



THE DREAMING

OR

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Musical in Two Acts

by

Howard Goodall

and

Charles Hart

Based on the play

by

William Shakespeare

Guildford Draft  
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## CHARACTERS

JULIAN, Lord Melstock.....	A young aristocrat, 20's.....
HENRIETTA, Lady Melstock.....	His wife, 20's.....
MATTHEWS.....	His gamekeeper, 50's.....
BOWLES.....	His butler, 40's.....
CHARLOTTE.....	Matthews' daughter, early 20's.....
ALEXANDER.....	A penniless artist (loved by Charlotte), early 20's.....
DAVID.....	A young officer (suitor of Charlotte), early 20's.....
JENNIFER.....	The Admiral's daughter (in love with David), early 20's.....
ANGEL.....	King of the Woodlanders, teens.....
SYLVIA.....	Queen of the Woodlanders, teens.....
JACK.....	The blacksmith's boy.....
REV HERBERT PLUM.....	The vicar.....
NICK CHEEK.....	The butcher.....
WALTER GRUBB.....	The butcher's boy.....
SETH WILMOT.....	A farmer.....
JESS DUNN.....	Farm-hand.....
BOB FRY.....	Sexton.....
COMPANY.....	Woodlanders, Lord Melstock's house-guests, villagers.....

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The action takes place over a midsummer's weekend in 1913 in woodland, park and garden in and around Broxton, a hilltop manor near Midsomer Magna, a quiet Somerset village.

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

### Act One

1.	<u>Thursday's Children</u>	JACK	Song
2.	<u>Dream-Nights -- start</u>	JULIAN & HENRIETTA	Song
2A.	<u>Dream-Nights -- concl</u>	SAME	Song/Duet
3.	<u>Cuckoo-Song</u>	VILLAGERS	Ensemble
3A.	<u>Cuckoo-Song -- reprise</u>	VILLAGERS & PLUM	Ensemble
3B.	<u>Thursday's Children</u> -- reprise	JACK	Song (fragment)
4.	<u>Heart of the Wood</u>	SYLVIA, ANGEL, WOODLANDERS & JACK	Ensemble
5.	<u>Love-in-Idleness</u>	ANGEL & BOY-WOODLANDERS	Song/Ensemble
6.	<u>Night and Silence</u>	SYLVIA, GIRL-WOODLANDERS & ANGEL	Song/Ensemble
6A.	<u>Love-in-Idleness</u> -- reprise #1	JACK	Song (fragment)
7.	<u>Jennifer</u>	ALEXANDER & JENNIFER	Duet
8.	<u>The Banner of Saint</u> <u>George -- pre-echo #1</u>	CHEEK & VILLAGERS	Song/Ensemble (fragment)
8A.	<u>The Banner of Saint</u> <u>George -- pre-echo #2</u>	VILLAGERS	Ensemble (fragment)
8B.	<u>The Banner of Saint</u> <u>George -- pre-echo #3</u>	VILLAGERS	Ensemble (fragment)
9.	<u>Finale</u>	COMPANY	Ensemble

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## Act Two

1.	<u>Under the Hill</u>	ANGEL, JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS	Ensemble
1A.	<u>The Rising of the Sun</u> -- pre-echo	DAVID	Song (fragment)
2.	<u>Jennifer -- reprise</u>	DAVID, ALEXANDER & JENNIFER	Trio
3.	<u>Midsummer Madness</u>	CHARLOTTE, JENNIFER, ALEXANDER & DAVID	Quartet
3A.	<u>Catch Me If You Can</u> -- introduction	ANGEL	Song (fragment)
4.	<u>Catch Me If You Can</u>	JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS (& DAVID, ALEXANDER, JENNIFER & CHARLOTTE & ANGEL)	Song/Ensemble
4A.	<u>Dreaming (The Dreaming)</u> -- pre-echo	JACK	Song (fragment)
4B.	<u>Love-in-Idleness</u> -- reprise #2	ANGEL	Song (fragment)
5.	<u>Dreaming (The Dreaming)</u>	ANGEL, SYLVIA & WOODLANDERS	Duet/Ensemble
6.	<u>The Rising of the Sun</u>	COMPANY	Ensemble
6A.	<u>Dreaming (The Dreaming)</u> -- reprise	DAVID, ALEXANDER, JENNIFER & CHARLOTTE	Quartet
6B.	<u>The Banner of Saint George -- pre-echo #4</u>	PLUM, VILLAGERS & CHEEK	Ensemble (fragment)
7.	<u>Finale</u>	COMPANY	Ensemble

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NOTE

1. A vertical line in the left-hand margin of the text ...



... denotes areas of overlapping text.

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2. A vertical line running centrally through the text ...



... denotes the presence of music (underscoring) outside the boundaries of musical numbers.

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ACT ONE

Scene One

(Darkness. Distant thunder. Lights, very low, revealing ...  
... Woodland. Summer dusk. Silence. Then, in the distance,  
a VOICE.)

VOICE (off, receding)

Jack ... Jack ... Jack ...

(Little by little we make out the shape of a boy of about  
twelve -- scruffy, with huge, haunted eyes, hiding: JACK. He  
is holding a small, purple flower. He gazes into the petals.

Music: eerie waltz.

|  
As JACK stares into the flower, shadowy FIGURES begin to  
materialize around him. They glide by in elegant, spectral  
dance, swirling around JACK in the sepia half-light.

|  
The music stops.

The DANCERS freeze, then vanish. JACK gazes up at the  
darkening sky.)

JACK (suddenly)

They don't know, they don't, they don't know nothing, none of them. Jack knows, Jack  
does. It come dark and he do dream it.

