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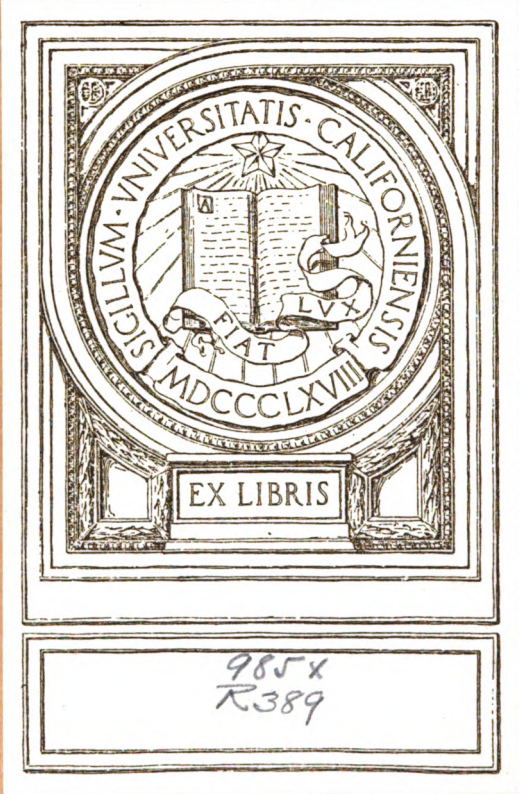
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MR. BUNT

REMSEN



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MR. BUNT

OTHER PLAYS BY

IRA MALLORY REMSEN

THE MAN WHO MARRIED AN OSTRICH

PERPETUAL SUNSHINE

JAM

THE RENTED RANCH

THE HEMLOCK GREEN

AH CHANG

THE SHEPHERDS' BRIDGE

INCHLING

KING SOLOMON

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

MR. BUNT

CONCERNING THE INVISIBLE
PLAYMATES OF OUR
CHILDHOOD

BY

IRA MALLORY REMSEN
"

985 X

CARMEL
THE SEVEN ARTS
1924

THE BUNT ALSO AVAILABLE

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BY IRA MALLORY REMSEN

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Carmel, California

**DEDICATED TO
YODEE**

593598

THE PEOPLE IN THE PLAY

AS PRODUCED IN THE FOREST THEATER
CARMEL, CALIFORNIA

July 3, 4, 5, 1924

IN THE COTTAGE IN THE WOOD

Rose.....Helen Judson
DabsDale Leidig
Annie.....Valentine Mott Porter

IN THE CIRCUS

JimCharles Van Riper
LuPhyllis Blake
Danny.....John Northern Hilliard

IN THE MAPLE TREE

Owl.....Winsor Josselyn
Gyem.....Caryl Jones
The Sandman.....Calvin H. Luther
Gateman.....Paul Flanders
Buttons.....Denman Whitney
First FairyBarbara Lewis
Second Fairy.....Barrian Cator

IN TROUBLE

Mrs. GeshisishChristine Burton
Mr. BuntScott Douglas

Fairies, Circus troupe

SETTING

One set is used throughout. It is an open glade in the forest. The trees and flowers center about a Maple Tree, beside which is a low hill of yellow buttercups. The changes of scene are effected by what I might best describe as a carved Swiss wooden toy. This is made with three sides, each side representing or symbolizing, if you like, the scene played. The Greeks called this a periaktos. It is on rollers and easily turned. Side one is a cottage; side two, the great twisted roots of the Maple Tree and the head of an owl; and to side three the canvas of the circus tent is hung.

ACT I

SCENE 1

THE COTTAGE IN THE WOODS

It is night.

The little cottage which stands on the right of the stage is hidden among the dark trees. A light in the window, however, cuts a solitary orange square in the soft blue night. From the deep shadows comes the throbbing song of the crickets.

Prelude.

A little boy in night clothes appears at the window and presses his face against the pane in a vain endeavor to look out into the night. The throbbing of the crickets grows louder. It is taken up by the wood and the voice of a man is heard singing afar off. The boy yawns and slowly leaves the window. The stage is empty. The song draws nearer and the somber figure of a man enters, carrying a heavy sack, from the corners of which pour tiny grains of sand as he slowly passes on his way, singing.

Music: Sandman's Song.

As he passes the cottage the light in the window fades out. The moonlight grows brighter and the cottage is now clearly outlined. The Sandman and his dreamy song are lost in the distance. The

music stops for a moment, ~~again~~ the stage is empty.

Music: The Fairies.

Now from all parts of the wood the little fairies enter. Delicately, rhythmically, they form a circle about the house and dance in the moonlight. The rattle of milk cans is heard and the music ceases. The fairies fly as a heavy-set milkman, with a flashlight, enters and leaves a bottle of milk by the doorstep. Exit milkman.

Dawn comes and the cottage is now seen in the early sunlight. It is a quaint, toylike house with a chimney and a peaked roof, the sides of which sag a little. A window in the second story looks out on a little balcony. Below it is a green door. On one side of it a very large rain pipe descends at various angles and ends on the ground with a spout two feet in diameter, that looks at the audience inquiringly.

SCENE 2

The door of the cottage opens and the figure of a little girl in a yellow'gingham dress, with a shawl over her head, appears. She goes over and picks up the bottle of milk. As she returns the door swings shut; finding it is latched she calls loudly for

Mummy.

After a moment the window above opens and a rather frail but sweet-faced woman appears. She leans

over the balcony and on catching sight of the little girl calls down quietly:

All right, Annie.

And disappears. We hear the latch being drawn and the little girl lets herself in.

In the meantime the head of a small boy has appeared at the same window where the lady disappeared. You see there are so many things happening that you have to watch carefully so as not to miss anything. At any rate the head of the small boy appears above the window sill and it is followed at once by two little hands and the sole of his shoe. Having gotten, in other words, a good grip on the house, he hoists himself out onto the balcony.

Once outside he collects himself and, hanging over the rail, makes a long and rather thoughtful spit to the pavement below.

He is evidently waiting to collect more material when the voice of the lady is heard calling:

Dabs.

At which the youthful gentleman remarks belligerently:

I don't want no more rotten oatmeal.

Now, this was rather a horrid thing for Dabs to say, and he ought to be spanked for saying it; but you see, when he climbed out of the window into the play, I saw at once he was a real little boy and, like all real children, didn't think about other people's feelings—except when spanked.

And this little boy was built very healthy and

finished with a place expressly designed for spanking, that would make him understand about other people's feelings. For, as I say, nice healthy children only think about themselves, and have to be spanked and taught.

Just as when they grow up, kind Mother Earth begins the spanking just where their own mother left off, until they reach the point where they finally learn to continue to think only of themselves, but in terms of other people, which is far from being selfish, and is the only way to live happily and make other people happy, no matter what your mother says.

But to go back to Dabs—and his horrid remark about the oatmeal—who stands waiting thoughtfully on the balcony, while Annie, the little girl who was seen going into the house, now appears at the window and the lady inside is saying :

Annie, where does he get those awful words ?

ANNIE

To Dabs.

Donald Reber ! You come in here right away and get your mouth washed out with soap !

At which Dabs remarks, without animosity:
Get your own mouth washed out.

ANNIE

The idea of you talking like that !

Turning.

Mummy, he just says everything he hears in the streets.

DABS

It's better'n making things up the way you do.

ANNIE

What did I make up?

DABS

Oh, lots er things about fairies, that ain't got any sense.

ANNIE

That's because you don't understand.

DABS

Oh, I understand, all right, all right, all right!

ANNIE

You do nothing of the kind; besides, you come in now and get your milk.

DABS

How do you know it ain't sour?

ANNIE

Because we tasted it.

DABS

How did it taste?

ANNIE

It tasted sweet and cold.

DABS

Thoughtfully.

Lightnin' bugs kin turn milk sour—same as lightnin'—

ROSE

Appearing at the window.

Children, come and finish your breakfast. It's

time for me to go. Annie, won't you bring Dabs in and make him eat his oatmeal?

ANNIE

Can we have it outside, Mummy?

ROSE

Why, yes, if you are careful. Annie, please look after Dabs. I'm late and I've got to hurry.

ANNIE

Oh, Mummy, I hate to have you go.

ROSE

Don't, Annie, you'll make me late.

ANNIE

But, Mummy, it's lonely.

ROSE

I know, Annie, but remember all the things you have to do. And if you do them nicely, I'll read you some more about the fairy that came back.

ANNIE

They do come back, don't they, Mummy?

ROSE

Of course, if you remember them. Good-bye, dear—good-bye, Dabs.

She kisses both the children and disappears. Annie now climbs out on the balcony and joins Dabs, and together they hang over the railing, when the door below opens and lets Rose out into the garden. She looks up and

waves quickly to the children, who stand and watch her till she is out of sight.

SCENE 3

ANNIE

Turning to Dabs.

Now, if you are good and eat your breakfast, I'll let you play with me until Mummy comes home.

DABS

Can I have it out here?

ANNIE

If you promise not to throw it on anyone.

Dabs, after promising reluctantly, climbs in the window, while Annie, being left alone, gets out a packing box in which she keeps her complete repertoire of dolls and arranges them for the day.

DABS

Appearing at the window.

Where is the maple sugar?

ANNIE

Mummy put it on your oatmeal.

DABS

She must er forgot it.

ANNIE

She didn't: I saw her put it on before she went out.

DABS

Aw, Annie, I kin hardly taste it.

ANNIE

Well, it's all you're going to get, so you might as well bring it out here and eat it.

Dabs having been disposed of, Annie returns to her dolls. The rag doll, appearing uneasy, has to be sung to sleep.

ANNIE

Singing.

Bye baby Bunting,
Dada's gone a-hunting,
To get a little rabbit skin
To wrap the baby Bunting in.
Bye baby Bunting,
Dada's gone a-hunting—

DABS

Appearing at the window with his oatmeal.
How do you know he's gone a-hunting?

ANNIE

'Cause he is.

Singing.

Bye baby Bunting—

DABS

What's his name?

ANNIE

Mr. Bunt, of course.

Dabs reflectively climbs out on the balcony while the song continues.

Dada's gone a-hunting—

DABS

What do he hunt?

Making himself comfortable.

ANNIE

Rabbits and rabbit skins.

Singing.

To get a little rabbit skin

To wrap the baby Bunting in—

DABS

And where do he live?

ANNIE

In the Maple Tree.

DABS

Where the maple sugar comes from?

ANNIE

Yes.

DABS

I wished I lived there. I'd git enough maple sugar
for my oatmeal for once.

ANNIE

You get quite enough as it is.

Singing.

Bye baby Bunting—

DABS

Does he get all he wants?

ANNIE

I don't know; but he's very gentlemanly and
wouldn't take more than his share.

DABS

Of course, he wouldn't.

ANNIE

Besides, there are lots of things besides maple sugar in the Maple Tree.

DABS

What, for instance?

ANNIE

Well, all the fairies live there, and they have a big house.

DABS

What—in the Maple Tree?

ANNIE

No. In the roots of the Maple Tree; but, of course, he is out most of the time, hunting.

DABS

Can he shoot straight?

ANNIE

He never misses.

DABS

I bet yer I can shoot better'n he can.

ANNIE

We are not making any comparisons. Please be still. You're disturbing baby Bunting.

Humming.

Bye baby Bunting.

DABS

Finishing his oatmeal inquires casually:

Tell me some more about him.

ANNIE

Mr. Bunt?

DABS

Yes. What's he like?

ANNIE

He has a big gun and he's all dressed up like a hunter.

DABS

Aw, go on—you made him up.

ANNIE

Ignoring the remark, hums.

Dada's gone a-hunting—

DABS

Aw, I knew you did.

ANNIE

What if I did; he's mine, and I won't let you play with him.

DABS

Delighted with his discovery.

Where is he?

ANNIE

It wouldn't make any difference where he was, you couldn't see him.

DABS

Is that so. I can see anything you can see and more besides.

Pointing at the absolutely empty garden below them.

Why, there he is now. Good morning, Mr. Bunt.

ANNIE

Furiously.

Donald Reber, what are you talking about?

DABS

Turning to Annie in utter surprise.

What! Can't you see him? How you surprise me!

Pointing very definitely.

He's sitting right over there in the bushes—the poor simp!

ANNIE

How dare you talk like that about Mr. Bunt! You don't see anything, anyway.

DABS

Don't I!

Pointing.

He's right down there, now.

Excitedly.

Why, if he ain't trying to climb in the rain pipe!

What do you think of that?

Dabs, I am afraid, is about to spit down on the imaginary Mr. Bunt when Annie, who has lost all patience, collars him and puts him, struggling, in the window, which she shuts, remarking during the operation—

ANNIE

When Mummy comes back I am going to tell her how you've acted, and you can get out now and play by yourself. I don't want you around here.

