



2002

### The Thwarting of Baron Bolligrew

Elizabeth Moss

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Bolt, Robert. *The Thwarting of Baron Bolligrew*. Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1966. ISBN 435234006. Contact publisher regarding price. 93 pp.

Reviewer: Elizabeth Moss

Reading Level: Primary; Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fairy tale plays; Plays; Adventure plays; Fantasy plays

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Knights and knighthood--Juvenile drama; Dragons--Juvenile drama;

Theme: Inner goodness overcomes all

Production Requirements: Simple sets, moderate to elaborate costumes

Acts: 2

Run Time: 90 min.

Characters: 15+ male

Cast: Adults

Time Period: Long ago

The Duke needs to send a knight to the North to restore justice and order, rebuild a church, and destroy an evil knight. Oblong Fitz Oblong is the kind-hearted knight who is chosen, and soon sets off on his mission. Oblong quickly encounters the Baron in the North, Bolligrew (accompanied by his squire, Blackheart), who is determined to prevent Oblong from accomplishing his mission. While trying to complete his tasks, Oblong makes friends with Mike Magpie and Obadiah the egg-painter. Meanwhile Bolligrew hires a magician, who casts a spell on Oblong. Nevertheless, all is righted and bad hearts turn good in the end.

This is a marvelous play. Robert Bolt, best known for his adult drama, *A Man for All Seasons*, is able to craft this children's play with much skill. This play is, above all, a moral play. Oblong is nearly a saint in his actions. He never does anything that could be considered wicked until his actions come under the control of the evil magician. Oblong has a high moral code, which he lives by continually. It is by the end of the play that he is able to share his goodness with the Baron and others to help them reform their evil ways. The dialogue in this play is astounding and the intelligence behind the lines is evident. The flow of speech is smooth and delightful. The characters themselves are also fascinating and engaging throughout the play. The action is well set up and complements both the characters and dialogue. This is a wonderfully well-written play and can be enjoyed by countless audiences of both children and adults.