(New music.)

|  
Bat-light. Fly, crow, says Jack. Home, crow, home to darkening wood. Leave Jack to  
his night, says Jack. Who's here now?

|  
(half-sung)

|  
Only us, says the woodlanders ... only us now ... only us ...

1. "Thursday's Children" Song

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JACK

THERE IS A LAND  
OF GOLD AND GREEN  
WHICH SOME HAVE SUNG  
BUT NONE HAVE SEEN



AND IN THIS PLACE  
A GENTLE RACE  
WHICH WANDERS FREE

A DARKLING RACE  
WITH SPARKLING EYES  
THOUGH THEY BE WILD  
YET THEY BE WISE  
THEY LIVE APART  
WITH HAPPY HEART  
AND THEY ARE FREE

THURSDAY'S CHILDREN  
BARE-FOOT AND FOREST-BORN  
WILD AS THE SPARROW-THORN  
FREE AS THE KITE

THURSDAY'S CHILDREN  
HIDING YET EVER-NEAR  
RIDING THE FALLOW-DEER  
RAIN-WASHED BY NIGHT

A BOY AND GIRL  
IN GOLD AND GREEN  
DO WEAR THE ROBES  
OF KING AND QUEEN  
AND HAND IN HAND  
THEY RULE THAT LAND  
WHERE ALL ARE FREE

AND COMES A NIGHT  
IN EVERY YEAR  
THERE BE A PLACE  
THEY DO APPEAR  
AND IN A RING  
BY MOONLIGHT SING  
THAT THEY ARE FREE

THURSDAY'S CHILDREN  
RAG-DOLLS AND RUNAWAYS  
PLAY WHERE THE OTTER PLAYS  
STARS OVERHEAD

THURSDAY'S CHILDREN  
WIND-BLOWN AS MEADOWGRASS  
LAKE FOR A LOOKING-GLASS  
MOSS FOR A BED



(Somewhere, in country-house setting, a butler, BOWLES, moves, silver salver in hand, among DANCING COUPLES. HENRIETTA, a young woman in evening-gown, appears. She takes from the tray glasses and a bottle, and runs out with them, weaving between the DANCERS, who freeze, as our attention returns to the woodland.)

(JACK)

THERE IS A LAND  
OF GREEN AND GOLD  
THAT SOME HAVE SEEN  
BUT NEVER TOLD  
AND KNOWING LIES  
BEHIND THE EYES  
OF THEM THAT SEE

(He wanders through the forest of frozen FIGURES.)

FOR THEM THAT SEE  
KNOW ALL TOO WELL  
IF THEY DID THINK  
TO TALK AND TELL  
THAT GENTLE RACE  
WITH SHINING FACE  
NO MORE WOULD BE

(The FIGURES fade and vanish.)

NO  
THURSDAY'S CHILDREN  
WOULD NEVERMORE  
NO NEVERMORE  
BE FREE

(Distant church clock. JACK hears it. At the same time, the scene begins to change.)

---

|

|  
Scene 1-A

|  
(As the scene shifts, we hear offstage a MAN's VOICE calling:  
"Henry! Henry!" JACK looks up, then mockingly apes it,  
running off into the shadowy woodland.)

|  
JACK (disappearing)

Henry ... Henry ... Henry ...

|  
(The scene changes to ...)

|

|  
Scene Two

|  
(Woodland. Summer evening.

|  
Music out.

HENRIETTA runs in, laughing. She is carrying the bottle of champagne and two glasses. She sits, recovering her breath.)

JULIAN (off, calling)

Henry! Henry!

(JULIAN runs in, searching. He too wears evening dress. He sees her.)

(JULIAN)

Henry, darling! What on earth are you doing here?

HENRIETTA

Nothing. Hiding.

JULIAN

Quite extraordinary.

HENRIETTA

Am I?

JULIAN

Of course. Why else would I have married you?

HENRIETTA

Oh.

JULIAN

Come on, Henrietta. Stop hiding. We have to go back.

HENRIETTA (pulling him away)

Because?

JULIAN

Because they're all waiting for us, if you must have a because.

HENRIETTA

Let them wait, then. I want you to myself a while.

(She kisses him, pulling him down onto the ground. He

breaks off.)

JULIAN

Come on. Can't start without us, can they, old girl. Our guests, our house.

HENRIETTA

Your birthday. Anyway, it's days away.

JULIAN

How did you find your way down here, Henry? It's years since I've even thought of ...

(HENRIETTA looks round sharply.)

HENRIETTA

What was that?

JULIAN

What?

HENRIETTA

I thought ...

(BOTH listen.)

JULIAN

No. Nothing. Nothing here but convolvulus arvensis and pipistrellus pipistrellus. Bats and bindweed.

HENRIETTA (looking around)

What woods are these?

JULIAN

Ah -- very old woods, these are. Fern Woods, they call them, though there's a good deal more nettle than fern these days. Careful where you tread. Midsummer is when the fern all blooms. And whoever catches the seed -- so they say -- is endowed with supernatural powers. So there you are.

HENRIETTA

Fern woods ...

JULIAN

Old and vast and wild. You wouldn't want to be out here after dark. Come on.

HENRIETTA

Why? Why wouldn't you?

2. "Dream-Nights" -- start

Song

(HENRIETTA)

Have you been here after dark?

JULIAN

Not for years. We used to come down here. When I was a boy.