*Annie, alone now on the little balcony, turns her attention to her dolls.**The door below opens quietly and a disconsolate Dabs appears. He considers the situation,*

and sitting down on the doorstep, out of sight of Annie, selects a fresh blade of grass and pressing it between his thumbs blows on it without result. And now, from the balcony above, in the quiet of the woods comes Annie's song again to baby Bunting.

As the song continues, a strange, little, pathetic figure rises slowly out of the rain pipe and steps timidly down on the balcony, waiting patiently to be addressed by Annie.

He is a very small hunter indeed, all dressed in a rabbit skin coat and cap, with bare legs and boots. On his back hangs a green hunting bag and he carries a very big gun.

Annie sings on, and even when she turns towards him it is as though she knew he was there and is not at all surprised at his appearance.

In fact, even after she sees him, she goes on arranging her dolls and only after they have been attended to does she take a packing box and place it as a seat for Mr. Bunt, who silently takes his place as though nothing extraordinary was happening, except that he is a little warm and takes off his hat to fan himself.

Annie now sits opposite him and begins her conversation, very politely and delicately, as children are wont when they enter the land of the fairies.

SCENE 4

ANNIE

You are very warm to-day, Mr. Bunt!

MR. BUNT

Nodding politely.

Quite warm, Miss Reber.

On Annie's remark Dabs, on the doorstep below, pricks up his ears and a look of utter disgust settles on his features.

Throughout the following scene which is being enacted on the balcony, Dabs expresses his disgust to the audience by a series of horrible faces and by means of pantomime gets the idea over that his sister is quite wrong in her head. Annie, in the meantime, is continuing her polite conversation with Mr. Bunt.

ANNIE

How was the hunting to-day, Mr. Bunt?

MR. BUNT

Worried.

Please could we talk of something else.

ANNIE

Anxiously.

You didn't kill anything?

MR. BUNT

Oh, dear no.

ANNIE

But your bag, Mr. Bunt?

MR. BUNT

It's stuffed full of grass.

What Dabs on the doorstep below registers here is unprintable.

ANNIE

Oh, how nice. Of course, I want you to hunt, but I wouldn't have you kill anything, you know.

MR. BUNT

I understand perfectly.

ANNIE

And you don't mind?

MR. BUNT

I much prefer it so—in fact I'm very much afraid of guns, and I dislike killing things most awfully, especially rabbits.

ANNIE

It makes it rather awkward.

MR. BUNT

Distinctly so.

ANNIE

But the song says you hunt things.

MR. BUNT

I know it does.

ANNIE

Well, I like the way you get around it. It shows consideration.

MR. BUNT

I know, but couldn't you make me up into something else—something that doesn't hunt?

ANNIE

No-o-o-o-o-o. I like you the way you came to me first in the song, and I like you to play with because you know how to show consideration, and almost nobody does that. Mummy says we must not expect it, but always show it.

Mr. Bunt here turns the bag around, on which is printed in very large letters: CONSIDERATION. He gently places it where it will show to the best advantage.

ANNIE

Holding out baby Bunting.

Would you like to hold the baby, Mr. Bunt?

MR. BUNT

Of course, if you wish me to, I will.

He accepts the baby patiently and then sits disconsolate.

ANNIE

You are not holding it very well, Mr. Bunt.

MR. BUNT

No, I suppose not.

ANNIE

Arranging baby.

There, that's better. Don't you like your baby, Mr. Bunt?

MR. BUNT

My baby!

ANNIE

Yes.

MR. BUNT

Oh, I suppose it came in the song, too.

ANNIE

Of course.

MR. BUNT

I'm glad it wasn't a very long song.

Looking thoughtfully at the baby.

You see, they are so much alike.

ANNIE

What are?

MR. BUNT

The things that came in that song, babies and guns—

ANNIE

For goodness sakes! I don't think they are at all alike.

MR. BUNT.

Perhaps not; but still, when you hold them you never can tell what's going to happen.

ANNIE

But you can—

MR. BUNT

Would you like to hold the gun?

ANNIE

Well, perhaps I had better take the baby.

Annie relieves Mr. Bunt.

MR. BUNT

You see they are alike in a way.

ANNIE

I'm sorry, Mr. Bunt. But, of course, you will get

used to them — and you are so nice to talk to — it's like having a real fairy.

MR. BUNT

That's what I am, Miss Reber.

ANNIE

And I'm going to have you come and play with me always.

MR. BUNT

Why certainly, Miss Reber.

ANNIE

And I can tell you all the things that Dabs doesn't understand and I don't want him to know, anyway.

MR. BUNT

Exactly.

ANNIE

I'm sure it's very nice of you, Mr. Bunt.

MR. BUNT

Oh, not at all, Miss Reber.

ANNIE

You see, Mr. Bunt, I think it's because I'm so lonely and want some one to talk to. Mummy is away all day, even to-day, Saturday, when there isn't any school or anything. Of course, there is Dabs, but he just gets into one mess right after another, and I want someone I can really talk to.

MR. BUNT

Of course you do.

ANNIE

That's what makes it so nice, Mr. Bunt. You understand everything.

MR. BUNT

I'm very glad you like me, Miss Reber.

ANNIE

And you **can** come and play with me always, can't you Mr. Bunt?

MR. BUNT

I can play with you always until—

ANNIE

Until what?

MR. BUNT

Until you forget me.

ANNIE

Forget you! Mr. Bunt!!

MR. BUNT

Nodding.

You see, if you forget me you won't remember me.

ANNIE

But I'll never forget you, Mr. Bunt.

MR. BUNT

That's what you think, Miss Reber, but when you do I must return at once to the Maple Tree, by order of the Board of Directors.

ANNIE

And would they never let you come back?

MR. BUNT

Never, in ever so long, and only then if you should

find whatever it is that unlocks the Maple Tree.

ANNIE

Why, whatever it is that unlocks the Maple Tree must be the maple keys, of course. I can find them all over the ground under the trees, but I don't see that that helps much because even if I found them I couldn't unlock the tree, you know, unless I found the keyhole.

MR. BUNT

I hadn't thought of that. It's very hard, you see, to really get me back again once you forget me.

ANNIE

Well, the best thing to do is to be very careful and not forget.

MR. BUNT

I think so, Miss Reber, because if you forget once, it's never quite the same again, and then—only—almost—

Dabs has had all he can stand of this sort of conversation. With a short stick he jams the latch on the door. This locks Annie in the house and with a comfortable feeling of safety he proceeds to make his presence known by loudly addressing the air.

SCENE 5

DABS

Good morning, Mrs. Geshisish!

ANNIE

Rises and looks over the rail.

Dabs!

DABS

Pays no attention to Annie but with great solicitation addresses the air.

Good morning, Mrs. Geshisish. You're very warm this morning, Mrs. Geshisish.

With increased politeness.

Won't you wipe your face on the mat, Mrs. Geshisish. Let me hold your feet for you.

ANNIE

Donald Reber, you come up here at once!

DABS

Contemptuously.

Aw go on, I kin do it too.

Continuing.

Mrs. Geshisish has come to call on Mr. Bunt, ain't you, Mrs. Geshisish? Sit right down and make yourself comfortable—

He continues, carefully arranging the ash can.
Why, you're all covered with consideration, ain't you, Mrs. Geshisish? Don't you want me to brush you off?*Dabs takes the broom in his hand.*

ANNIE

Donald Reber, did you hear what I said?

DABS

Aw, why don't you go on playing with your Mr. Bunt and leave me alone.

Brushing the air violently.

She's disturbing us, ain't she, Mrs. Geshisish?

ANNIE

Just wait until I get you, Donald Reber.

Annie is climbing in the window and Mr. Bunt is disappearing in the rain pipe. Dabs, sitting alone, is about to continue the conversation when a sudden banging on the door from the inside and Annie's angry voice demanding to be let out at once, stops him. He makes no effort to unlock the door; in fact, the situation seems to please him, and once more he proceeds with his conversation.

DABS

She's going to be awful mad, Mrs. Geshisish, but we mustn't mind her because I want some one I can really, really talk to.

ANNIE

Appearing at the window.

Dabs, you open that door at once!

DABS

What door?

ANNIE

You know exactly what I mean. You open that door at once.

DABS

Rocking back and forth with joy.

Why, Mrs. Geshishish, ain't she awful? She just gets into one mess right after another.

ANNIE

Dabs, do you hear me?

DABS

And, Mrs. Geshishish, I'm so glad because you can really understand.

ANNIE

If you make me climb out the back window, you'll be sorry when I get you!

DABS

She wants the key, Mrs. Geshishish, the key that unlocks the Maple Tree.

Annie gives one look and disappears. Dabs arises, saying politely:

I think I must be going, Mrs. Geshishish. I'll leave you to talk to Mr. Bunt.

Music.

Dabs is making good his escape and at the same time keeping a careful lookout over his shoulder for the harassed Annie, when he is suddenly confronted with a strange apparition that has arisen in his path. There was a large mushroom on the right side of the stage when the scene opened but the mushroom must have grown up very suddenly for now it is a large white umbrella, all trimmed with pink, and

under it stands the most alarming little old lady dressed in black bombazine. Dabs' hair fairly rises on his head.

Gee—I must have started something!

MRS. GESHISISH

You did! You started me!

Dabs starts for the house.

You started a great deal more than you can ever understand.

Dabs has had more than he wants to understand, and this with the appearance of Annie round the house makes his exit a hurried one. At Annie's appearance the old lady has again become a mushroom, and Annie, nursing her anger, draws the stick from the latch and enters the house.

SCENE 6

Whereupon the old lady, who has lost Dabs, advances upon the house, remarking in her sharp irritating voice:

Well, of all the impudent things! Never in all my fairy-godmother life did I ever expect to have such remarks passed on me. Mrs. Geshisish indeed! And as for this Bunt creature, I don't believe there is such a thing.

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

From the rain pipe.

Ma'am?

MRS. GESHISISH

Eyeing the rain pipe suspiciously.

Come out of that rain pipe, drat you.

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

Please ma'am, I'd rather not. I'm scared of the rabbits.

MRS. GESHISISH

Bending down and trying to peer into the rain pipe.

Scared of the rabbits!

More loudly:

You'll be more scared when I come in and get you. Are you coming out?

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

Please ma'am, no.

MRS. GESHISISH

Well, I'm coming in.

*And she has just started to crawl into the rain pipe when—Flash! the stage is black.**She is now in the rain pipe. Of course we can't see anything but we can hear Mrs. Geshish's voice remarking contemptuously:*

Well of all dark, dank places! What are you doing, sitting there all squished up with that gun?

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

I'm afraid of the rabbits.

VOICE OF MRS. GESHISISH

What do you want to hunt them for, anyway?

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

It's out of consideration for Annie.

VOICE OF MRS. GESHISISH

Well, never in all my fairy-godmother life have I heard such nonsense. I wish I were out of here.

The light goes up and Mrs. Geshisish is discovered standing on the steps of the cottage.

MRS. GESHISISH

Looking around in a surprised manner, finally remarks with a nod of conviction:

Must have stepped on something—never had a wish work as quick as that before.

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

How did you get outside the rain pipe?

MRS. GESHISISH

Shortly.

I wished myself out.

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

Oh!

MRS. GESHISISH

Can you do that? No! That's a modern fairy for you—no wishes! no nothing! How long are you going to stay in that rain pipe?

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

Till Annie wants me.

MRS. GESHISISH

Stuff and nonsense! Do you know who I am?

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

Why, you are Dabs' invisible playmate, of course.

MRS. GESHISISH

Outraged.

Invisible playmate indeed! I'm his old-fashioned fairy-godmother, that's what I am. The kind that gives everybody three wishes that all come true, and in the end nobody gets anything. That's simple. Anybody can understand that. Three wishes and there you are. But this invisible playmate stuff—that's too complicated for me. Why you know, in my time, we fairies amounted to something. We ran things. But now-a-days every child has its own particular brand of fairy. Has it for as long as it pleases and then forgets it. Do you call that life? I call it downright selfishness. I'd like to talk to whoever started this invisible fairy stuff.

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

Perhaps you'd better see the Board of Directors about it.

MRS. GESHISISH

The Board of Directors. What is the child talking about. Wait till I get in that rain pipe!

Very dramatically she raises her finger, saying with great emphasis:

I wish I were in the rain pipe.

Flash! and the stage is black once more.

VOICE OF MRS. GESHISISH

See how quick those old fashioned wishes work. I've just got to say what I want and bang! I get it. Now sit right where you are and answer me or I'll call the rabbits. Is that gun loaded?

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

No ma'am.

VOICE OF MRS. GESHISISH

Well, that's a comfort. Now this Board of Directors. What do they do?

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

They don't do anything. They're just awfully strict about everything, but you have to see the Owl first.

VOICE OF MRS. GESHISISH

The Owl?

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

Yes, he knows everything.

VOICE OF MRS. GESHISISH

Indeed. Well, we'll see this bird. Where does he live?

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

In the roots of the Maple Tree.

VOICE OF MRS. GESHISISH

In the roots of the Maple Tree is he? Well, we're going to investigate. If you are not used to flying, hold tight to my arm. Are you ready, Mr. Bunt?

