing me a napkin.

"Do you think he saw?"

"The entire fifth grade saw. Honestly? I think it helped."

The Longest Portage

Adventure, outdoors · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

My dad says a portage is when you carry the canoe instead of the canoe carrying you, and that it builds character. By the second mile, I had enough character. I wanted to trade some of it for a sandwich.

"How much farther?" I asked.

"Not far."

"You said that an hour ago."

"It was true an hour ago, too."

The canoe was upside down on his shoulders, so all I could see of him was legs. I had the paddles, the tent, and my little sister's backpack, because Mina had sat down on a log and announced that she lived there now.

"Mina, come on."

"I'm a log person. Bring me food sometimes."

"There are bears."

"Then I'm a bear person."

Dad set the canoe down. I thought he was going to give the speech about not quitting. Instead he sat on the log next to her and took off his hat.

"Can I tell you two something?" he said. "I took a wrong turn about forty minutes back. I've been hoping the lake would just show up."

"You're lost?"

"I'm a little lost."

"Dads don't get lost."

"Dads get lost all the time. We just walk faster so nobody notices." He pulled out the map and held it between us. "I could use some help."

Mina took one corner. I took the other. It was the first time he'd ever asked, and I remember thinking the pack felt lighter after that, even though nothing in it had changed.

The Smallest Knight in Brambledown

Fantasy, comedy · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 30 seconds

Sir Wren was the smallest knight in Brambledown. Her helmet came down over her nose, and her sword was, to be honest, a butter knife.

"You cannot fight a giant with that," said the queen.

"No, Your Majesty," said Sir Wren. "But I can butter his toast. And in my experience, nobody stays angry through breakfast."

The queen thought it over. Then she sent for the jam.

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