THERE WERE SPIRITS HERE  
WHEN WE WERE YOUNG  
DISTANT VOICES OF  
DANCERS LONG DEAD  
AND THESE ALDER-TREES  
ONCE WOULD HAVE RUNG  
WITH THE BEAT OF THEIR TREAD

AS PLOUGHMAN AND YEOMAN  
NOW FEEDING THE CORN  
WOULD GATHER AT TWILIGHT  
TO LAUGH THAT THE EARTH WAS REBORN

ON THAT DREAM-NIGHT  
WHEN SUMMER STOOD STILL  
AND FIRE-BREATHING BEACONS  
GAZED DOWN FROM THE HILL  
ON THE WHEAT-FIELDS  
ENCHANTED AND VAST  
ON THAT DEEP DREAM-NIGHT  
IN MIDSUMMERS PAST

HENRIETTA

Beacons?

JULIAN

The Midsummer fires, up on Moon Hill. My grandfather used to let me stay up and watch. Weeks they'd spend building them.

HENRIETTA

Who?

JULIAN (in a reverie)

They say that not many centuries ago a dozen could be seen, blazing across the shires.

THEY WOULD CIRCLE THERE  
OUT IN THE DARK  
TOSSING WILLOWHERB  
INTO THE FLAMES  
TILL THE SOUND OF THE

SPIRALLING LARK  
SANG AN END TO THEIR GAMES

AND ELDERS AND YOUNGSTERS  
IN GARLANDS OF YEW  
WOULD TURN THEIR EYES EASTWARDS  
THEN VANISH LIKE HIGH-MORNING DEW

OH THOSE DREAM-NIGHTS  
ARE ENDED SO SOON  
FOR WHERE IN SEPTEMBER  
ARE BLOSSOMS OF JUNE?  
THERE IS NO ROSE  
WHICH SICKENS SO FAST  
AS THE DEEP DREAM-ROSE  
WHEN SUMMER IS PAST

(He whirls her gently round.)

BOTH

LET US DANCE THEN  
FOR NOTHING CAN LAST  
LINK ARMS WITH THOSE DREAMERS  
OF MIDSUMMERS PAST  
LET THE MUSIC  
OF FIDDLE AND DRUM  
BE OUR HEART'S DELIGHT  
ON THIS DEEP DREAM-NIGHT  
AND ON DEEP DREAM-NIGHTS  
OF SUMMERS TO COME  
OF ALL SUMMERS TO COME  
ALL SUMMERS TO COME

---

|  
(They kiss. It has become perceptibly darker. A FIGURE becomes visible in the gloaming. JULIAN and HENRIETTA look up, startled. JULIAN peers into the gloom.)

Who is it? Who's there?

|  
JULIAN (sharply)

|  
(Music peters out. The FIGURE emerges, a man in rough tweeds, a shotgun under his arm: MATTHEWS, saturnine gamekeeper.)

JULIAN (recognizing him, relieved)  
Matthews, you devil -- you gave me a start. What the blazes are you doing slouching around down here?

MATTHEWS  
They said your Lordship came this way. Needed to speak, my Lord. Family matter.

JULIAN  
Couldn't it have waited?

MATTHEW  
Family matter, Lord Melstock. My daughter.

HENRIETTA  
Charlotte, yes -- engaged to David Swan, isn't she?

MATTHEWS  
Was, Your Ladyship. Was. My dearest wish to see them wed, it was. A good match.

JULIAN  
But Captain Swan -- wasn't he engaged to Jennifer, old Admiral Farthing's girl? I can't keep track of these bethrothals.

MATTHEWS  
All done and dusted now, my Lord. David Swan no longer has any care for the Admiral's girl. Promised to my Charlotte, he was -- till she was bewitched.

HENRIETTA (smiling)  
Bewitched, Mr Matthews?

(Music.)

MATTHEWS  
By the boy, Alexander -- a devil, my Lady. Filched her heart, turned her against me. Now she's shunned her father's choice, and fled with the damned seducer.

JULIAN  
Now Matthews, what on earth do you mean by that?

MATTHEWS  
Eloped, sir, gone. Found her bed this morning, empty and unslept in. And poor Captain Swan, heartbroken and gone after in hot pursuit.

JULIAN  
What?

|  
HENRIETTA

But where can they hope to go?

JULIAN

To Scotland, I'll be bound, where the ancient laws are laxer than our own.

MATTHEWS

And there to marry -- stubborn fool. I beg, sir, stop them. Your father would have done as much. That duty falls to you, now you're of age.

HENRIETTA (amused)

In three days.

JULIAN

Yes, yes, well -- Scotland is a good way off. Did the elopers leave on foot?

MATTHEWS

Sure of it, sir. No horse is gone.

JULIAN

It's a fair old hike to Midsomer halt, unless some carter picks them up.

HENRIETTA

And the earliest train is noon on Friday.

(Music.)

|  
JULIAN

Most likely they'll be forced to bed down in the woods tonight and start the trek afresh at daybreak. We'll send out men and hunting-hounds -- and cheer up, man. The battle isn't lost till it's been fought. You lead on, I'll follow.

|  
(MATTHEWS nods and vanishes. Pause.)

|  
HENRIETTA (hearing something again)

What was that?

|  
JULIAN (preoccupied)

Nothing.

|  
HENRIETTA

I feel watched out here.

|  
(JULIAN makes to go, then turns back surveying the clearing.)  
|

2A. "Dream-Nights" -- concl

Song/Duet

JULIAN

THEY WERE NEARER THEN  
NEARER THAN NOW  
THEY HAVE VANISHED LIKE  
MIST IN THE SUN  
AND THE PLOUGHMAN LIES  
UNDER THE PLOUGH  
AND THE DANCING IS DONE

HENRIETTA (with a shudder)

Come on.