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

Yes ma'am.

VOICE OF MRS. GESHISISH

Then up we go.

Dramatically.

I wish I were in the roots of the Maple Tree.

*Music.**There is a rushing sound as of wings and two huge, round eyes look out of the darkness. The lights go on slowly and we are in the roots of the Maple Tree.*

SCENE 7

From a dark hollow among the huge tangled roots the gigantic head of the Owl looks down and blinks at the little figures of Mrs. Geshisish and Mr. Bunt. Mrs. Geshisish is holding her open umbrella far above her head as though she had just alighted and gripping a very frightened Mr. Bunt firmly by the arm.

As for the rest of the scene, there are a number of little mushroom-like seats in groups as though they had just come up, and at the side of the Owl's head is a large sign, reading: SECOND CLASS IN SILENCE.

The Owl blinks his large eyes.

OWL

In a very solemn voice.

And what can I do for you?

MR. BUNT

MRS. GESHISISH

Well of all things!

MR. BUNT

Ssh! It's the Owl.

MRS. GESHISISH

Irritated beyond measure.

I kin see him.

MR. BUNT

Timidly addressing the Owl.

I want to introduce you—

OWL

In a deep voice.

To who?

MR. BUNT

Mrs. Geshisish.

OWL

Calmly and firmly.

Visitors not allowed.

MRS. GESHISISH

Ain't he dreadful.

MR. BUNT

Ssh, or he'll send for the Board of Directors. She isn't exactly a visitor. She wants to learn things.

VOICE OF ANNIE

Calling softly.

Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt.

MR. BUNT

It's Annie calling me—I'm off. Keep your eyes open.

MRS. GESHISISH

Most perturbed.

Oh dear, I'm all mixed up. I don't think I can learn anything around here.

OWL

Yes you can, Madam. This is the Second Class in Silence.

MRS. GESHISISH

Where is the class?

OWL

Just behind you, Madam.

MRS. GESHISISH

Turns around and regards the audience. Having satisfied herself as to their mental capacity, she expresses her feeling by saying:

And what do you expect me to learn in a place like this?

OWL

Silence.

MRS. GESHISISH

That's not very hard.

OWL

Well, you haven't learned it yet. Madam, please be seated.

Mrs. Geshisish sits down properly on one of the mushrooms and holds very firmly to her white umbrella. In the silence that ensues, the Owl's eyes slowly close. After an appreciable time, he remarks sleepily: "The class is doing very well to-day." If, however, there

is any unconscious disturbance on the part of the audience, the Owl will reprimand the offender at once. This is played ad lib until the little white figure of Gyem-of-the-Woods appears, climbing slowly over the huge roots to the stage below. Suddenly he slips and comes down plump. As he lands he says "Oh!" quite loud, whereupon the Owl, whose eyes are closed, remarks wearily "Again." And Mrs. Geshishish, who has caught sight of Gyem, has risen and is furiously shaking her umbrella at him.

MRS. GESHISISH

You go and put your pants on!

GYEM

What!

MRS. GESHISISH

It ain't decent.

With which she opens her umbrella and retires behind it.

OWL

Resignedly.

Are we or are we not going to have any class?

VOICE OF MRS. GESHISISH

From behind umbrella.

Class or no class this ain't no place for me.

GYEM

Looking at the white umbrella.

You'll only see one side of things that way.

VOICE OF MRS. GESHISISH

I'll see the side I want to.

OWL

Opening his eyes.

So long as she feels that way we'd better leave her alone. But —

Solemnly.

Until she puts her umbrella down she will never understand.

*With which he closes his eyes again. The white umbrella passes across the stage. As it reaches the exit it stops.**Music.*

MRS. GESHISISH

From behind the umbrella.

I've seen quite enough of things as it is, thank you, and they're quite too complicated for an old woman, if they ain't immoral at that.

Exit Mrs. Geshisish behind umbrella.

SCENE 8

OWL

Quietly.

Has she gone?

GYEM

Yes sir.

OWL

Remarks abstractedly:

She was my aunt.

*And closes his left eye and settles his head
once more in silence.*

GYEM

Aghast.

She was your what?

OWL

*Opening his eye again for a moment, long
enough to say :*

She was my aunt ! It may sound strange, but
read mythology. Mythology is absolutely neces-
sary. It explains everything without saying any-
thing. Do you know where my class is ?

GYEM

They are all out playing in the mole hole.

OWL

That's all very nice, but wait till the Board of
Directors hears about it.

GYEM

What will they do ?

OWL

Calmly.

Nothing.

Opening one eye slowly.

That's what makes it so terrible. You never
know what they might do.

GYEM

I see.

OWL

You don't.

Closing his eyes.

I don't.

Pause.

GYEM

What else do you teach here?

OWL

Come up and I will tell you.

Gyem climbs carefully up the roots and sits beside the huge head of the Owl, who blinks at him wisely.

OWL

I have classes in Make-Believe, Interest and Don't-Bother-Me.

GYEM

Which gives you the most trouble?

OWL

Turning towards him, remarks significantly:

The class in Don't-Bother-Me.

GYEM

Why?

OWL

They ask so many questions.

GYEM

What kind of questions?

OWL

Impertinent questions. The answer to an impertinent question is "Don't bother me." I teach them to tell the difference between impertinent questions and warm-hearted questions.

GYEM

What is the difference?

OWL

There isn't any. That's what makes it so difficult to study. It's only in the way they are asked. An impertinent question wants the answer out of curiosity, a warm-hearted question wants an answer so as to be better able to help somebody.

GYEM

I think I understand.

OWL

Think some more!

Gyem studies for a while.

GYEM

Looking at sign.

What is the next class?

OWL

Make-Believe! We had Interest this morning.

GYEM

What do you teach in Interest?

OWL

Nothing.

GYEM

What?

OWL

Solemnly.

I'm trying to get them interested in **nothing**.

GYEM

What do you mean by that?

OWL

It's the interest that's the important thing.

He turns his head completely around.
That's all you have to have.

GYEM

Timidly.

But what are you interested in?

OWL

Sharply.

Mice!

This gives Gyem such a start that he slides the complete length of the roots and then collects himself.

GYEM

Looking up.

Anything else?

OWL

No!

GYEM

That's simple.

OWL

Slowly opening his eyes.

The simpler life is the sweeter.

GYEM

I think I was happier when I knew less.

OWL

Opening one eye long enough to say:

The trouble is, you don't know enough.

GYEM

Where do I learn?

OWL

You don't—it just comes.

GYEM

From where?

OWL

Opening both eyes suddenly.

I don't know.

GYEM

Isn't there any way to tell?

OWL

Keep on trying.

SCENE 9

At this moment a queer little door opens and a lot of fairies come dancing in, singing. Each fairy has as a partner some strange little creature clothed in the ends with which children dress their imaginary playmates.

Music.

**This is the class in Make-Believe,
Make-Believe, Make-Believe,
This is the class in Make-Believe,
Under the Maple Tree.**

When the dance is over they arrange themselves on the semi-circle of little mushroom-like seats that surround the Owl, who looks down and addresses them.

Music.

OWL

Silence, fairies. You are, you know, in the roots of the Maple Tree. Remember, a little fairy is at

the root of everything — any child knows that. Out in the world the children are calling to you. The world is one great game of Make-Believe— and if you have learned your lessons here, you will have no trouble on earth. Gyem-of-the-Woods will let you out from the branches of the Maple Tree. I will show you the way up as far as the door, but Gyem has the maple keys and will let you out into the world. And, now that you are to cross the bridge of dreams, I will give you your final lesson. Children should be seen, not heard. Fairies should be heard, not seen. Now never get those two things mixed up, or the Board of Directors will get you. You understand?

Looking around.

You do.

Continuing.

Tonight you are to leave the tree, for I can hear the children calling. Your time has come to go out into the world. Go, and beware of the Board of Directors.

They all dance around and out of the door to the tune of:

This is the class in Make-Believe,
Make-Believe, Make-Believe,
This is the class in Make-Believe,
Under the Maple Tree.

The Owl closes his eyes.

SCENE 10

GYEM

To Owl.

And you are all through for the day?

OWL

I have to make my report to the Board of Directors, then—

Bowing.

I am through for the day, thank you.

GYEM

They're very strict, aren't they?

OWL

You'll find that out.

GYEM

Well, I've got to get up in the Maple Tree to let all those little fairies out into the world tonight.

He starts to climb upward.

By the way, has anyone found the key?

OWL

Shaking his head.

They don't know where to look.

GYEM

Calling down.

Do they ever find it?

OWL

Very, very few.

*Music.**The lights grow dim and the scene fades out.*

SCENE 11

The Maple Tree.

We have a deep, soft, moonlit sky. In the center of the stage is the Maple Tree, and curled high in its dark cluster of branches lies the little white figure of Gyem, nodding.
Music.

Deep shadows fall about, and from them comes the throbbing of the crickets. The throbbing grows louder and again the song of the Sandman is heard approaching. He slowly enters.

SANDMAN

Singing.

Dream, baby, dream.
Close the shadows creep,
While your fancies follow me
O'er the land of sleep.

GYEM

Yawning.

Oh, it makes me sleepy to look at you, Sandman.

SANDMAN

Stops a moment, then continues on his way across the stage.

Fair night tonight, Gyem.

Singing.

All the world is still.

Moving off.

GYEM

Good for you, old top. You've done a good job.

Now, I've got my work to do.

SANDMAN

Singing.

And I upon my way.

GYEM

Well, don't stay on my account. You'll send me to sleep again before I get to work.

SANDMAN

Singing.

Sleep, sleep.

VOICES IN THE TREE

Key—key—key—key—key—key—key.

GYEM

Shaking the branches.

Listen to them trying to get out.

SANDMAN

Singing.

Dreamy eyes will fill.

GYEM

Sandman—go away—I'm falling to sleep and I've got to let those baby fairies out of the Maple Tree before the world wakes.

VOICES

Key—key—key—key—key—key—key.

GYEM

Yes, I know—I'm coming.

Yawning.

Oh me, I hate work. I think I'll leave them all inside.

SANDMAN

In the distance.

All the world's asleep.

GYEM

Yes, all the world's asleep. I wish I were.

*Reaching out, he turns one of the maple keys
and throws it on the ground. There is silence.*

VOICE

From the trees, full of pep.

What am I?

GYEM

Laughing.

Can't you remember anything? **You are a fairy.**

VOICE

Oh, where am I?

GYEM

You are in the world again.

VOICES

Key—key—key—key—key—key—key.

GYEM

There are the rest of them.

VOICE

Where are they?

GYEM

That's what I can't understand. The minute I let you out of the Maple Tree you forget everything you ever knew. And I have to begin all over again.

VOICE

Where do I begin?

GYEM

That's it—and you are so cheerful about it. Now wait.

He reaches and turns another key.

NEW VOICES

Oh, it's cold; I don't like it.

GYEM

Well, you wanted to get out and here you are.

He is now busily turning key after key and throwing them on the ground below. The voices, clear and fresh, come piping out till they are clattering in the branches like a flock of grackles.

VOICES

Where are we?

I don't know.

What next?

Here I am.

My wings are stiff.

Look out, you'll fall.

Where do we go next?

Is this the world?

Tell me quickly.

GYEM

Admonishing a reluctant fairy.

None of your nonsense now—out with you—I've got lots to do tonight.

VOICES

Wide world.
 Round world.
 I like it.
 Let's play.
 Feel—the air moves.

Delighted.

I drift with it.
 Like a feather.
 Come, let us sail,
 On the dandelion down.
 Around and around.
 Oh, look at me glide.
 That's the way.
 Try it again.
 I like it.
 Don't you?

*Gyem climbs down from the clattering tree,
 shakes himself and looks up. He raises his
 wand and silence reigns.*

GYEM

Baby fairies in the air,
 Have a care, have a care.
 Go and find your playmate now,
 Make your curtsy and a bow.
 If they hold their arms to you,
 Make their fairy dreams come true.

VOICES

We're off—
By the bridge.
Can you see us?

GYEM

By the bridge of dreams you go,
To the waiting earth below.

Turning to the audience.

Can you see them on their way?

*We are no longer children. We only see the
Maple Tree and the little white figure of Gyem.
Gyem, however, waves his wand.*

Look again with children's eyes!

*And now, from the dark clustered leaves of
the Maple Tree a narrow bridge swings in a
rainbow-like arch to the world below. On it
the fairies are seen, in silhouette, making their
way in the moonlight, their little wings flut-
tering on the air. Gyem stands watching the
fairies, when Mr. Bunt, in his hunting clothes,
is seen climbing in a pathetic manner onto the
stage. He waits till Gyem turns and sees him.*

 SCENE 12

GYEM

Who are you!

MR. BUNT

I'm Mr. Bunt.

GYEM

What are you doing here?

MR. BUNT

I'm lost. You opened everybody's eyes.

GYEM

Why, I was just showing the people how the fairies went over the bridge of dreams down into the world. I thought they'd be interested.

