*This quest was written as a contribution to the Beyond Skyrim mod with the aim to provide side quests for the player to explore and learn more about the world, and will be included in the final release.*

Colour Coding:

The colours purple, orange, and cornflower blue are used to denote the following:

* [Implementation notes] e.g. [end dialogue] [merge to ...] [start combat]
* [Voice Acting notes] e.g. [happy] [sad] [angry]
* Identical lines i.e. NPC responses that are repeated in a NPCs dialogue history.

Writer: Conor Molloy

Quest: The Quill Is Mightier Than The Sword

Summary:

The player meets Johick, a down on his luck playwright who has arrived at Solitude aiming to confront Selos, his childhood friend who stole all the credit for a play they co-wrote and is living a life of fame. Selos has refused to meet with Johick and so Johick has turned to the player to ask for help in getting the credit he rightfully deserves. It is up to the player which of the theatrical pair they will side with and how they end the squabble between them.

Dramatis Personae:

**Johick Scotar** - A broke playwright new in Solitude who wishes to receive the credit for co-writing *The Nord’s Last Voyage*. Johick is a young male Imperial with unkempt hair and scruffy clothing, demonstrating his poor background.

**Selos Scinestrake** - A pompous playwright enjoying his new found fame in Solitude. Selos is a young male Imperial with slicked back hair and colourful, fancy clothing - a means of demonstrating his wealth and talent.

**Mauhak Ugrh** - Selos’ bodyguard. Mauhak is an orc and has short hair and fancy but practical clothing - demonstrating his charges' wealth but ready to fight if need be.

Assets:

The Nord’s Last Voyage Manuscript

Letter to Selos

Selos’s Autograph

Key to Selos's room

**[PREAMBLE]**

The player can find Johick in the Winking Skeever sitting by himself and drinking.

1. [Slight drunken slur] Welcome, traveller, to the most pitiful corner of Skyrim, with myself being the most pitiable fool of all! Oh woe is me!
   1. **You seem upset - what has happened to you?**
      1. [Melancholy] My name is Johick and I hail from Cyrodiil. Oh, growing up there was idyllic, especially with my best friend Selos at my side.
      2. We both had big dreams, you see - we wanted to be the most famous playwrights these lands have ever seen.
      3. We spent years perfecting our writing and together we wrote a masterpiece - *The Nord’s Last Voyage*, but fate has spurned me and left me broken.
         1. **What happened?**
            1. We were due to travel to Skyrim together and write our fortune in the stars, but Selos had different ideas.
            2. [Seething with anger] The two-faced snake rode off in the middle of the night, taking the only copy of our manuscript and has since found fame and fortune off of it.
            3. I followed him here, only to seek what I am owed - my half of the credit, but he refuses to even see me…
            4. [Sudden curiosity] But now I get a better look at you, you seem like a heroic figure. Say, would you be interested in helping out a fate-cursed soul?

**I’ll help you right this wrong.**

[Elated] Oh, merciful heavens! I can see an end to my suffering!

I’ve written Selos a letter which I’m sure will move his heart into recognising my contributions, but I can’t get anywhere close to him.

He’s been granted a room in the Blue Palace while he stays and has a bodyguard that turns away any and all unwelcome visitors.

But if you could get past that bodyguard of his, I’m sure you could convince him to give me what I’m rightfully owed.

**Consider it done.**

[Grateful] I humbly thank you from the bottom of my heart! [gives letter to Selos] [end dialogue]

**I’ve had a change of mind, you’ll need to find someone else.**

[Melodramatic] Oh curses! Is there no-one willing to help the common man? [end dialogue]

**If the price is right, I can be persuaded.**

[Eager] If you champion my cause, I promise you every penny to my name!

I’ve written Selos a letter which I’m sure will move his heart into recognising my contributions, but I can’t get anywhere close to him.

He’s been granted a room in the Blue Palace while he stays and has a bodyguard that turns away any and all unwelcome visitors.

But if you could get past that bodyguard of his, I’m sure you could convince him to give me what I’m rightfully owed.