JULIAN

YET ON NIGHTS THICK WITH SILENCE  
STEP INTO THIS GLADE  
AND YOU HALF-HEAR THE FOOTFALLS  
WHICH FATHERS OF GRANDFATHERS MADE

(He holds her. They dance again, pensively.)

HENRIETTA

Come on, Julian. You've work to do, men to rally.

JULIAN

And at this time of day. Blast Matthews and his silly daughter.

(They begin to move off.)

Eloped ... ha!

HENRIETTA

Midsummer madness ...

(They exit. Something stirs in the trees. Music continues, changing.)

|  
Scene 2-A

|  
(As the scene shifts, we see TWO FIGURES flitting by:  
ALEXANDER and CHARLOTTE, as we later learn.

|  
We also hear a WOMAN'S VOICE calling: "David, David!"  
Another VOICE echoes it, mockingly: JACK, far-off.)

|  
JACK (off)

David ... David ...

|  
(He laughs. Now ANOTHER VOICE is heard: "Hullo, hullo".  
JACK copies this one too. His voice recedes.)

Hullo ... hullo ...

|  
(The VOICES overlap and criss-cross confusingly. Strange  
music, collage-like.)  
|

|  
Scene Three

|  
(Church Meadow. A grassy bank rises steeply to one side.  
Dusk.

|  
The church clock strikes eight.)

|  
PLUM (offstage, calling)

Hullo? Hullo? Hullo?

|  
(Over the bank appears REVEREND PLUM, a stick in one  
hand, a sheaf of papers in the other. Music out. He looks  
around.)

Anybody there?

(No-one. Hot from his walk, he sits on a tree-stump, and  
wipes his brow with a bright handkerchief. He looks around  
again, examines his pocket-watch and sighs.)

Late, late, late. Late again.

(He puts on spectacles and begins to look through the  
papers, mouthing passages. A tubby, ruby-faced YOUTH  
appears: WALTER GRUBB, the butcher's boy.)

GRUBB

Evening, Vicar.

PLUM

Ah -- Master Grubb, welcome. We seem to be the first. Heaven knows what's happened  
to ... yes, well ...

GRUBB

Down "Fir Cone" is where, Vicar. Quaffing and scoffing, drunken rabble. And sent for  
me to say, tell Reverend Plum we'll be there by and by, which I do hereby do.

PLUM

I see, I see. Ah! Well, Walter -- come, sit. Let us savour, then, we two alone together,  
the magic of this summer's evening. For, you know, Walter, all manner of magical  
superstitions pertain to this special time of year. Well, that's why we're meeting here,  
after all, isn't it?

GRUBB

Is it, Vicar?

PLUM

Why, yes! Not that the summer solstice marks any kind of event in the Christian calendar, of course. Rather the reverse, in fact. It is one our quietest periods.

GRUBB

What super suspicions, then, Vicar?

PLUM

Well, for instance, it is said that were one to cut a branch of hazel on St John's Night -- that is to say, Midsummer's Eve -- it would serve as a divining rod to discover treasures, water, thieves, all manner of things! Did you know that, Walter?

GRUBB

I didn't know that actually, Vicar. No.

PLUM

And another tale has it that poachers can render themselves invulnerable by swallowing the seed from a fir-cone ...

(Distant music: cheerful thump and jingle of tambourine and drum. GRUBB stands and waves.)

|

GRUBB (interrupting PLUM)

Here they comes, Vicar, the whole per session -- and Mister Cheek at the head.

|

(Offstage, the approaching GROUP begins to become more audible, singing and playing artlessly. GRUBB whoops and shouts. Then his voice sinks.)

|

Oh, Vicar ...

|

|

PLUM

What is it, Master Grubb?

|

|

GRUBB

Oh, Vicar -- Mister Cheek, he's fell. Now he's up. No -- now he's fell again. No, now he's up again. Fell. Up. Oh, but now he's walking silly. Oh, Vicar -- he looks to me to be seven-seas over with stagger-juice.

|

PLUM (mopping his brow again)

Does he? Oh, dear ...

|

|

3. "Cuckoo-Song"

Ensemble

(The VILLAGERS process in, footing an extemporized morris-dance.)

VILLAGERS (in canon -- distant at first)

DAMN THAT BIRD  
CURSE THAT BLASTED BIRD  
DAMN THAT BIRD  
BLAST THAT CURSED BIRD (etc)

AT DUSK ALONG THE DARKENING LANES  
COME TADPOLE-TIME OF YEAR  
AS HOMEWARD WEND OUR WEARY SWAINS  
WHOSE VOICE IS IT THEY HEAR?

THE DAINTY THRUSH?

(Whistling.)

THE DOLEFUL FINCH?

(Again.)

THE TINY WREN?  
THE TUNEFUL TIT?  
AY ALL THESE BIRDS 'TIS TRUE  
BUT WHO BE BOLDER THAN THEM ALL?  
BUT HIM WHO WITH A DYING FALL  
THROUGH FIELD AND WOOD DOES LOUDLY CALL  
CUCKOO CUCKOO  
CUCKOO CUCKOO  
CUCKOO CUCKOO  
CUCKOO (etc)

YET THOUGH MELODIOUS TONE HE MAKE  
THE CUCKOO IS A SCROUNGING RAKE

FOR NORTH OR SOUTH  
EAST OR WEST  
WHERE DOES CUCKOO  
MAKE HIS NEST?  
CUCKOO CARES NOT  
WHERE IT IS  
SAVE THAT THE NEST BE  
NOT HIS

(as before)

DAMN THAT BIRD  
CURSE THAT BLASTED BIRD  
DAMN THAT BIRD  
BLAST THAT CURSED BIRD (etc)

PLUM (joining)  
SAY WOULD IT NOT OFFEND YOUR EYE  
IF YOU COME HOME ONE NIGHT  
TO FIND YOURSELF A-GREETED BY  
THIS FOUL UNNATURAL SIGHT?