MR. BUNT

You told them to look again with children's eyes.

GYEM

And what has that got to do with you?

MR. BUNT

Do with me? Why, it made me visible. Don't you know that children see everything? They don't miss a thing. I was sitting down there on the steps perfectly invisible. You opened everybody's eyes, and I saw the usher coming for me, so I thought I'd better come up here and let you settle it before the Board of Directors got me.

GYEM

What were you doing in here, anyway?

MR. BUNT

I came in to see the show. As an invisible fairy I have the right to go anywhere. Now, how am I going to get back?

GYEM

Where do you belong?

MR. BUNT

I belong to a little girl in the woods. How am I

going to get back? As long as I was invisible I could ride in the street cars for nothing, but now I haven't even a penny and anybody can see me. Even if I got back, Dabs would punch the head off of me the moment he saw me.

GYEM

Scratching his head.

This is very awkward. Suppose we see the Owl.

MR. BUNT

He won't like it. He's very strict.

GYEM

But we've got to do something. Either you go back to the world or back into the Maple Tree.

MR. BUNT

But I can't go back to the world now. Everyone can see me.

GYEM

Then we've got to see the Owl about it.

Turning, he looks up into the tree and calls:

To whit.

Music.

SCENE 13

OWL

In a deep voice.

To who?

GYEM

Oh, Mr. Owl, we are in trouble.

VOICE OF OWL

Everybody is. They know too much.

At this point two very small eyes look out from the branches of the Maple Tree, which after all is an extraordinary tree. The Owl, after his wise remark, asks :

What is the matter ?

GYEM

Here's an invisible fairy that got lost. I opened people's eyes and they can see him.

OWL

That's what you get for playing with things you don't understand. Now you've gone and thrown the whole works out of order. What will the Board of Directors say ?

GYEM

Timidly.

I don't know.

OWL

Things are in a mess.

GYEM

Can't we do anything ?

OWL

We? We are the only persons who can do anything. The Board of Directors won't touch it.

MR. BUNT

Timidly.

Am I a lost fairy ?

OWL

That's exactly what you are, and it isn't very pleasant. In the first place, you can't go back to the little girl who called you her playmate, because Dabs and everybody can see you now and they wouldn't understand. And second, you can't go back into the Maple Tree because that is where the forgotten fairies go. It is only when the children outgrow the fairies and forget them that they can come back. You are not forgotten—you are lost.

MR. BUNT

Isn't there any place for me to go?

OWL

Considering.

There's only one chance, and you'll have to be quick about it and go before the bridge closes. Over the bridge, down into the world, you will be neither fairy nor child. And there is only one way back. When you are forgotten. That, or the key.

MR. BUNT

The key! No one ever finds the key!

OWL

Very, very few.

MR. BUNT

But I want to stay here.

THE DEEP VOICE OF THE SANDMAN

The fairy world is closed to you.

Music: The Forgotten Fairies.

SCENE 14

Again the bridge appears and by it stands the Sandman in silhouette.

SANDMAN

They come—the forgotten fairies.

Slowly mounting the arch into the Maple Tree climb a number of bedraggled, queer little creatures, stopping to look back at the world below. In pathetic silence they hold out their little arms to it for the last time and then disappear into the shadow of the Maple Tree. The Sandman repeats quietly:

The forgotten fairies.

MR. BUNT

Sadly.

Didn't the children want them any more?

SANDMAN

They grew up and forgot them. Forgot how much they needed them, and they will never know what the trouble with life is, now they have lost their fairies.

MR. BUNT

Do they live in the tree?

SANDMAN

Yes, and forget everything when the gate closes.
Only the keys can let them out.

MR. BUNT

Then they are happy. Why can't I go in?

SANDMAN

You are lost—not forgotten.

MR. BUNT

Calling.

Oh, let me back! Let me back!

SANDMAN

To the bridge! It is closing. It is your only way
out now. You can't stay here.

GYEM

Running to Mr. Bunt.

You've got to go. Quick! I'll go and hold the
bridge. Try and find someone when you get to
earth and don't let anybody see that you can fly.
This way, quick!

*Gyem disappears, dragging Mr. Bunt into the
Maple Tree.*

VOICE OF MR. BUNT

Sobbing.

Let me back. Let me back.

*There is silence, then his lonely figure is seen
making its way slowly over the bridge down
into the world below, where the little tents of
the circus are seen vaguely on the silent hills.*

ACT II

SCENE 1

THE CIRCUS

The stained and spotted canvas of the big tent hangs silent in the night.

On the right is the great gilded wagon in which the lions are drawn when on parade. On the left a light burns within the tent, throwing on the canvas the gigantic shadowed forms of those who pass. It is evidently the rear of the circus where the circus folk live.

Straw litters the ground.

In the light of a lantern, right, sits the ragged figure of an old man, studying some cards laid out before him on the ground.

A clown enters, carrying a bundle of torn hoops. He deposits them and stops at a basin near the opening of the tent to wash the make-up from his face.

A bare-back rider crosses the stage. She pauses for a moment in the flood of light that fills the entrance of the tent and streams across the stage.

It is Lu, in all the glitter of her ring costume. From the shadows the clown speaks to her.

JIM

Looking up from the basin.

How did the act go tonight, Lu?

LU

Fine, Jim. I nearly fell off Midnight laughing at you—you are such a fool.

JIM

I wish I felt that way.

LU

Jim, you've got it, that's all I got to say.

JIM

Aw, ferget it.

LU

Goodnight, Jim.

*She passes into the tent.**Jim slips on a coat and, having fished out a pipe from his pocket, stands idly watching the old man and his cards.*

JIM

What do you see in 'em, Danny? You're starin' at 'em so.

DANNY

I'm minded no tae tell ye, man.

JIM

Kin you read 'em?

DANNY

If it were but the cairds, I wouldna' be starin' so, Jim.

JIM

Well, I never could understand 'em.

He crosses over to Danny.

DANNY

It's na for ye tae understand; it's for ye tae hearken, man, for there be word for ye here. But I wouldna' hae turned thon laist caird if I'd ha' known.

JIM

Sitting on wagon shaft and bending toward cards.

You mean that queen of diamonds?

DANNY

Aye, Jim.

JIM

What's that?

DANNY

It's Lu.

JIM

Lu?

DANNY

It's aye her when it comes atween th' ace and th' twa.

JIM

What makes you so sure of that, Danny?

DANNY

Sure, man, didna' it come that way the night afore she fell frae the horse, she that they ca' the Queen o' the Ring, and isna' it aye a dimond croon she wears, around an' around the ring on the back o' the white horse? I wouldna' hae turned thon laist caird—for man, it micht mean onything.

JIM

I hope there ain't no trouble fer her, Danny.

DANNY

I dinna' ken, Jim. It's her heart I'm starin' at noo.

JIM

You mean whatever is comin to me is goin' to hurt Lu?

DANNY

Aye, man, it looks that way.

JIM

Well, how much can you see, Danny?

DANNY

I see a wee lad and lassie, Jim, playin' somewhaur by a wee hoose.

JIM

Rising.

How kin you read that, Danny?

DANNY

They're in the cairds, man.

JIM

And can you read if they're happy?

DANNY

Aye, Jim.

JIM

Walks slowly across to tent.

They're mine, Danny, and it's five years since I seen 'em. Sometimes it comes over me hard. It's when you're tired you can't shake things

off. Annie'll be ten this fall and Dabs eight.
But you say they're happy?

DANNY

Aye, man, they be happy.

JIM

Turning.

And what's this about Lu, Danny. How did she
get mixed into this?

DANNY

I dinna ken, Jim, till the word comes tae ye.
Wait, man, till I lay them oot aince mair.

*Jim fills a dipper from a pail beside the tent
and drinks, while Danny turns the cards.
Suddenly he starts.*

It be Lu again, Jim. Man, there be trouble
somewhaur!

JIM

Trouble!

*The dipper slips from his hand, there is a
clank of metal and he crosses to Danny.*

What does it say, Danny?

DANNY

It says a word be a-comin' tae ye, Jim.

Rises in fear.

But I canna' read what it micht be and I'm nae
hand at hearin' voices as some of them be.

Troubled.

Man, will ye no turn in?

JIM

Seating himself again on the wagon shaft.

No, Danny, I'll set here a bit.

Exit Danny.

SCENE 2*From the tents, in the silence, comes the restless sound of the animals—a short growl, the chatter of a monkey.**The shadow of a woman appears on the canvas. She passes across the tent and steps out softly. It is Lu, who has slipped into her wrapper. In her hand is a tinsel crown. She approaches Jim.*

LU

I heard your voice—can't you sleep, Jim?

JIM

Oh, it's that way some nights, Lu! Seems as though I'd rather set here.

Again there is a disturbance among the animals.

LU

I wish I could do something fer you, Jim. I hate to see you grieving, you who can make 'em laugh so. Why, Jim, you're the whole show. When you come in there ain't anything else. They jest foller you around and holler their heads off, laughing. Seems like you didn't have

to do anything, jest look at 'em and they begins to scream at once. Where do you get it, Jim?

JIM

It's jest watching 'em, Lu.

LU

Jest watching 'em? Why, people ain't funny.

JIM

No, but I studies 'em. What the professors in the schools calls psychology, Lu. All the little things they do—things that they're ashamed of, or afraid of—they got them all tied up inside of 'em in a hard bundle, and when they see me do these things right out, it sort of unties the bundles and they begin to laugh soon as they see someone else being a fool. There's nothing like company, Lu. It's funny, I can show 'em what fools they are, but when it comes to myself—

He stops.

LU

Gently.

Jim, you ain't never told me or anyone the trouble, since you joined us.

A harsh scream of a parrot breaks the stillness.

JIM

No.

Rising.

And I ain't telling. What's the use of spreading a thing.

A roar from the animals, then a horse neighs shrilly.

Them animals is restless tonight.

LU

Seems like something was bothering 'em, Jim. Excuse me fer asking, it were jest to help you if I could. You don't mind my coming and setting with you, Jim?

JIM

No, Lu, but I ain't good company, fer I'm tired, awful tired, Lu. Seems sometimes as if I'd—
He stops and his whole body grows tense.

LU

Sitting down on the ground.

Let me stay, Jim. I'll work a bit. It's a new crown I'm making from the old one.

JIM

You've had it long, Lu?

LU

Ever since I got my riding job in the show, Jim. And I've got to feeling there is something lucky about it, so I always makes the new one out of the old. It's only the band wears out. I don't know how many new ones I've had by this time. Most every year I've made it over in the spring, when the show starts out.

JIM

It's a long time, Lu. Was you with the show afore you became the 'Diamond Queen'?

LU

Laughing.

'Way back, Jim, I come. It's so far back we'll forget about it, boy—but after they found I could manage the horses, they trained me in for an act, and I've spent my life going round that ring ever since.

JIM

Won't it get you somewhere, Lu?

LU

Smiling.

What? Jest going round the ring?

JIM

I mean—don't you want something else?

LU

Why, Jim, that's all life is fer most of us. Jest going around the ring, doing the same act. They feeds us fer that.

JIM

I know, but—

LU

Softly.

I know, Jim. You told me your dreams when you first came and they be true, boy. You'll find 'em some day.

JIM

I'm all right here, Lu. I don't ask for nothing more as long as you and Danny is here.

LU

But, Jim, you know what I told you. You've got it

in you, Jim, boy, only you never got it out right yet. You'll see a way some day and you're going to do it.

JIM

All of us are, you mean, Lu.

LU

Never you mind the rest of us, Jim, but I've set my heart on your going on.

JIM

Smiling.

Yes—you set your heart on everything around here, Lu.

LU

Enthusiastically.

And it all comes true, Jim. It's the wishing that works it. It's when you don't see your way clear, if you keep on wishing, finally—whatever it was breaks, and they call it luck.

Jim smokes in silence.

JIM

It's funny, Lu.

LU

Everything's funny, Jim—almost.

JIM

Turning to look at her, slowly.

You said the word, Lu—almost—

LU

Well, don't let that worry you. That's the word that lets us see how funny things has to be.

JIM

Nodding slowly.

I reckon I get it, Lu.

LU

Not quite, Jim, because you're different, and that's what makes it so hard. I know, there isn't much a woman don't know about these things. A man jest sees what he wants and fights fer it; he don't feel or think of anything else, he jest fights. But with a woman it's different. If you could only understand, Jim. A woman's got to give. She can't live without giving, and when it ain't children it's everything else. And even if it ain't quite the same—it's almost, Jim—almost.

JIM

Some of us wake up too late, Lu!

LU

Why, that's life, Jim. It begins then. It ain't anything like we think it's going to be. It's only when the fairies come back that we understand.

JIM

The what, Lu?

LU

Why, Jim, ain't you ever seen the children talking and playing with the little things that no one else can see? It's the fairies, Jim. Even the babies when they can't talk—have you ever noticed how all of a sudden they change—and their big

eyes are a-looking through you and a-peering out—

JIM

With a smothered groan.

