

Mini Opera, submitted for a competition held by English National Opera.

## Far, Far Away

*A young man enters, sits on a battered couch, puts on a headset and picks up a handset. At the other side of the stage, a young woman enters and sits at a desk, turns on her computer and puts on a headset.*

*Behind them, mist rises and a Chorus of witches, goblins, knights, elves and general medieval-style characters emerge.*

### Chorus

This is the world we made;  
This is the world we made.  
Where princes are noble, and dragons are slayed;  
This is the world we made.  
You live in the world of men;  
You live in the world of men.  
The same disappointments again and again,  
When you live in the world of men.

*A colourfully attired jester hops from the Chorus.*

### Jester

Join us won't you? Soon you'll see, another world awaits...

### Chorus

For a very small fee.

### Jester

Another world awaits,

### Chorus

Compatible with a Mac - or with a PC!

*Meanwhile the young man and young woman leave their seats, exit the stage and re-appear, Him dressed as a Knight and Her in fine, flowing clothing. They rush toward each other and embrace.*

### Jester

It's not just a videogame,  
It's a portal to another place,  
Create your own character, name and face...

### Chorus

If you've got the time, then we've got the space!

*At that moment, a slightly over-weight chorus member in medieval attire lumbers in. He is eating a gigantic packet of cheese puffs and drinking a can of soda.*

Chorus slob

Hear ye one and all,  
The Princess is having a farewell feast, in the great hall.

*He belches, throws the crisp packet to the floor and exits. The man turns to the woman in surprise.*

Him

It's true then? You're really leaving?

Her

I said that I would, once the dragons were slain.

Him

But the game doesn't end, they'll come again!

Her

We talked about this; it's not about dragons,  
I had a life, before you came...

Him

Before you, I had nothing, you made me the hero I am,  
You can't say that it's all been a sham?

Her

It's the right thing to do...  
I have a life I've been ignoring,

Him/ Her

A life you find boring!

While I slay dragons with you...

Him

This is madness,  
I've known you for two years online,  
In reality we could be passing each other,  
Every day in the street...

Her

We've been through all this  
A hundred times,  
Out there, I have a real marriage,  
That's why we agreed we'd never meet.

*The chorus of elves and such re-emerge from the background, they set the stage for a magnificent feast.*

Chorus

Millions of people a day,  
Choose escapism this way,  
Log on, drop out, another life,  
Is just a mouse-click away...

*A goblin and a blacksmith step forward.*

Goblin

I never had time for football...

Blacksmith

I don't give a damn for TV...

Both

So consider your time spent on Facebook,  
Before you pass judgement on me.

*The party is underway.*

Chorus

There is magic here,  
There are precious things...  
We only have one rule:  
No all-powerful rings.

*The parting couple step away from the crowd.*

Him/ Her

If this wasn't real...

Then why does it feel...

Him and Her

This way?

Him/Her

Has it all been a game?

I don't even know his name...

Him and Her

Was it nothing but role-play?  
There is magic here,  
There are precious things...  
But there's a sadness to the joy it brings...

*A witch and an elf step out of the chorus.*

Witch

Have I spent too much time by myself?

Elf

I'm 36 years old and I'm pretending I'm an elf...

Him

Escape with me, I'll escape with you...

Her

What was true will always be true...

Him

I'm sorry.

Her

I'm sorry too.

*She turns and leaves.*

Chorus

Escape with me, I'll escape with you.  
As children, we learned, to pretend.

Him

No, this can't be the end...  
[The music stops, he shouts in desperation]  
My name is Jeremy Folder, I live in Anaheim!!

Chorus

This user has gone offline.

*Jeremy falls to his knees, a knight heartbroken. The young woman returns to her desk, turns off her computer, and leaves the room, turning off the light.*

Chorus

This is the world we made,  
And though it may seem clichéd,  
Everything that you're hoping, to find,  
It is all, it is all, in your mind.