YOUR DAUGHTER DEAR

(Ah-ing.)

YOUR LOVING LAD

(Again.)

ALL  
YOUR GIRL AND BOY  
YOUR PRIDE AND JOY  
ALL VANISHED IN THE BLUE  
AND SAT THERE IN YOUR CHILDERS' STEAD  
DEMANDING HE BE HOURLY FED  
A LARDY LUMP WHO LOUDLY SAID  
CUCKOO CUCKOO  
CUCKOO CUCKOO  
CUCKOO CUCKOO  
CUCKOO (etc)

FOR THOUGH A MERRY NOISE HE MAKE  
ALL CUCKOO DOES IS TAKE TAKE TAKE

FOR NORTH OR SOUTH  
EAST OR WEST  
WHICH DOES CUCKOO  
LIKE THE BEST?  
CUCKOO CARES NOT  
WHERE HE BE  
SAVE THAT HE LIVE THERE  
RENT-FREE

(in canon, dancing)

COUNT ONE MY BOYS COUNT ONE  
AND CUCKOO WE SHALL STUN  
COUNT TWO MY BOYS COUNT TWO  
WE'LL MAKE A CUCKOO STEW  
COUNT THREE MY BOYS COUNT THREE  
WE'LL NAIL HIM TO A TREE  
COUNT FOUR MY BOYS COUNT FOUR  
AND SOON HE'LL BE NO MORE  
COUNT FIVE MY BOYS COUNT FIVE  
AND IF HE'S STILL ALIVE  
COUNT SIX MY BOYS BOYS COUNT SIX  
WE'LL SMASH HIM WITH OUR STICKS (etc)

(Stick-work. Then in a group:)

OH NORTH OR SOUTH  
EAST OR WEST  
CUCKOO IS A  
BIG FAT PEST  
SO LET THIS BE  
MY FINAL WORD  
DEATH DEATH DEATH  
DEATH DEATH DEATH  
DEATH DEATH DEATH  
TO THE VAGABOND BIRD

(Pose.)

---

PLUM (applauding)

Welcome, dear friends, welcome. Welcome, one and all. Bravely sung, my boys -- and better late than never, yes. Now -- is everybody here? Yes? Seth Wilmot, farmer? Bob Fry? Good, good. Now -- as you all know, it has become something of a tradition for the Midsomer Mummers to mount a musico-dramatic *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and our great endeavour is once again almost at its apogee.

FRY

But, Vicar -- why we presenting at Lord Melstock's ball?

PLUM

Why, to mark midsummer, the magical solstice, Bob -- like the ball itself.

GRUBB

And to mark Lord Julian's coming of age. It's gentry business, Bob Fry.

---

JESS

It's church business, is what it is, Robert.

PLUM

Well, Jess, yes and yet no. For, as I was telling Walter, the church does not normally observe the summer solstice. Yet I, for one, see no reason why the cloth should not embrace some of our quainter pantheistic customs.

(waxing passionate)

That well-beloved man, the Vicar of Morwenstow, would fill his church on the Cornish cliff with roses and southernwood for a Midsummer service, then lead his congregation onto the village green, for the dancing and wrestling that he himself would initiate.

SETH

Will you be wrestling, Vicar?

PLUM

Well, no, Seth. But then, our little tableau is a horse of a rather different colour, isn't it?

OTHERS (mutter)

Ay ... that's true ... truly said ... horse ... colour ... *Gesamtkunstwerk* ... ay ...

PLUM

Now, no practise this evening, but we really must settle on a venue for our dress-rehearsal -- the Broxton marquee, alas, being not yet fully erect. And please, please -- everyone. I expect all to be note-perfect and sans book by the dress. Lord knows, we've had six months to get it into our heads, haven't we?

ALL (mumble)

Yes, Vicar.

PLUM

Now -- are there any questions? Yes, Nick?

CHEEK (raising his hand)

Nick Cheek, butcher.

PLUM

Yes, Nick.

CHEEK

Saint George, Vicar -- what manner of man is he? How am I to play him, Vicar?

PLUM

Why, as we agreed, Nick. George is our great hero. He must be played heroically, stoically.

GRUBB

Soberly.

CHEEK

Watch your tongue, Boy Walter, or I'll be seeking another lad to peddle my saussies.

SETH (saluting)

Seth Wilmot, playing Dragon's head, Vicar. Why, Vicar, did we not play upon St George's Day, then, Vicar?

PLUM

Because, Seth, as well you know, we were far from ready. Not one of you was abreast of his part. And the Jessop sisters hadn't even started on Walter's wimple.

JESS (raising his hand)

Jess Dunn, farm-boy.

PLUM

Yes, Jess.

JESS

So where's dressy rehearsal to be then, Reverend?

(Music, slow and strange.)

|

SETH

In church hall, Vicar?

|

PLUM

The hall, alas, is spoken for. Miss Tubb and the Ladies' Glee Club have it for their Midsummer Frolic.

|

SETH

Why not meet again here?

|

GRUBB

Boy-scouts got green for cricket, Thursdays.

|

PLUM

Ah, yes ... dear, dear, dear.

|

CHEEK

Why not Membury stones, Vicar? No-one never goes up there.

|

PLUM

Up on Moon Hill? Why, Mister Cheek, that is a grand idea! And quite in keeping with the pagan theme of our pageantry.

JESS

Don't like it, Vicar. Place give us the shudders.