Don't, Lu!

LU

Softly.

I guessed it, Jim—can't you go back?

JIM

Firmly.

I'm here, Lu.

LU

Quickly.

Then it's almost time for the fairies, Jim. When you can't stand anything more, they come back, and I can tell they be coming soon, Jim, for you can't get on without 'em. What was Danny reading in the cards?

JIM

What do you mean, Lu?

LU

Oh, there's ways of reading things besides the cards.

JIM

He sets a heap of store by what they say.

LU

And what was he telling you, Jim?

JIM

I can't make it out. He said there was some-

thing going to happen; something like "word" was coming to me. And then it seemed that you got mixed up in it.

LU

Rising.

Me, Jim?—me?

JIM

Yes, and he got afraid for you, and he couldn't read no more.

LU

Turning away.

He needn't be afraid for me, Jim. Now I understand.

Holding up the crown.

There, it's most done. Look at it, Jim.

Jim does not look. Lu, reaching out her hand, touches his shoulder.

Goodnight, Jim.

JIM

Quietly.

Thank you, Lu.

Lu crosses to the tent slowly. For a moment she stops and turns towards Jim as if about to speak. The words do not come, but her hands are pressed tightly over her heart as she turns again and slowly enters the tent.

Jim sinks down on the wagon shaft, staring at the cards that have warned him.

SCENE 3

In the silence, high up among the gilded ornaments of the circus wagon, a little figure with a gun is seen, peering cautiously over the top.

JIM

Looking up and watching it.

What you doing up there, sonny?

BOY

I'm afraid.

JIM

Where did you come from?

BOY

I don't know.

JIM

Well, I guess you're skeered out of your wits, ain't you? Come down here; I want to see you.

BOY

You won't bite me?

JIM

Say—

BOY

Nor you won't let the tiger get me?

JIM

You come down here.

The boy descends and walks over into the light. It is the absurd figure of Mr. Bunt.

Why, bless my heart, what's this? Where did you get them clothes? Be you out hunting animals in the menagerie?

MR. BUNT

They're all I got.

JIM

Say, I'm the clown in this circus. What do you think you are?

MR. BUNT

I'm a lost fairy.

JIM

Still astonished.

Er—?

Changing quietly.

That's right, come right out with it. Now that we know each other, don't try and be funny any more. That's my business around here. I'm the clown.

MR. BUNT

But I'm not trying to be funny.

JIM

What's your name?

MR. BUNT

She calls me Mr. Bunt.

JIM

She? You mean your mother?

MR. BUNT

No, I haven't got any mother. The little girl who used to play with me before I got lost.

JIM

Where did you play?

MR. BUNT

With her. She just made me up.

JIM

Well, she made you up fine, I'll say that. But look here, sonny, let's get down to business. We're not doing an act, remember that.

MR. BUNT

I'll do anything you say, sir.

JIM

Forgetting.

You know we could do an act. I can be an awfully funny bear and you could hunt me around with that gun of yours until they laughed their heads off.

MR. BUNT

I would'nt have to kill you, would I? Because I don't like killing things.

JIM

No, you wouldn't have to kill me, and what's more you won't have the chance, because you got to run along home now as fast as you can, before they find you out.

MR. BUNT

Honestly, I haven't got any home.

JIM

Say, young 'un, what do you think you're handing me?

MR. BUNT

Won't anyone in the world believe me?

JIM

Looking at him.

Look here, kid. You're not crying, be you?

MR. BUNT

Sobbing.

What if I am—I can't help it.

JIM

Um-m—right you are. Go ahead and spill. It's the only thing that shows anybody's worth while. But look here, now, if you're lost, I'll take care of you till somebody comes, and you can stay with me.

MR. BUNT

And hunt you as a bear?

JIM

Yes, and hunt me as a bear. I'll teach you all the tricks.

MR. BUNT

Do you think I could learn to be a little clown?

JIM

Sure. I'll learn you to make people laugh till—well, like me—they almost forget.

MR. BUNT

Almost forget what?

JIM

That you've got to go on living—on and on. Some day you'll understand, son. I hope it won't be like me.

Changing.

That's funny. How did I come to talk to you?

MR. BUNT

That's what I'm for—for people to talk to, like

the little girl said. Things she could tell nobody else she could talk with me about.

JIM

Amused.

You're a funny one.

MR. BUNT

Then I can stay?

JIM

Sure, of course you can stay till somebody comes fer you. Roll in under the wagon and in the morning tell them you belong to me, do you hear?

MR. BUNT

Yes, Mr. Clown.

Mr. Bunt rolls under the wagon. Jim stands staring at the moon. Slowly his head sinks down as he leans despondently on the wheel. The figure of Lu is seen stealing toward him softly.

LU

Jim.

Jim looks up at her slowly.

JIM

Lu, if you couldn't cry you couldn't make 'em laugh, you know.

LU

Pitifully.

Don't, Jim—don't—it's killing you.

Lu turns away in agony. The bit of starlit sky which shows above the big tent begins

slowly to glow. Lu's widening eyes stare out upon the fire and a whisper of dumb terror comes :

Jim, what's that !

JIM

Turning slowly, in the moment before the outbreak.

Lu, it's the—show—

SCENE 4

We are back at the Maple Tree again. The stage is dark and empty. Away off, where the little tents of the traveling circus stood, is seen the red glow of the fire. Slowly it increases. A sinister stillness fills the stage. Suddenly the quivering silence of the woods is broken—a twig snaps; something unseen is crossing the stage. One follows simply the weird rustling of the leaves. Again the sound occurs. It is as though strange animals were fleeing through the woods before the oncoming fire. Jim's voice is heard. He is mounting the hillock carrying a lantern. For a moment his figure is silhouetted against the red sky. With him are Lu and Danny. Their clothes are torn and burned. Lu still carries the spangled crown held aimlessly in her hand.

JIM

Looking back.

Danny, I don't like the looks of things.

Descending the hill.

Lu, you'd better rest here; I don't think the fire will get up this far.

LU

Jim, I can't rest with the cries of them poor burning brutes in my ears.

DANNY

Calm yirself, lassie, calm yirself. There, rest a wee bit. It's a black nicht for us—

Lu seats herself on the ground, Danny standing by her.

JIM

Danny, I'm going back again for that kid.

DANNY

He'll nae be there, I tell ye. I saw him running through the woods.

JIM

Then we'll start on the hunt now. I tell you he's the one that has the word for me; I could feel it the minute I laid eyes on him.

DANNY

It might be true, Jim, and the trouble I saw come too.

JIM

Aye, Danny, it has come. But that kid—

At this moment the huge form of a bear rises in silhouette against the red sky.

LU

Jim!

JIM

Danny, give me that knife of yourn. The animals is loose!

Taking knife from Danny.

Look after Lu.

He advances to meet the bear.

LU

Resisting Danny.

Jim, let me stay with you!

The bear is coming on now, with Jim watching him, when suddenly a shot rings out. The bear totters for a moment and then falls before the astonished eyes of Jim.

JIM

Who shot that bear?

DANNY

In wonderment.

Man, it was a grand shot.

JIM

But who shot him, Danny?

DANNY

Ye can ask me—but for aught I ken it was a bricht and shining angel of the Lord.

JIM

Danny, where is that kid? There's something queer here. What was his name?

DANNY

How should I ken? I had nae word wi' him.

JIM

Well, we got to find him, Danny. He's got that word for me you saw in the cards. I know it now.

LU

Jim, I want to help. I'm strong enough.

JIM

You lay there, Lu, you hear. You ain't fit to move after all we've been through this night.

LU

Please let me hunt, Jim.

JIM

No, Lu. It may be all night. Danny and I will find him. And don't you worry, Lu, 'cause the show is gone; I can take care of you and Danny, whatever comes. Danny, take that canyon we just crossed and I'll go back along the creek.

Exit Jim.

DANNY

It's nae guid, tae gang back, Lu; it's a' burned o'er. I'll bide here wi' ye.

LU

No, Danny, Jim's counting on you. Go back through that brush; the kid might be there.

Exit Danny.

SCENE 5

Lu rises and slowly walks among the low bushes, peering into the darkness. She stops for a moment, looking at the dead bear. A tiny cry, as of a child, is heard. She turns suddenly and listens, then rushes off in the direction of the sound, across the hillock toward the fire.

SCENE 6

The red glow is increasing, illuminating the whole scene, painting with fantastic lights the trees that seem to flicker in the leaping flames. The frightened figure of Mr. Bunt appears. He rushes wildly onto the stage. A mysterious sound of voices seems to follow him like some weird, barbaric chant. It rises and falls with the oncoming flames, sweeping in the air above him, striking terror into his little trembling form.

FIRE VOICES

Un—yan—yan—yan—un—yan—yan—yan.

Un—yan—yan—yan—un—yan—yan—yan.¹

With unrelenting cries it pursues him. It swells and dies away and then is taken up more strongly, sweeping through the air.

¹ Anyone who has been among the Arizona Indians can give the correct intonation of the weird monotony and terror of this chant.

Transfixed with terror, Mr. Bunt is staring wildly at the empty sky above him. The rising and falling reflections of the flames play around him in a fantastic dance. He sees the Maple Tree and is now beating frantically on the trunk.

MR. BUNT

Let me in! Let me in!

A VOICE

Who comes? Who comes?

MR. BUNT

Turning and running out to meet the voice, calling:

It is I—I—I—Mr. Bunt—the lost fairy.

FAIRY VOICE

Fairies should be heard, not seen.

MR. BUNT

Please let me in! Please let me in!

Other voices begin to mingle with the rhythmic chant.

FIRE VOICES

Un—yan—yan—yan—un—yan—yan—yan.

Un—yan—yan—yan—un—yan—yan—yan.

Un—yan—yan—yan—un—yan—yan—yan.

FAIRY VOICES

Fairies should be heard, not seen.

Fairies should be heard, not seen.

MR. BUNT

Screaming.

Let me in! Let me in!

VOICES

As if in answer.

Key—key—key—key—key—key—key.

*Mr. Bunt, panic-stricken, rushes about the stage, finally throwing his arms about the Maple Tree.**Gyem springs on the scene, waving his arms to the flames.*

GYEM

Fire, fire, burning bright,
No fairies leave the tree tonight.

VOICES

Key—key—key—key—key—key—key.

Let him in! Let him in! Let him in!

SANDMAN

Entering.

Gyem, will you then let him burn?

MR. BUNT

Running to Gyem.

Gyem—Gyem—save me! Let me in!

GYEM

Forgotten fairies, lost and found,
Seek their shelter in the ground.
You must make your way again,
Share the sorrow and the pain

Of some mortal until he,
By forgetting, sets you free.

FAIRY VOICES

It's the lost fairy !
It's the lost fairy !
Let him in—he'll burn.

GYEM

Too late, too late
To enter here !
Nor have I the magic key
To open wide the Maple Tree.

He disappears. The Sandman stands silently by, for the long last sleep belongs to him. Mr. Bunt drops in terror. As if in mocking comes the answer.

FIRE VOICES

Un—yan—yan—yan—un—yan—yan—yan.

NEW VOICES

In a rush, as though driven before the fire.

Un—ne—ne—na—un—ne—ne—na.

Un—ne—ne—na—un—ne—ne—na.

Un—ne—ne—na—un—ne—ne—na.

Gyem—Gyem—Gyem—Gyem !

Yen—ne—ne—a—yen—ne—ne—a.

Above the ominous chanting the deep voice of the Sandman is now heard as he moves toward the figure of Mr. Bunt.

SANDMAN

Baby fairy of the tree
 Will be burnt and never be
 But the food for fire and flame.
 Gyem—I call you once again !

Enter Gyem. The Sandman calls to him :

Quickly set this fairy free,
 'Ere he perish by the tree.

GYEM

Wildly.

The key is lost.

FIRE VOICES

Un—yen—yen—yen—un—yen—yen—yen.

Un—yen—yen—yen—un—yen—yen—yen.

*The terrifying chant rouses Gyem to action.
 He rushes madly to the hillock. Climbing to
 the top he cups his little hands to call :*

GYEM

West Wind—ho !

*Silence again. Then way off in the distant
 hills is heard a long cry: "West Wind
 blow—o—o—o !"*

*Gyem jumps to the ground. The red fire now
 fills the stage and through the smoke he is
 seen, standing rigidly, watching the Maple
 Tree. The leaves move slightly. Gyem dances
 in delight.*

Oh, for the West Wind,
 West Wind, ho!
 Maple leaves a-dancing go,
 Dance and turn
 To the red, red glow.

*Gyem climbs again to the top of the hillock,
 crying to the flames :*

Come on, O flames,
 And burn your way
 Through the crackling brush
 And the tinder hay :
 With spark and flame
 You'll eat your way ;
 Then stop !
 For the Wind
 Is on its way.

