

Prologue \hbar
– or –
Quantum Mechanics Made Easy

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to Quantum Theater. (*The lights come up on an ornate theater. Gold proscenium arch with \hbar at the top*)

I would like to take you backstage to meet the actors. But there is no backstage and there are no actors. (*The corner of the stage is peeled back showing nothing but emptiness!*) In fact, our players do not exist except when you see them.

Their roles, however, are eternal. The hero. (*Appears downstage, audience right. Poses, vain*) The heroine. (*Appears beside him. Poses. Vain, coy.*) The king. (*Appears beside her. Poses. Vain*) The villain. (*Appears beside him. Twirls moustache in a self-satisfied way. We see all four lined up.*)

We'd like to believe that the heroine is beautiful and chaste, that the hero is ardent and true, that the king is powerful and wise. (*Each each gestures in turn. Villian gives a dirty look at having been left out*) But if you study the heroine's beauty too closely (*clothes drain away*), you will lose all knowledge of her chastity (*shocked naked cover-up*), and if you demand the king give absolute show of his strength (*pushes the button*), he's bound to do something really dumb (*nuclear crud rains down*).

Nor is there any script for tonight's show. (*Actors look at each other, puzzled.*)

We can, however, say with complete confidence that there is a 16% chance the hero and the heroine live happily ever after. (*Arms linked, she smiles up at him.*) There is an 8% chance that the dragon (*roars and spews fire*) swallows the hero. (*Dragon swallows and gives a happy belch.*) There is a 14% chance that the villain (*twirls moustache*) usurps the throne (*slides onto throne ass first and lounges*), a 7% chance that the heroine is a lesbian, (*suddenly disenchanted with "Brucie", she unhooks and joins up with a passing woman*) and a 5% chance that our characters will all appear across town at Barney's Beanery! (*All are seated happily around a big round table. At the left, king and villian are earnestly discussing business. At right, the princess has one arm around hero, one around her new lover. These two eye each other with a mixture of jealousy and interest. At center, dragon lifts his glass and toasts your good health. Drains mug. Idly pops a whole live chicken from bar bowl. Chicken squawks before dragon swallows.*)

And now, without further ado, tonight's show!

(*God appears on stage wearing robes, sandals, long hair an beard. Quantum waveform issuing from his head like a halo. Walks determinedly downstage, reaches into his robes and says*) "Sorry, Albert," (*and tosses a huge pair of dice. These tumble in mid-air, and the credits roll.*)