CHEEK

Tosh, bosh. 'Tis a marvellous convenient spot for our rehearsal! The grassy knoll will make a splendid stage. And the stones theyselves will serve us as our wings. Excellent!

PLUM

That's the spirit, Nick. We'll show Lord Melstock what hearts of oak can do!

OTHERS

Ay, that we will!

PLUM

Very well. Let us meet at eight on Moon Hill, in the clearing by the stone-circle. |

(He looks at his pocket-watch.)

We'd best be gone. Night is getting the better of us, and the way's unsure by dark. |

CHEEK

Vicar's right. Come, my lads -- strike up, strike up!

(They plod off, singing and playing -- gradually accelerating, but never attaining their earlier vivacity.)

3A. "Cuckoo-Song" -- reprise

Ensemble

VILLAGERS (gradually disappearing into the distance)

AND SO MY BOYS A CALL TO ARMS  
LET'S CRUSH WHOM WE DESPISE  
CRY DEATH TO HIM WHO CRUELLY HARMS  
THE SONGSTERS OF THE SKIES

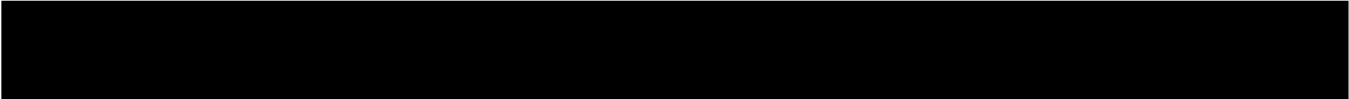
THE PLAYFUL SWIFT

(Whistling.)

THE MOURNFUL DOVE

(Again.)

THE MORNING LARK



THE EVENING OWL  
PROTECTION IS THEIR DUE  
TO HIM AS BREAKS HIS NEIGHBOURS EGGS  
I CRY SNAP OFF HIS TINY LEGS  
UNTIL THE GUZZLING BASTARD BEGS

(plaintively)

CUCKOO CUCKOO  
CUCKOO CUCKOO  
CUCKOO CUCKOO  
CUCKOO (etc)

(FOR NORTH OR SOUTH  
EAST OR WEST  
WHERE DOES CUCKOO  
FIND HIS REST?  
CUCKOO CARES NOT  
WHERE HE LIE  
SAVE THAT HIS BRETHREN  
DO DIE)

(Lights and music fade.)

---


|





|  
Scene 3-A

|  
(As the scene shifts, we see TWO FIGURES making their way  
silently through the forest, ONE in pursuit of the OTHER --  
DAVID and JENNIFER, as we later discover.)  
|



Scene Four

(Woodland grove. Leaf-dappled midday. Long shafts of sunlight pierce the forest canopy. Distant church-clock strikes twelve.)

JACK on his haunches, rapt in concentration. Before him, on the ground, a large handkerchief, and on it, seeds. He is making something.)

3B. "Thursday's Children" -- reprise Song (fragment)

JACK

AND COMES A NIGHT  
IN EVERY YEAR  
THERE IS A PLACE  
THEY DO APPEAR  
AND IN A RING  
BY MOONLIGHT SING  
THAT THEY ARE FREE

(He gathers the seeds in his hand.)

Give me your hand, says Jack, make me your sign -- circle the elder-bush nine times  
nine ... nine times nine ... nine times nine ...

(He takes the seeds and swallows them.)

THURSDAY'S CHILDREN  
WILD-EYED AND WEATHER-WORN  
SHARP AS THE BUTTON-THORN  
BRIGHT AS THE DEW

JACK KNOWS  
JACK KNOWS  
THEIR WAY IS ALSO HIS  
THEY KNOW WHAT FREEDOM IS  
JACK DREAMS IT TOO

(trance-like, slower)

THURSDAY'S CHILDREN  
HIDING YET EVER-HERE  
RIDING THE FALLOW-DEER  
RAIN-WASHED BY NIGHT

THURSDAY'S CHILDREN

(He hums. We now see what JACK has made: a bizarre effigy of a goat's head, serving as a mask. He holds it over his head.)

This be the time, says Jack, this be the place -- childer of forest, come, show your face.  
Oh, show your face.

(He puts the mask on. The trees rustle, as if whispering and muttering.)

(Slow, barely audible chanting starts, as if -- under JACK's spell -- the woods are coming to life.)

|

VOICES (jumbled, overlapping)

Jack knows ... Jack knows ... their way is also his ... they know what freedom is ... Jack dreams ... Jack dreams ... Jack dreams it too ... (etc)

|

(JACK becomes increasingly silhouetted by back-glow. He shivers. The murmuring has begun to shape itself into music, as ...)

|

4. "Heart of the Wood"

Ensemble

(... the sound of the incanting VOICES begins to fill the woods, gradually building in number and volume. The effect is disturbing.)

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

THERE HE BE  
THERE HE BE  
THAT BE THE YOUNGLING  
THAT BE HE  
CAN YOU SEE?  
THERE HE BE  
THAT BE THE WOODLING  
THAT BE HE

JACK JACK JACK JACK  
JACK JACK JACK JACK (etc)

JACK JACK  
HAMMERMAN'S BOY  
WOOD-MITE MOON-CALF  
DIDDAKOI

WHY YOU CALL ME?  
HOW YOU KNOW ME?

JACK (suddenly scared)

JACK JACK

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

WHERE YOU HIDE YOU?  
SHOW YOU SHOW ME

JACK

JACK JACK

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

(Light behind the brambles and saplings begins to strengthen, gradually revealing FIGURES, then FACES -- a few at first, soon many: strange CHILDREN, the GIRL-WOODLANDERS -- vagabond urchins, spirits of the forest, flotsam and jetsam of post-Victorian England. Or figments of JACK's lonely fantasies?)