*Slowly the sound of the Wind rises. It grows
 in volume until the chanting of the fire voices
 is lost in the rush of the oncoming storm. The
 flames dance wildly. Then comes the Battle
 Song of the Wind. Black figures in stream-
 ing silver capes rush in, dancing madly about
 the stage, chanting :*

Blow 'em down, West Wind,
 Blow 'em down flat!
 Scatter 'em hither and thither and back ;
 Beating 'em down on their blackened knees,
 Pick off the flames from the burning trees.

The Wind—the Wind—the Wind,
 Ho, for the battle of Wind and Flame,
 Blowing 'em back and back again.
 Oh, ho! Oh, ho!

The red glow of the fire has gone, the stage is black, the wind has died and the figures have departed. Vaguely the figure of the Sandman is seen rising from the prostrate form of Mr. Bunt. He moves away slowly, singing:

SANDMAN

Dream, baby, dream—

A spirit voice from another world breaks in upon the song.

VOICE OF SPIRIT

Sandman, do you bring him to us?

SANDMAN

Not yet, O Spirit of the Air—he lives.

VOICE OF SPIRIT

Sandman, do they not understand on Earth?

SANDMAN

Not yet, O Spirit, are we clearly seen.

VOICE OF SPIRIT

Pass on, O Sandman, with thy sack of dreams,
 O'ershadow by thy visions earthly Fate;
 Guard one who asked but for a tinsel crown;
 Make sweet her dreams, her voyage to our gate.
 Pass on, O Sandman,
 All is well.

Through the smoke the figure of the Sandman is seen moving slowly on his way. Again comes the song.

SANDMAN

Dream, baby, dream,
All your dreams come true.

SCENE 7

The gray dawn comes softly through the woods.

The huddled figure of Mr. Bunt is seen sleeping on the ground close to the dead bear.

Danny's voice is heard calling: "Lu!" He enters and calls again.

Lu's bedraggled figure appears on the hillock.

DANNY

Lu—are ye there, dear?

VOICE OF LU

I'm coming, Danny. Did you find the boy?

DANNY

No' me. Hae ye no seen Jim?

LU

Entering.

No, Danny, I could find no one and the woods were strange and fearful with the fire.

DANNY

We'll bide our time here, lassie. Jim'll be back soon noo daylight has come.

LU

I'm frightened, Danny. I kept following the cry of a child through the woods all night and here I am back where I started. It might all be fancy—but I don't understand.

DANNY

Rising and peering about the stage, then walking right.

It was a strange wild nicht, lassie, and strange fancies come tae me, too, as if mair trouble was coming.

LU

Is everything gone, Danny?

DANNY

A' the show, lassie, ilka stick is gone, burnt up. Aye, lassie, there isna' muckle left for us noo but the spangled croon ye're carryin' in yir hand.

LU

Why, Danny, I must have carried it all night—it brought me luck, once.

DANNY

Keep it, Lu. Ye'll need it, lassie, in the black days that has come upon us all.

He sees Mr. Bunt and the bear. After staring for a moment, puzzled, he turns towards Lu, and in a whisper calls :

Lu!

LU

Rising.

Danny, what is it? Tell me! What have you seen?

DANNY

What hae I no' seen, lassie. I gie ye my word, there's a wee hunter no bigger nor my thumb that shot and kilt the biggest bear i' the whole show.

LU

Crossing.

Have you lost your mind, Danny? What are you talking about?

DANNY

Noo can ye believe yir een.

LU

Rising and drawing Danny away.

It's him, Danny—the strange kid that Jim is hunting. Call Jim! Wait—Danny, wait.

DANNY

What is it, Lassie?

LU

Jim thinks maybe he brought the word—

Pause.

“the word,” that's it.

DANNY

The word—

Going up to Lu.

Ye mean what I was readin' i' the cairds?

LU

Yes, Danny. He thinks the kid has it. He says it's queer things the kid says.

DANNY

If it's the word, Lu, send him awa', for he brings nae luck tae ye. Tak' my word.

LU

Turns and walks away slowly. Then, turning towards Danny again.

No, Danny, we'll not send him away. He must have come for Jim. I know, and oh, Danny, listen before you call Jim—there's something I wants you to do fer me.

She stops and Danny walks over to her.

DANNY

And I'm listenin', lassie, I am.

LU

Sitting down.

Danny, mind when Jim come to us five years back now? How terrible bad he was that night, and how straight he run when you and me took hold of him? Never a drop—and then when he found he could act and he wouldn't leave us?

DANNY

It was no the show.

Shaking his head.

And no me—it was ye, Lu.

LU

Listen, Danny, you don't understand. He's got

to go on, and it ain't for the likes of us to stand in his way.

DANNY

And what dae ye mean by a' this, lassie?

LU

Danny, Jim and me was together last night when the fire broke out. I ain't sayin' I ain't blind mad in love with him. I can't—can't help it. It's just the mother in me, Danny. Last night—it seems years ago—

Pause.

Last night, Danny—I found out he had a home and kids somewhere, and—well, you see, I'm out, Danny, that's all, and—well, you got to help me, Danny.

DANNY

And hoo can I help, Lu?

LU

Why, Danny—

Pause.

I'm going to say—I'm going home.

DANNY

Hame—ye hae no any hame, Lu.

LU

I have if I say I have, Danny, and you understand that?

DANNY

Why, lassie, a' ye've got i' the world is that fool spangled croon. Yir nae goin' ta stop him helpin' ye, are ye?

LU

Yes, Danny. You don't understand — you couldn't, you're only a man. If I don't leave him now I got a chance, I'll never have the strength to do it again; and you'll back me up, Danny, when he comes? It's for his sake, Danny, and oh! he's a man now, I know it!

Danny is silent. Lu continues.

Call him, Danny. Tell him we found the queer kid.

Danny starts to go. Lu puts out her hand.

Wait, Danny, just a minute—till I get hold of myself again. Just a minute now—I'll be all right.

There is a crackling of underbrush.

Oh, Danny, listen—it's him a-coming. Mind you do as I say.

SCENE 8

Jim enters, carrying a lantern.

DANNY

I was just for gi'en ye a cry.

JIM

Have you found the queer kid?

DANNY

He's here, man.

Jim goes quickly to Mr. Bunt and stoops over him.

JIM

Drawing away softly.

He's sleeping, Lu.

LU

Yes, Jim.

JIM

Well, somebody gave that damn bear what was coming to him. You don't suppose that kid shot him—

DANNY

Man, it was a grand shot.

Jim stoops and blows out the lantern.

JIM

It's queer about that kid, Danny; he came running in on me just after your telling me that word would come. It seems like maybe he brought it.

LU

It's him, Jim—I know. He brought you luck.

JIM

Well, we'll need it, Lu, we'll need a-plenty.

Turning out his pockets.

Two bits, a jack-knife and a dead bear. Why, that's quite a collection when you think about it.

Danny and Lu remain silent. Jim, unheeding, repeats :

That's quite a collection, takin' it all in all—now, ain't it, Lu?—to start another circus on. And, Lu, there's the kid. Why, he's a regular

little fairy, darned if he ain't. Of course, of course. Listen, Lu—

Crossing to her.

He was going to hunt me round as a bear, him and me. A sort of act, you know; and now I reckon that bear ain't got much use fer that skin of his'n. Why, we'll get us a wagon and start right back across country, him and me doing the act, and you with—

LU

Jim—you mustn't count on me.

JIM

Looking up.

Not count on you, Lu?

LU

Painfully.

No, Jim, I ain't going. Jim—

She gasps.

I know it's hard fer you to understand—

JIM

Hard fer to understand? Why, Lu, what you thinking—giving up the business—and—

LU

Jim, listen. Set down here by me and listen.

Jim kneels beside her. Lu continues.

Jim, dear—you got to go—you and the kid.

JIM

Why—where are you going, Lu?

LU

Home, Jim.

JIM

Home?

LU

Yes, Jim. Ain't I never told you about my little home up in the—the hills? You see, I've been thinking about quitting it all some time and going back. I've been in the business years longer than you ever have, and I wants a rest, Jim, I wants it bad. And up in my little house on the hill it's so nice, so silent and peaceful. Danny here is going to take me—ain't you, Danny? But you, Jim boy, you got to go on.

JIM

Why, Lu! I can't go on without you and Danny—I can't! I can't leave you, you know that.

LU

Listen, Jim. You got to remember how you been studying for to make something for yourself, and you know more than Danny and me.

JIM

Lu, I don't want nothing, you know that. I wants to come with you. What will I do without you and Danny? You're everything to me.

LU

Jim, you're strong enough now, and if you love us, you'll show what we done for you.

JIM

But where am I going, Lu? What for? I ain't got no home.

LU

You're going on, Jim, I'm telling you—to make your dreams come true.

JIM

But I need you, Lu; indeed I do.

LU

No, Jim. You're going on. Maybe there's someone that needs you now, Jim.

JIM

Someone?

Rising.

Lu, there ain't anybody, for—

Brokenly.

Lu, she said she hoped she'd never see me again—and she never will.

LU

Going to him.

Jim boy, don't! Don't you know you've paid? I don't care what you done—you've paid, Jim—paid in full.

Putting her hands on his shoulders.

Oh, Jim, listen—the queer kid, he brought word. I know he has.

Eagerly.

Danny, it were in the cards, weren't it?

DANNY

Aye, lass.

LU

Listen to him telling you, Jim. Them things means something—and Jim, I'm tired. I want ter rest up in my little home and dream of you going on and making a great actor of yourself. The people need you, Jim. It ain't everybody that can make people laugh the way you can, and you got it, Jim. Ain't he, Danny?

DANNY

Who has been sitting near the hillock, rises.
I'm tellin' ye, lassie. But if ye're goin', Lu, it's time we started.

LU

Steadying herself.

I'm coming, Danny. Jim boy, goodbye.

JIM

Shocked.

Goodbye!

LU

Yes, Jim; now—

They stand staring at each other. Then Lu, with her soft, firm voice, speaks :

Jim, I've made up my mind, so don't ask again. My little voyage is over and I got a quiet harbor waiting for me, but you—you got to go on—understand—for my sake.

JIM

Lu, you can't go like this!

LU

Yes, Jim—I—Oh, Jim, understand!

Exit Danny and Lu.

SCENE 9

Dumbly Jim stands watching them depart ; then he follows, haltingly, to the hill. Behind his back, Mr. Bunt wakes slowly and rubs his eyes. Jim has drawn the knife from his belt and is feeling the edge with his fingers. Mr. Bunt is timidly watching him.

MR. BUNT

Please, sir, couldn't you take me as your fairy ?

JIM

Say, you're a queer kid.

MR. BUNT

I'm a fairy.

JIM

What you say your name was ?

MR. BUNT

Mr. Bunt.

JIM

Well, Mr. Bunt, you just happened along at the right time.

MR. BUNT

Coming up smiling and taking Jim's hand.

And what are you going to do with that knife, now, Mr. Clown ?

JIM

Mr. Bunt, you and me are going to skin that bear.

ACT III

SCENE 1

THE MAPLE TREE AGAIN

It is afternoon. Jim is sitting on the ground, making some alterations in the bearskin. Mr. Bunt is standing with his back turned, looking off at the distant hills beyond.

JIM

What you looking at, Mr. Bunt?

MR. BUNT

Jest the clouds, Mr. Clown.

JIM

Dreaming, hey?

MR. BUNT

Kinder, Mr. Clown. I like to watch the pictures in 'em.

JIM

Pretty, ain't they?

MR. BUNT

Sometimes it seems like I could see beyond, and all sorts of things.

JIM

Well, don't let that bother you. There's lots of things in this world that people don't see—jest because they keep looking inter the next.

MR. BUNT

Are we going to see the world, Mr. Clown?

JIM

That we are, Bunty. And you'll find that it's an awful wide world when you travel on foot.

MR. BUNT

Sitting by Jim.

And where are we going, Mr. Clown?

JIM

Straight over them hills, Bunty, and strange sights we'll see. And new roads we'll foller, and I'll show you the high mountains and the crooked rivers that run to the sea, and the little towns that we go through and the cities with their tall buildings, and we'll keep on going, Bunty, over the hills and all, till we come to the big ocean what you ride on in boats. And then you will see how big the world is, and you can set there and dream, Bunty, and listen to the sea—for it sings to you, Bunty. And once you've heard the song and understand what it means you can't never go 'way but what it follers you and brings you back.

MR. BUNT

And what does it sing about, Mr. Clown?

JIM

Always it sings of a peaceful world, Bunty, and you'll like it, son, fer you can fish and play in the big waves that come galloping in like the

white horses—the kind that Lu used to ride around the circus.

MR. BUNT

And she's gone away now. Don't you miss her, Mr. Clown?

JIM

Miss her, son? Why—

He is speechless. Then, returning to his work, he goes on:

But I understood what she meant when she said she was tired and wanted to rest. I know what it means, Bunty. You only got to say that to me once. And if she's got a home I guess she didn't want me around. So we goes back to the sea, sonny. Back to the sea, fer I heard the song once and I'm going back to it now and listen till I gets it again, and then we can go on, Bunty, and take it with us.