**Consider it done. [**Accept**]**

[Grateful] I humbly thank you from the bottom of my heart! [end dialogue]

**I’ve had a change of mind, you’ll need to find someone else.**

[Melodramatic] Oh curses! Is there no-one willing to help the common man? [end dialogue]

**I have no interest in getting involved with such a pitiful creature.**

[Dismay] Fate continues to rain these barbed insults upon me! So be it, leave me to my woes. [end dialogue]

Quest Update

**< > Deliver Johick's letter to Selos**

*I met a playwright called Johick who co-wrote a play called* The Nord’s Final Voyage *with his childhood friend Selos. Selos ran away and took all the credit for himself and so Johick has asked me to deliver a letter to Selos and convince him to share the credit.*

Selos can be found staying in one of the wings at the Blue Palace but the door is locked and guarded by his bodyguard Mauhak. Any attempt to interact with the door will cause Mauhak to force conversation with the player.

1. [Curt] Can I help you?
   1. **I wanted to speak with Selos, I have a letter to deliver.**
      1. Yeah, a lot of people do. He’s not seeing anyone at the moment, so bad luck.
      2. And before you ask - no, I won’t deliver the letter for you. I’m no delivery boy and you fans weird me out.
         1. **You sure I couldn’t persuade you to look the other way? (Bribe)**
            1. [Hesitant] Hmm, that entirely depends on how convincing your offer is.

**How about 100 gold?**

[Annoyed] Pah, you want me to risk my job for that? Time you left, pal. [End dialogue]

**How about 200 gold?**

[Pleased] Now you’re talking my language... You get 5 minutes, then you're gone, got it? [Remove 200 gold from inventory] [End dialogue]

* + - 1. **Trust me, it’s important he sees the content of this letter. (Persuade)** [Speech >50]
         1. [Success] [Bored] Well, it has been quiet today. Fine, you get 5 minutes. [End dialogue]
         2. [Failure] [Threatening] Oh I’m sure, but it’s even more important you leave before I lose my patience. [End dialogue]
      2. **I’m getting in there whether you let me or not. (Intimidate)** [Speech >75]
         1. [Success] [Worry] What is your problem? Fine, you get 5 minutes before I call the guards. [End dialogue]
         2. [Failure] [Glee] Hahaha, it’s about time - I was starting to get bored. [Brawl] [End dialogue]
      3. **I can smell smoke… shouldn’t you investigate to see if there’s a fire?**
         1. [Suspicious] What? I can’t smell anything… Hm, stay here and don’t touch that door. [End dialogue]

Using the fourth option to get him to leave will give players an opportunity to pick the lock on the door (Difficulty: Adept). If the player walks away and does not attempt to pick the lock, they will trigger the quest update A for DIPLOMATIC FAILURE BRANCH [merge to DIPLOMATIC FAILURE BRANCH below]

[BRAWL]

Mauhak is a challenging opponent as his profession calls for strength. Once defeated, he will say the following:

1. [Pleading] Alright, you win! I’ll unlock the door for ya, just make it quick. [Will move and unlock Selos’ door]

Entering the room, the player will find Selos sitting down and reading. As the player draws closer, he will force conversation.

1. [Grandly, but slight irritation] Well now, I thought I told Mauhak that I wasn’t to be disturbed. Is it an autograph you want? I can’t deny a fan, who am I making it out to?
   1. **Johick sent me, he asked me to deliver this letter.**
      1. [Irritated] Johick? Has that miserable fool not given up yet? Let me see it then. [Remove letter from inventory]
      2. [Disdain] Ha! The audacity, how laughable! I suppose he spun you a tale about how his masterful writing has gone so cruelly ignored?
      3. [Dramatically] It’s true I set off in the dead of night, throwing off the shackles of the past… Hold on, I should write that down.
      4. Johick is a hack. Yes, we came up with the idea of *The Nord’s Last Voyage* together, but that’s all that remains of him in the play.
      5. [Disdain] I had to scrub the rubbish he wrote before it ever got attention. He’s far too over-dramatic, and his dialogue… yeesh.
      6. [Mocking] I suppose that’s how he won over your service? A tale of pity? Let me guess, I bet he even said “Oh woe is me!”?
         1. **Whether that’s true or not, he still deserves credit.**
            1. [Mocking] Oh, how moving! A just soul searching to right any wrong… what a shame that it ends in tragedy.
            2. I’m not inclined to share. If I had co-credit with that talentless dullard, it would sully my reputation.
            3. [Curt] So it seems like you’ve wasted your time bothering me; about now is the time you exit stage right.