They move towards him, forming an ever-tightening circle, twittering and cooing like birds.

Prominent amongst the FIGURES -- who by now are legion -- is one wearing an elaborate floral crown. The FIGURE moves slowly forward. It is SYLVIA.)

What you do here, Jack-boy? Blend him drugs, Jack? Snare him slugs, Jack? Bess be where mantraps, pet.

SYLVIA (almost in rhythm)

Bess be where, bess be where!

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

BOY-TRAPS  
MORE LIKE

GIRL #1

BOY-TRAPS  
BOY-TRAPS

OTHERS (laughing)

Not afraid.

JACK

SYLVIA

Better be frayed, my pretty one.

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

BETTER BE FRAYED  
BETTER BE FRAYED

FLEET OF FOOT  
KEEN OF EAR  
ANGEL'S WOLF-BOYS  
DRAW NEAR

SYLVIA (advancing)

Come to me, pet. Come to Sylvia. She'll look after.

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

LIGHT OF LIMB  
BRIGHT OF EYE  
ANGEL'S WOODLINGS  
BE NIGH

SYLVIA

Tell Sylvia all. Let Sylvia listen out for.

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

COME COME

SYLVIA

TELL ME TELL ME

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

COME COME

SYLVIA

TELL ME TELL ME

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

COME COME

SYLVIA

TELL ME

WHY DO YOU HIDE YOU  
IN THE HEART OF THE WOOD?  
IS IT TO PLAY  
OR TO EXPLORE?  
WHAT WILL YOU FIND

WANDERING BLIND?  
BADGER OR BAT OR BOAR?

SYLVIA & GIRL-WOODLANDERS  
MUSK-ROSE OR MINT OR  
SOMETHING MORE?

GIRL-WOODLANDERS (chanting)  
WHAT'S IN STORE?  
WHAT'S IN STORE  
MIGHT GET MORE  
THAN HE BARGAINED FOR

(Wild giggling. JACK is encircled by the  
GIRL-WOODLANDERS.)

SYLVIA (the GIRL-WOODLANDERS echoing)  
WHAT DO YOU SEEK HERE  
IN THE HEART OF THE WOOD?  
WHAT DO YOU HUNT  
HERE ALL ALONE?  
SOMETHING TO EAT?  
SOMEONE TO MEET?  
SOMEONE AS YET NOT KNOWN?

WHO WILL JACK FIND HERE  
IN THE HEART OF THE WOOD?  
WHAT'S IN THE WOOD  
WHICH JACK WOULD SEE?  
HEDGEHOG OR HAWK?  
PET?  
WHO DO HE STALK?  
PET?  
WHO IS HIS PREY TO BE?

SYLVIA (alone)  
PET?

(She moves towards him in a predatory fashion.)

MAYBE JACK'S AFTER  
STALKING ME  
PET  
STALKING ME  
PET?  
STALKING ME

(She yanks the mask from JACK's face. The GIRL-WOODLANDERS explode into dance. Laughter, chasing, circling, JACK at the centre.)

SYLVIA & GIRL-WOODLANDERS

PRETTY ONE  
PRETTY ONE  
PLAY WITH ME  
TELL US A STORY  
TELL US OF THEE  
TELL US OF IVY  
TELL US OF TREE  
PRETTY ONE  
PRETTY ONE  
AFTER THREE

SOME  
COME COME

OTHERS  
ONE

SYLVIA  
TELL ME TELL ME

SOME  
COME COME

OTHERS  
TWO

SYLVIA  
TELL ME TELL ME

SOME  
COME COME

OTHERS  
THREE

SYLVIA  
TELL ME

GIRL-WOODLANDERS  
WHO'S JACK'S DA THEN?

JACK  
DA BE A BLACKSMITH

GIRL-WOODLANDERS  
WHO'S HIS MA THEN?

JACK  
JACK NEVER KNEW HER

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

WHO'S HIS SISTERS?

JACK

JACK NEVER GOT NONE  
NO BROTHERS NEITHER  
JACK BE AN ONLY BOY

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

JACK BE AN ONLY BOY  
WHERE'S HE LIVE THEN?

JACK

LIVES WHERE HE PLEASES

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

WHAT'S HE DO THEN?

JACK

DOES WHAT HE CHOOSES

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

WHERE'S HE SLEEP THEN?

JACK

OUT IN THE OPEN  
UNDER THE STARSHINE  
OUT IN THE GREAT GREEN WORLD

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

OUT IN THE GREAT GREEN WORLD  
OUT IN THE GREAT GREEN WORLD

JACK JACK BORN TO ROAM  
FAR FROM BLACKSMITH'S HEARTH AND HOME

(This is repeated, building to a frenzy at the height of which,  
and as SYLVIA moves closer in on JACK ...

... The BOY-WOODLANDERS are suddenly among them,  
howling like wolves, ululating. They move down through the  
ring of GIRLS, who scream and scatter.

Like the GIRLS, the BOY-WOODLANDERS are a strange  
sight, a fin-de-siecle rag-bag: savages at play amidst a lost  
world of Edwardian salvage, a surreal melange of rags and  
riches. SOME are in tatters, OTHERS in bizarre home-made  
motley: cast-offs and hand-me-downs, plunder of attic and

nursery; boas, bowlers, cocked hats, oversized riding-boots. It's as if someone had upturned a theatrical hamper and let them forage. ALL are incredibly dirty.