MR. BUNT

Where, Mr. Clown?

JIM

Why—jest on, Bunty. That's all I know. All I wants is to keep the song with me, and when I get lonesome, I goes back to listen.

Jim gets up and shakes out the bearskin.

Now, Bunty, let's try him on. Now that I got poor Big Bear's arms took up a bit, I reckon he'll fit me better.

Jim proceeds to get into the suit with the help of Mr. Bunt.

MR. BUNT

The folks was asking today when we was going to start, fer they wants to see us before we go.

JIM

Stopping.

They was, was they? And did they think I was going without seeing 'em?

MR. BUNT

No—but I think they wanted you to stay.

JIM

I wisht I could, Bunty. Think of the folks fetch-
ing us food to eat and Ellery a-bringing up that
little hand organ fer you, and everybody so kind
to us. You won't find 'em so everywhere, Bunty.
Not by a long shot.

*Jim is now dressed as a bear, except that the
bear's head is hanging like a cowl on his back.*

How do I look?

MR. BUNT

Fine, Mr. Clown.

JIM

Now, Mr. Bunt, get your little organ and swing
it over my shoulder; and you remember that new
act I taught you?

MR. BUNT

The one with the strings?

JIM

Tell me what you're going to do so I kin be sure.

MR. BUNT

When you give the signal by putting your paws in front of your face—

He makes the movement.

I come and make out as to tie strings to your hands and feet, and when that's done I goes over and plays the organ and pulls the string and that makes you dance.

JIM

Right as a trivet. You're doing fine. And remember, when you do it, be awful important about it and feel, for the feeling gits over more than the words. Well, I guess we're ready now.

Mr. Bunt is looking at the Maple Tree.

Hate to leave the tree, do you?

MR. BUNT

Yes, Mr. Clown.

JIM

Well, I tell you, Mr. Bunt, if we'd stayed here much longer, the way you was digging inter them roots, that tree would have fell down.

Jim slips the bear's head down over his own and straps it on. He continues from inside the head.

Greatest little feller I ever did see fer digging. Wait till we git to the sand. You'll like it there. Come on, Bunty, it's going to be a long journey—a bit too long fer your little legs.

Picking him up.

Come on, son, I'll tote you.

Holding him tight.

Don't cry, sonny. I'll let you dig at every maple tree we come to, and maybe you'll find them fairies some day—the ones you was talking about.

He starts off, carrying Mr. Bunt and the organ.

SCENE 2

Again the cottage in the woods. Rose, the mother, and Annie are sitting on the low stoop. Annie is talking to her mother, evidently about Dabs, who lies peacefully asleep on the balcony above.

ANNIE

And, Mummy, he was awful bad all day. First thing he did after you left this morning was to bust that pane of glass right out with his sling shot, and it fell all over the flower bed. And then when I took him down in the village he got in a fight with another boy and bloodied his nose all over everything; and then he hollered at the man with the peanut stand, who chased him and—

ROSE

Worried.

Annie, it's so bad I don't know whether to laugh or cry.

ANNIE

Continuing.

And the man told him to "get the hell out of here!"

ROSE

Annie, you mustn't say that word.

ANNIE

Innocently.

I didn't, Mummy. The man said it right out. You know the corner by the merry-go-round.

ROSE

But don't you know you mustn't repeat that word?

ANNIE

But I ain't, Mummy, I was just saying what the horrid man said. He said—

ROSE

Annie, think. Now do as Mummy says.

ANNIE

Meekly.

I am—but Dabs he tells everybody to "get the hell out of here!"

ROSE

Annie, darling, listen to me. Don't you remember the story I told you about the little girl who said naughty words, and her mother didn't know what to do with her and—

ANNIE

Without seeing in the least how it applies to her.

Yes, she was a horrid little girl and her mother

had to take her to an old magician who lived in a tower, and every time she said a horrid word a toad hopped right out of her mouth.

ROSE

Encouragingly.

Yes, and what then, Annie?

ANNIE

Oh, Mummy. You don't mean that I'm that little girl—am I?

Looking up at her mother.

Do you, Mummy?

ROSE

Annie, I am afraid we are all little girls like that, and it takes us a long while to grow up and learn not to say things that hurt people.

ANNIE

Oh, Mummy. I try so hard, 'deed I do, because I want to grow up and be just like you, and I don't want the horrid toads following me round like they did that little girl, everywhere she went, and sitting and looking at her—

ROSE

I'm afraid, Annie, that all of us make mistakes sometimes. We can't help it.

ANNIE

Oh, Mummy—you never said anything horrid, did you? You couldn't.

ROSE

Gently.

Annie, I'm only really a little girl like you, and I

need help just the way you do; and once upon a time, long, long ago—

ANNIE

Oh, Mummy, it's a story.

ROSE

Yes, Annie, it's a story.

ANNIE

And are there fairies in it and everything?

ROSE

There were a great many fairies in it at first, and the most beautiful fairy in the world.

ANNIE

And was there a fairy prince all in gold?

ROSE

Yes, and the fairy prince all in gold. A fairy prince who said he was looking for something that was lost. And the girl thought it was wonderful; but she didn't know why, after the fairy prince had found her, he should go on looking for something that was lost. For the little girl thought she was everything, and she didn't understand then how things are always getting lost, how we must always be hunting for them and bringing them back, so the fairy prince would go away hunting and leave the little girl alone. And when he came back he would be very tired and discouraged, because he could never find the way that led to things that were lost.

And the little girl didn't understand, and the prince became more and more discouraged, so that there came a time when he would not go hunting any more, but just sat all day and did nothing, and the little girl, who wanted all the beautiful things in the world, couldn't understand why the prince didn't go and get them for her. So it got worse and worse, and all the fairies began to leave slowly, one by one, and the little girl grew more and more bitter, because all her dreams of what the prince might have been were slipping away from her. And one day, when they hadn't any money or anything, the little girl told the prince that she hoped she would never see him again—and the prince, who was really only a little boy, got up very slowly and looked at the little girl, and he didn't say anything, but there were tears in his eyes, and he went away and was never seen again.

ANNIE

Did you see the tears in his eyes, Mummy?

ROSE

Yes, Annie, but it was only a long while afterwards that I remembered them, and it was too late then.

ANNIE

And did the prince ever find what he was looking for?

ROSE

I don't know, Annie, except we all find it—only to some of us it comes very late.

ANNIE

It would be funny if he didn't find it and you, who stayed at home, did—wouldn't it, Mummy?

ROSE

Yes, Annie. It comes like the forgotten fairies—they understand the things we are hunting for.

ANNIE

You know, Mr. Bunt never came back. I didn't forget him, either, and I have called so many times, but he never came. Why is it, Mummy?

The strains of a hand-organ are heard coming slowly through the woods. Annie listens and runs down the path, leaving her mother, who sits staring before her.

Annie calls excitedly :

Oh, Mummy, come and see. It's a little boy and a bear, and they're coming down our path.

Turning to Rose, who has risen and walked towards her.

Why, Mummy, it's Mr. Bunt!

ROSE

Now, Annie, it couldn't be, you know. He was just your invisible playmate.

ANNIE

But, Mummy, it looks just like him.

ROSE

It's just a funny little boy, and you mustn't call him Mr. Bunt, because he wouldn't understand.

ANNIE

Oh, he would! he would!

ROSE

He'll only laugh at you, Annie. You had better mind what I say.

ANNIE

Repeating to herself:

Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt.

Dabs, asleep on the balcony, wakes slowly and, sitting up, rubs his eyes.

Annie calls to him:

Dabs, Dabs! Quick! There's a bear coming down our path!

DABS

Yawning.

Tell it to get the hell out of here!

Rose turns and looks up at him in despair.

ANNIE

Oh, come quick! They are coming right by, Dabs!

Dabs, now fully awakened to the excitement of the situation, attempts to get in the window, which he finds locked. In writhing impatience he turns and hangs over the rail, begging his mother to come up and let him out. Rose enters the house, but the excitement is too

much for Dabs and, climbing over the railing, he drops to the ground below, just as the bear and Mr. Bunt enter, followed by a crowd of delighted children.

SCENE 3

The crowd makes a semi-circle about the bear, who is nodding and waving his great shaggy paws at the people, when the window opens and Rose looks out. The bear, who is doing some very funny steps, happens to look up and catches sight of her. He ends quite suddenly, so suddenly that Mr. Bunt is very much frightened and stops the organ and goes timidly over and looks up at the face of the great bear that stands above him so rigidly, staring at Rose on the balcony.

And then the bear moves his great paws slowly towards his face as though to shield it, to cut out something from his view, and he is trembling. And then, oh then, Mr. Bunt understands, of course, that it is the signal to do the magic string dance. So Mr. Bunt, with all the air of a great showman, reaches up and draws down the great paws, pretending to attach strings to them and his feet, and in a pretty pantomime shows that he is going to

make the bear dance. He then withdraws, holding the imaginary strings in his hands. He pulls one boldly, the arms go up a little—slowly perhaps, and then hang as though suspended. He pulls another; a foot comes up. The people are beginning to see the joke. Annie and Dabs are clapping their hands, and now Mr. Bunt begins a jingling little tune on the organ and with the other hand pretends to pull the strings that make the bear dance. No more ridiculous, absurd dance could be conceived and the bear is doing it wonderfully, with oh, so many little steps. How the children are laughing and the pennies are raining down in the ring!

Finally the bear stops dancing, and Mr. Bunt is collecting the money and Dabs is trying to imitate the bear, and the bear, who is watching him, suddenly tugs on his chain and starts, dragging Mr. Bunt with him. And then the crowd becomes frightened, and Rose leaves the window to open the door for the children. Mr. Bunt has fallen, and everyone is rushing to safety, while the bear becomes confused and finally drops on the bench, dazed.

Mr. Bunt runs over to him and in a frightened manner is unstrapping the bear's head. As he draws it off, the door opens and Rose comes

out. The children enter and the door shuts behind them. Rose turns toward Mr. Bunt and the bear just as Jim's great shaggy paws drop from his face. With a gasp, Rose is at his side.

ROSE

Jim! It was you—

JIM

Rose—I—I—

ROSE

You saw—you were going by—you weren't going to speak to me?

JIM

But you said—

ROSE

Oh, Jim boy—can't you forgive me? I didn't understand—I didn't.

JIM

But it's me you got to forgive, Rose—me.

ROSE

Oh, Jim. I forgave you years ago. It was myself I couldn't forgive.

JIM

Don't, Rose!

ROSE

And you've come back to me now, Jim—back out of the dark forest?

JIM

Do you want me, Rose?

ROSE

Want you, Jim? Can you ask?

JIM

I never found anything, Rose. I lost myself.

ROSE

Smiling.

So did I, Jim; but I've found you now. Jim, both of us were lost, indeed we were; and don't you see we can't get lost now—there are two of us. And the children—oh, Jim, how could you pass them?

JIM

Would they know me now, Rose?

ROSE

Jim, they need you.

JIM

And you really want me to come back, Buddy?

ROSE

Oh, Jim, can't you feel? Jim, call me that again—what you used to call me when the fairies were here.

They are in each other's arms, and only after he has kissed her do we hear the word "Buddy."

Then the door opens and Mr. Bunt in a hurried manner comes running out of the house with a pail, slopping the water as he comes. He stops as he sees Rose and Jim. He is waiting timidly to be recognized. Jim doesn't see him. He comes over on tiptoe, looking in a wondering way at them. In the silence he tries a little to attract their attention. His

efforts are without result. He steps back by the rain pipe.

Rose looks up at Jim, and speaks softly :

Jim, dear heart—the children—

They have started towards the door when Rose sees the pail.

Why, Jim, that's our pail. Where did it come from?

She looks around, wondering. Annie and Dabs are seen looking out of the window.

JIM

Smiling.

I guess those little rascals put it there.

They enter the house.

But Mr. Bunt is left behind. He goes over to pick up the pail and is stooping over it when suddenly his face lights up.

MR. BUNT

Aghast.

Why, I'm a forgotten fairy!

With a leap he starts off the stage on a run for the Maple Tree.

Annie comes out and gets the pail and is looking anxiously in the direction where Mr. Bunt has disappeared. For a moment she hesitates and then calls pathetically, "Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt!" The lights go out. The voice is still heard calling softly in the distance, "Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt!"

SCENE 4

The lights come on slowly, and we are in the land of the forgotten fairies. On the gate is a sign, reading: FORGOTTEN FAIRIES WITHOUT KEYS WILL PLEASE KEEP AWAY FROM THIS GATE. By Order of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS. In spite of this warning, two little fairies are doing their best to look through the keyhole. Annie's voice is still heard calling "Mr. Bunt!" But the voice seems changed and is drawing closer, when a very little fairy, dressed with a great many brass buttons, rapidly crosses the stage, calling "Mr. Bunt! Mr. Bunt! Mr. Bunt!"—and off.