**This good act could help improve your reputation. (Persuade)** [Speech >75]

[Success] [Pondering] Hm, you do raise an interesting point. Maybe this act of charity could help my career even further; I could be seen as a patron of the arts.

Fine, let Johick know that I will discuss terms with him. If he plays by my rules, we can come to an arrangement. [End dialogue] [merge to DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS BRANCH below]

[Failure] [Disdain] Ha! If you believe that, you’re as stupid as you look. Not now, not ever. It’s time you left. [End dialogue] [merge to DIPLOMATIC FAILURE BRANCH below, quest update A]

**I don’t think you understand: I’m not asking, I’m ordering. (Intimidate)** [Speech >75]

[Success] [Shock] What! You brute! Your depraved villany knows no bounds!

Fine, let Johick know that I will discuss terms with him. If he plays by my rules, we can come to an arrangement. [End dialogue] [merge to DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS BRANCH below]

[Failure] [Disdain] You don’t scare me, I’ve written villains far worse than you. This audience is over - get out. [End dialogue] [merge to DIPLOMATIC FAILURE BRANCH below, quest update A]

**I’ve heard enough.**

[Cold] Good, it's a bad image to be seen with a nobody like yourself. It's time you left. [End dialogue] [merge to DIPLOMATIC FAILURE BRANCH below, quest update A]

* + - 1. **Frankly I don’t care who is credited, as long as I get paid.**
         1. [Boastful] Trust me when I say that someone as famous as I am is a far better friend to know than Johick is.
         2. Go back to that talentless hack and convince him to drop this whole nonsense all together. I don’t care how you do it - use your imagination.
         3. [Boastful] My fame has paid off generously - if you succeed, I'll reward you 500 gold for your trouble.

**Fine, I’ll see it done.**

[Pleased] I'm glad my brilliance shone through. Come back once it is done - I’ll let Mauhawk know I’m expecting you.

[Dismissive] Anyway, it’s time you left. I must get back to my writing - more delays means more anguish for my fans. [End dialogue] [merge to DIPLOMATIC FAILURE BRANCH below, quest update B]

**Surely a man of such fame can increase the reward? (Persuade)** [Speech >50]

[Success] [Superior] Such ambition, you remind me of... well, me. Very well,you've twisted my arm.

[Dismissive] Anyway, it’s time you left. I must get back to my writing - more delays means more anguish for my fans. [End dialogue] [merge to DIPLOMATIC FAILURE BRANCH below, quest update B]

[Failure] [Scolding] Please, giving my time is generous enough - the price is final. [Remove option] [Back to options]

**I have no interest in helping you.**

[Uncaring] Pity. Though my acting talents aren’t good enough to feign heartbreak.

[Dismissive] Anyway, it’s time you left. I must get back to my writing - more delays means more anguish for my fans. [End dialogue] [merge to DIPLOMATIC FAILURE BRANCH below, quest update A]

[DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS BRANCH]

Quest Update

**<X> Speak to Selos**

**< > Return to Johick**

*Though reluctant, Selos is willing to share credit with Johick. I should return and tell him the good news.*

Johick can be found back at the Winking Skeever in his cups.

1. Ah, hello friend! I hope your arrival brings good news?
   1. **I spoke to Selos, he has agreed to give you co-author credits and asked you to visit him.**
      1. [Elated] Oh, what joyous news! My heart soars like an eagle high above Solitude!
      2. It is only right and fair of me to pay you for what you’ve done - I shall soon be rolling in money! [Add levelled gold]
      3. Well, I shall go to claim what is rightfully mine - I hope our paths will cross again! [End dialogue]

Quest Complete

**<X> Speak to Selos**

**<X> Return to Johick**

*Johick was overjoyed to learn he was receiving co-author credit with Selos and rewarded me for my actions. I have gained the favour of an up-and-coming playwright in Solitude.*

[DIPLOMATIC FAILURE BRANCH]

Quest Update A

**<X> Speak to Selos**

**< > Return to Johick**

*I was unsuccessful in convincing Selos to share credit with Johick. I should return to share the news with Johick and plan what to do next.*

Quest Update B

**<X> Speak to Selos**

**< > Return to Johick**

*Selos refuses to share credit with Johick and has offered a reward if I force Johick to back off. I should return to Johick and convince him to stop with this pursuit.*

Johick can be found back at the Winking Skeever in his cups.