The fairies at the keyhole of the gate have paused for a moment to watch Buttons come and go.

FIRST FAIRY

There he goes again, calling Mr. Bunt.

SECOND FAIRY

My! he thinks he's important.

FIRST FAIRY

There's no Mr. Bunt here.

SECOND FAIRY

Of course not, he's outside.

FIRST FAIRY

What else is outside?

SECOND FAIRY

I don't know. Nobody knows.

FIRST FAIRY

Who's nobody?

SECOND FAIRY

We all are. Forgotten.

FIRST FAIRY

And that is all we know?

SECOND FAIRY

Yes, except that this is where they all come in.

FIRST FAIRY

And they're so sort of asleep when they come in?

SECOND FAIRY

Yes, and they act funny and say funny things until the gate closes behind them.

FIRST FAIRY

When do they come?

SECOND FAIRY

Oh, any time. You can never tell.

FIRST FAIRY

Let's stay and ask the next one that comes in.

SECOND FAIRY

It's no use. They never remember, after their eyes open, what they said—or anything about it.

FIRST FAIRY

Can you remember anything?

SECOND FAIRY

No, nobody can.

FIRST FAIRY

Let's play here today and watch.

SECOND FAIRY

Looking up suddenly.

Look out! Here comes the Gateman.

An enormous and fierce Gateman enters, with a big club in his hand, with which he chases the fairies, who run with shouts of laughter about the stage and scatter in flight until he is left alone, when he walks over and takes his place directly in front of the gate, and then the fierce look on his face gradually fades away into a big contented smile.

SCENE 5

BUTTONS

Again enters and rapidly crosses the stage, calling in a very mechanical and important manner :

Mr. Gateman, Mr. Gateman, Mr. Gateman.

GATEMAN

That's for me, son.

BUTTONS

Sign here, please.

He takes one of the two little messages off his little silver platter and presents it to the Gate-

man. In the meantime the little fairies have been creeping back on the stage to see what is going on.

A FAIRY

A message for Mr. Gateman.

A LITTLE FAIRY

Excited.

Something doing all the time, here.

ANOTHER FAIRY

Ain't it fine?

The Gateman has solemnly taken the telegram and is looking at it thoughtfully. Getting on his spectacles with great difficulty and a great many "Dear me, dear me's", he finally gets the slip signed, whereupon Buttons who, with his feet apart, has been surveying him from head to foot, demands in an important voice:

BUTTONS

Do you have much trouble with the children?

GATEMAN

Hey, what?

BUTTONS

Do you find your work easy here?

GATEMAN

What work?

BUTTONS

Why, you guard the Gate, don't you?

GATEMAN

Oh, dear me, no. I'm just the Gateman.

BUTTONS

What are you here for?

GATEMAN

To chase the children. They like to be chased. It's a game. We don't have any rules here.

BUTTONS

Oh, I see. That's like me. I like to be important and busy so they made me the Bell Hop, so I can go around anywhere and shout out names.

GATEMAN

You like it?

BUTTONS

Seriously.

It's a very important position.

With which he looks down at the other telegram on the silver platter and walks off, shouting:

Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt—

In a very mechanical and impressive way.

 SCENE 6

GATEMAN

Coming forward with telegram.

The message says: "PREPARE TO RECEIVE FORGOTTEN FAIRY. HAVE KEY READY. Signed, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS."

FAIRIES

The key, the key, the key! Someone has found
the key. Think of that!

GATEMAN

Goes over and takes down key from wall.
It is very rusty. No one has had it for so long.

A FAIRY

Let me clean it.

ANOTHER FAIRY

Please let me help.

GATEMAN

All right. Come! Everyone to work.

*The Gateman is now busy dusting off the
gate and taking down the sign, and the little
fairies are all at work shining the big key, and
surprisingly enough its green mottled surface
begins to change to gold.*

A FAIRY

Singing.

Gold is yellow, I can see;

Gold is yellow, I can see.

ALL

In chorus.

Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub,

Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub.

A FAIRY

Someone's coming for the key;

Someone's coming for the key.

ALL

In chorus.

Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub,
 Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub, Rub.

A FAIRY

We forgotten fairies—we,
 Polishing the hidden key.

ALL

In chorus, sustained.

Key-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e!

The Gateman enters and, taking the huge key from the fairies, as drum major leads them off the stage, all singing, to the tune of "London Bridge":

Make them welcome everyone,
 Everyone, everyone,
 Make them welcome everyone,
 When your work is done.

In triumphal procession they bear away the shining key.

SCENE 7

A loud knocking is heard on the gate. It is repeated and continues, but no one appears. Finally it stops, and the stage remains silent and empty.

Suddenly the figure of Mr. Bunt is seen climbing over the gate. Reaching the top he sits there and looks around.

The huge Gateman enters.

GATEMAN

Hey, what are you doing there?

MR. BUNT

Getting my breath.

GATEMAN

Well, you can get it just as well down here. I've had no complaints about the air, so far.

Mr. Bunt climbs down and dusts himself off.

The Gateman eyes him suspiciously.

Bless my heart, I never saw you before.

MR. BUNT

Casually.

I'm the forgotten fairy.

GATEMAN

What?

MR. BUNT

Serenely repeating.

I'm the forgotten fairy.

GATEMAN

Do you mean to say you climbed over the wall?

MR. BUNT

I did.

GATEMAN

Not only is that a very undignified way to come in but it is against all the regulations. I shall go at once to the Owl about it.

MR. BUNT

Please don't. He'll make an awful fuss and feathers.

GATEMAN

In a terrible voice.

He will, will he?

MR. BUNT

Yes, he'll say that I've thrown the whole works out of order. He said that the last time.

GATEMAN

In a VERY TERRIBLE voice.

Did he, indeed? Well, now, wait till he gets you this time!

The Gateman goes out with a blood-curdling "Ha, ha, ha!" leaving Mr. Bunt alone and very much frightened.

SCENE 8

MR. BUNT

In despair.

Am I still a lost fairy?

At this moment the important Buttons enters.

BUTTONS

Crosses the stage, calling:

Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt.

MR. BUNT

I'm Mr. Bunt.

BUTTONS

Sign here.

MR. BUNT

What is it?

BUTTONS

Message from a little girl in the woods. Wants you.

MR. BUNT

But I'm a forgotten fairy.

BUTTONS

Oh no, you're not. You go right back, you do.

MR. BUNT

Why—I just got here.

BUTTONS

Never mind, back you go. And what's more, if I ever told the Board of Directors what I know about you, you'd be doing an awful lot of explaining.

He stalks off and begins calling again :

Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt, Mr. Bunt.

He turns around and stops, in a disgusted manner.

There, you see, it's just a habit now. I've paged you so much I just go right on paging you.

He struts out in disgust.

Mr. Bunt goes over and stands by the gate.

SCENE 9

GATEMAN

Entering.

Ha, ha, he says he's coming to get you and take you to the Board of Directors.

MR. BUNT

Isn't there any way for me to get away? There's a little girl waiting for me in the woods.

GATEMAN

What?

MR. BUNT

I just got the message.

GATEMAN

Whispering.

Oh! If the gate opens before they get here, slip out.

SCENE 10

He goes off on tiptoe, leaving Mr. Bunt at the gate. The fairies are returning with garlands of roses, and Mr. Bunt, hidden by the huge gate posts, watches them. They arrange themselves in two lines, leading to the gate, when the voice of the Sandman is heard approaching outside, singing.

SANDMAN

Dream, baby, dream—

FAIRIES

The Sandman!

SANDMAN

Continuing.

Sleep—sleep—

DEEP VOICE

Outside gate.

The Forgotten Fairy.

The gates move apart as if by magic, and from the silent night Lu enters, carrying her little tinsel crown. She steps slowly into the light.

VOICE OF DANNY

From outside the gate.

And dae ye nae ken me, Lu? It's Danny.

LU

Whose eyes are closed, lifts her head and speaks softly.

Yes, Danny, I can hear your voice.

DANNY

And if ever I see Jim, and he mat be askin' aboot ye, lassie, will ye nae leave me a word for him?

LU

Yes, Danny—tell him I went home, Danny—to the—

Her eyes open, and in delighted surprise she calls :

Danny, there be fairies all around—and—

She stands with her arms outstretched in silence, and as the fairies gather around her the Sandman is heard singing softly, on his way back to earth.

Mr. Bunt is far ahead of him, on his way to Annie.

THE END

AFTERWORD

BY

MAURICE BROWNE

AFTERWORD

Mr. Remsen has honored me by an invitation to write a footnote to MR. BUNT. I have heard the play read and seen it acted; but there has been, of course—in the midst of its simultaneous production and publication—no copy available for bystanders to read; nor indeed, had there been, would there have been due time to read it—at least to read it aright, for the play demands and deserves a quiet and unhurried mind. So all that I can say is said from those two memories, of hearing it read and seeing it played.

When, a week or two before its production, the author read it to his producing staff and let me listen, no one who was present—even if, like myself, he had before known at first hand none of Mr. Remsen's plays, nor indeed any of his writings—could but recognize that here was something with a real reason for existence: the things said were things that mattered; they were mellow, they were radiant and wise, they were infinitely tender, and they were said with rapture.

Its dramatic qualities were harder to judge; but there seemed, perhaps, faults in the architecture, a lack of structural unity, almost, it might be,

of organic growth in the form itself. Was there "story", suspense, a plot that "held"? Were there acting values? I, for one, could not tell. There was a rich humanity, I knew; there was marked creative power, I believed. Was there drama? I did not know.

At the first performance, many of these doubts were resolved. Maybe the inevitable changes which rehearsal brings accounted, in part at least, for the fact; but at all events there was clearly now a unified story, with plot, acting values and even, though in a lesser degree, suspense. That lovely "something" which I had heard read had become for me, quite definitely, a play. And if the category, as we know it, of "play" is not wide enough to include MR. BUNT, then so much the worse for the category.

The extraordinary charm of the production which MR. BUNT was given intensified this feeling. First, there was the magic of that fairy glade which is Carmel's Forest Theater—the stillness of the great trees, the rare call of a bird, the deep heart of night under the stars and near the sea; we came and we went by lantern light, and our voices and our feet fell gently on the pine needles and the quiet earth. Add to that spacious silence a simple beauty of staging and costume, delicate and unobtrusive lighting, sensi-

tive music from wind-instruments and strings, and above all the naive and spontaneous joy which children (of all ages) take in their own make-believe, and it is easy to tell why we sat, a hushed and enchanted audience, with the lump of sheer delight gulping in our throats for two unbroken hours. In the best sense of the word, it was an *amateur* performance: love lay in every moment of it; and it was an articulate and expressive love with singularly few traces of that other quality so abhorrent to the artist, *amateurishness*.

To that evening of magic, only a heart dulled by worldliness to all the tender and brooding charm of wistfulness and naive beauty could have remained insensible. Maybe there is overmuch sentimentalism, maybe overmuch preaching, in MR. BUNT; I dare say; but unhappy are they who have not eyes to see the ripeness of threshed grain, nor ears to hear the moral order of the stars in heaven.

This footnote is written hurriedly, with the printing presses waiting for the final "signature"; that inevitably precludes any considered criticism of the play as such, and I have to content myself with half-evasive statements, philosophical rather than aesthetic. As a man of the theater, I would like to weigh this and to balance that, to discuss—for instance—whether the play is, or

should be, "Lu's tragedy" or "Jim's comedy". That, and all such criticism, is not possible here. But there is one opinion which every critic is bound to express, every critic at least who believes, as I believe, that a primary function of any work of art is to evoke a corresponding mood in the spectator. MR. BUNT, in performance especially, evokes and sustains such a mood, at all events for me, with mastery.

The particular mood of MR. BUNT is one of which our theater, like our life, today has desperate need. It is the mood of "Prunella" and of "Peter Pan". By those plays, which in their own way are masterpieces, this play must be judged. It challenges the comparison, and it merits it.

Until it can be read in print and at leisure—and not then, likely enough—will one be able even to form an opinion as to whether or not it is "literature"; how important it may be as "drama" is, for this hurried but happy once, no concern of the critic; but that it is, for me, a thing of magic and of beauty, my own experience with it tells me. And for that, among much else, I am grateful to its author.

In this quiet place, with its few hundred residents (and its several thousand summer visitors) there are three non-commercial theaters—one of

them an open-air theater that is fragrant, peaceful and lovely; another an interesting and typical "little theater"; the third the most beautiful and best-equipped indoor theater of its size in the whole country. Some of us, who love the Theater greatly, believe that in America today, and especially on this Pacific Coast, a true dramatic Birth begins; a few of us dream that it may perhaps even come here, in this little town with its three theaters between the mountains and the sea. It is at least a happy augury that so delicate and kind a work of the human imagination as MR. BUNT should be the first in a series of projected publications of Carmel plays. May it have worthy successors.

MAURICE BROWNE.

July 4, 1924.

The music used in the production of MR. BUNT
was written especially for the play by
FREDERICK PRESTON SEARCH

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