1. [Hopeful] Your arrival is a beacon of hope in these dark times! Do you bring good news?
   1. [If the player spoke with Selos] **I spoke to Selos, he refused to co-credit you and sent me away.**
      1. [Anger] The cold-hearted betrayer! To think I once thought of him as my dearest friend, when now I can think of no one more vile.
      2. [Despair] I am lost, it has all been for naught. All of those hours spent pouring my soul into that manuscript, for him to snatch my talent away…
      3. [Triumphant] That’s it! The manuscript has my name on it, and I penned large parts of it. If I had that in my hand, the proof would be irrefutable!
      4. [Pleading] He’s a vain man - he must keep it close to his person for admiration. I know what I ask is too much, but could you help a desperate soul?
         1. **I will find the manuscript and bring it back to you.**
            1. [Elated] You are truly a champion of the people! If you succeed at this, I will write your story in the stars.
            2. Selos won’t part with it willingly, of course, so I fear you’ll have to resort to skullduggery.
            3. [Hesitantly] You could wait until he is out of his living quarters and… procure it, or his bodyguard Mauhak might be convinced to see the light. I’ll leave that up to you.
            4. **I’ll see it done.**

[Sadly] I wish it hadn’t come to this, but Selos has tied my hands. Good luck, I’ll be waiting in anticipation. [End dialogue] [merge to HELPING JOHICK BRANCH]

* + - 1. **This won’t help you, it is time to give up on this. (Persuade)** [Speech >50]
         1. [Success] [Defeated] I… I suppose you’re right. What can one man do against the weight of corruption?
         2. It is time for this broken shell to head home. Thank you for your part in this, here is a small token of my thanks. [End dialogue] [merge to HELPING SELOS BRANCH] [Add levelled gold]
         3. [Failure] [Indignant] Rarely does the common man understand the lofty ambitions of the thespian. If you won’t, someone else will help me seek justice! [End dialogue]
      2. **I know the truth, Johick. You’re a hack and you deserve no credit. (Persuade)** [Speech >50]
         1. [Success] [Hurt] What, you too? I've felt the sting of critics all my life, but you’ve only just met me…
         2. [Defeated] My heart cannot take any more of this - it is crushed beyond repair. I’ll give up on this dream and head home to reality. [End dialogue] [merge to HELPING SELOS BRANCH]
         3. [Failure] [Angry] What would you know of talent? The greats often suffer the scorn of those who cannot recognise genius - take yourself away! [End dialogue]
      3. **Selos can make you disappear if you keep causing trouble - time to go home. (Intimidate)** [Speech >50]
         1. [Success] [Scared and hurt] Just when I thought I'd seen the depths of depravity, you proved to be worse. Fine, I'll leave this moment. [End dialogue] [End dialogue] [merge to HELPING SELOS BRANCH]
         2. [Failure] [Angry] You thug! You think you can silence this poet? To arms I say! [Brawl] [End dialogue]
      4. **I cannot help you any more.**
         1. [Sad but sympathetic] My heart breaks to hear it, though I know you’ve done much already. If you have a change of heart, please seek me out. [End dialogue]
  1. **[**If the player couldn’t speak to Selos, replaced with**] I wasn’t able to speak to Selos, he’s not seeing anyone. [Go to 1.1.1]**

[BRAWL]

Johick is an easy foe to beat - he is not athletic and so will give up quickly into the fight. Once defeated, he will say the following:

1. [Pleading] Stop, stop, I yield! This city has brought me nothing but heartbreak and bruises - I’ll leave immediately. [Will leave the tavern] [merge to HELPING SELOS BRANCH]

HELPING JOHICK BRANCH

The player can find the manuscript in a bedside drawer in Selos’ room. Selos will be absent from his room during the day speaking with other inhabitants of the household, but will arrive back to sleep. Players can either break into the locked room at night time and avoid waking him up (If Selos does wake up, he flees and calls for the guards), or they can speak with Mauhak who guards his empty room. Alternatively, they can pickpocket either Selos or Mauhak to gain a key to the room.

If they talk to Mauhak while he’s guarding the door, they enter the following conversation:

1. [Sarcastic] Ah, you’re back. Lucky me. Though I shouldn’t be surprised, you fans really are a lot.
2. [if the player told Mauhak the lie about the fire] [Angry] You've got a lot of nerve coming back here. Let me guess, another fire down the hall?
3. Selos ain’t here, so you’re barking up the wrong tree. Try your luck later on.
   1. **Shame, I’ll come back another time.**
      1. [Sarcastic] Fantastic. I look forward to it. [End dialogue]
   2. **I need to get into Selos’ quarters.**
      1. Well, the reason I’m here is to stop people like you coming in, so too bad.
         1. **Selos needs to be taken down a peg. I’ll be in and out before you know it. (Persuade)** [Speech >50]
            1. [Success] [Hesitant] Hmm, you're right about that. Something's not right about the guy, I always suspected he's a fraud.
            2. Fine, I'll turn a blind eye for now. But if he comes back, you’re on your own. [End dialogue]
            3. [Failure] [Incredulous] And lose my job? Pah, you’re outta your mind. [Return to choices]
         2. **You’re going to let me in or I’m going to step over your unconscious body. (Intimidate)** [Speech >75]
            1. [Success] [Suprise] Woah, relax will ya? I took this job to get away from fighting. If it’s that important to you, fine - go in. [End dialogue]
            2. [Failure] [Threatening] Oh yeah? It’s been a while since my last fight, but I’ll make sure to enjoy this. [Brawl] [End dialogue]
         3. **I can pay you a lot if you look the other way (Bribe)**
            1. [Hesitant] It would cost me my job if Selos found out, so it had better be worth it.

**How about 100 gold?**

[Annoyed] Get out of here and stop wasting my time. [End dialogue]

**How about 200 gold?**

[Pleased] That’s all you needed to say. 5 minutes and you’re out. [Remove 200 gold from inventory] [End dialogue]

* + - 1. **Fine, I’ll leave you alone.**
         1. [Pleased] About time. [End dialogue] [Opens up Quest Failure route with Johick]

Upon retrieval, the player can bring the manuscript back to Johick at the Winking Skeever.

1. [Hushed] Hello again, my co-conspirator. The shadow of intrigue follows in your wake. Is there any update?
   1. **I retrieved the manuscript for you.**
      1. [Elated] Talos above, I can hardly believe my eyes! I thank you from the bottom of my soul. [Remove The Nord’s Last Voyage Manuscript from inventory]
      2. With this, Selos could never refute my authorship. Fame and riches lay before me!
      3. [Grateful] Speaking of, it is only right I pay you for your service. And of course, you shall always have a friend in Solitude. [Add levelled gold] [End dialogue]
   2. [Quest Failure Route] **I wasn't able to retrieve the manuscript.**
      1. [Dismayed] It was too much to hope for, I'll have to accept that fame and I were never meant to meet.
      2. It is time for this broken shell to head home. Thank you for your part in this, here is a small token of my thanks. [End dialogue] [Add levelled gold]

With the quest complete, if the player was able to retrieve the manuscript then Johick can be found by Selos’ side in the Blue Palace, dressed much more fancily and still drinking himself silly. If not, Johick leaves Skyrim and Selos can still be found in the Blue Palace, but refuses to engage with the player.

[HELPING SELOS BRANCH]

Quest Update

**<X> Speak to Selos**

**<X> Return to Johick**

**< > Return to Selos**

*Johick has been convinced to abandon his claim to The Nord’s Last Voyage. I should return to Selos and claim my reward.*

Selos can be found speaking with other inhabitants of the household or in his rooms at night.

1. [Grandly, then disappointed] Ah, who do I owe the pleasure- oh, it’s you. I assume you have a good reason to be speaking to me?
   1. **Johick won’t be bothering you again, he’s left the city.**
      1. [Cooly with a hint of begrudging relief] Ah, wonderful news. His talentless shadow would never be able to dim the light of my success, but I’m glad to see the back of him.
      2. [Reluctant] I suppose I do owe you for this favour, here is some gold and a token of my appreciation. [Add levelled gold] [Add Selos's autograph]
      3. [Dismissive] Anyway, intrigue is great in a play, but less so as a reputation. It’s time we parted ways. [End dialogue]

With the quest complete, Johick disappears from the Winking Skeever and is never seen again by the player. Selos can still be found lounging around the Blue Palace, but will no longer speak to the player.