Prominent is ANGEL, also crowned but with brambles. He bears down on JACK with terrifying swiftness.

ANGEL (the BOY-WOODLANDERS echoing)

WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE  
TO THE HEART OF THE WOOD?  
OTHERS HAVE COME  
AND FOUND TOO MUCH  
ROOTING FOR WEEDS?  
MIDSUMMER SEEDS?  
CAREFUL OF WHAT YOU TOUCH

WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE  
IN THE HEART OF THE WOOD?  
WEAVING LIKE WOLF  
AMONG THE DEER?  
WOODS CAN BE DARK  
BOY  
SILENT AND STARK  
BOY  
NO EAR WOULD HEAR YOU HERE

ANGEL (alone)

WOODS IS NO FRIEND TO  
THEM THAT FEAR

How you know us of, then, know-him boy? How?

JACK

KNEW WITHOUT KNOWING  
JACK DID  
FOUND YOU BY FEELING  
JACK DID  
CALLED AS YOU CLUSTERED  
BRIGHT LEAVES AMONG

SLEPT WITHOUT SLEEPING  
JACK DID  
SAW YOU IN DREAMING  
JACK DID  
KNEW YOU AT NIGHTFALL  
IN DITCH AND DUNG

Da says sometimes we most awake when we do sleep.

GIRL-WOODLANDERS (twittering)

Da says, da says ... (etc)

ANGEL  
OTHERS HAVE WANDERED  
IN THE HEART OF THE WOOD

SYLVIA (overlapping)  
OTHERS HAVE WANDERED  
IN THE THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
LINGERED TOO LONG  
AND LOST THEIR WAY

BLUNDERED TOO FAR  
AND LOST THEIR WAY

VANISHED FOR GOOD  
INTO THE WOOD  
NEVER TO FIND THE DAY

VANISHED LIKE LIGHT  
INTO THE NIGHT  
NEVER TO FIND THE DAY

ANGEL & SYLVIA (together, slower)

EASY FOR BOY TO  
GO ASTRAY

(They lower over him. Lights dim. Pause.)

JACK

Who are you?

ALL except JACK (quietly at first, building)

AS BONE IS TO BIRTH  
AS BIRTH IS TO BRUTE  
AS BRUTE IS TO EARTH  
ARE WE TO WOODS

AS EARTH IS TO FRUIT  
AS FRUIT IS TO BOUGH  
AS BOUGH IS TO ROOT  
ARE WE TO WOODS

AS ROOT IS TO PLOUGH  
AS PLOUGH IS TO RUST  
AS DUST IS TO DUST

IS TO DUST IS TO DUST  
ARE WE TO WOODS  
ARE WE TO WOODS (etc)

(together)

WE ARE THE WARDERS  
OF THE WONDERING WORLD  
STANDING WHERE NONE  
BUT US HAVE STOOD

WE ARE THE BEAT  
OF THE DARK GREEN SOIL  
PLANTING OUR FEET  
WHERE THE WOOD-MICE TOIL  
DEEP IN RETREAT  
IN WHAT MEN WOULD SPOIL  
IF THEY COULD

GIRL-WOODLANDERS  
WE ARE  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
WE ARE  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
WE ARE  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD

BOY-WOODLANDERS  
WE ARE  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
WE ARE  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
WE ARE  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD

WE ARE

WE ARE

ALL (except JACK)

THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
THE HEART OF THE

(Suddenly the music stops. When it resumes, it is slow and  
ominous. SYLVIA turns imperiously to ANGEL.)

SYLVIA

Gift me the boy.

ANGEL (smiles)

Take him, elf.

(She moves forward. With a strange gesture, he conjures her away, and JACK to him. JACK hides himself. Bruised, SYLVIA backs off, hissing. ANGEL laughs scornfully, the BOY-WOODLANDERS joining in. ANGEL and SYLVIA stand eye to eye.)

ANGEL (to SYLVIA)  
WHAT IS IT BRINGS YOU  
TO THE HEART OF THE WOOD?  
HUNTING ONCE MORE  
FOR SLY-FOOT BOY?  
DOE-EYED FOR HIM  
SLOE-EYED AND SLIM?  
HOW SOON WILL THIS LOVE CLOY?

SYLVIA (to ANGEL)  
WHY DO YOU HOUND ME  
IN THE HEART OF THE WOOD?  
WHY AM I NOT  
TO HAVE MY TOY?  
WHAT'S IT TO YOU  
WHAT I MAY DO  
HUNTING MY HEART'S NEW JOY?

WOODLANDERS (under)

FOXES AND VIXEN  
AT SIXES AND SEVENS  
IN THE HEART OF THE WOOD

SYLVIA

Lark not so soon you, lord of swine. Come full of the moon he mine. Hobs, kits, with me! Wisht! Away!

(SYLVIA and the GIRL-WOODLANDERS sweep out, leaving ANGEL alone with the BOY-WOODLANDERS. He looks after her, brooding.)

ANGEL

WRITTEN IN STONE  
WAS THE OATH SHE GAVE  
SHE SHALL BE SHOWN  
I AM NOT HER SLAVE  
LET IT BE KNOWN  
THAT SHE SHALL BEHAVE  
AS SHE SHOULD  
BEFORE  
SHE LEAVE  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD

BOY-WOODLANDERS (echoing)

THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD

---

|

(The BOY-WOODLANDERS remain in the shadows, squatting around ANGEL.)

Boy ... ANGEL (hisses)

Boy ... boy ... boy ... BOY-WOODLANDERS (echoing in a whisper)

(ANGEL snaps his fingers. The whispering stops. JACK re-emerges.)

Who calls? JACK

ANGEL  
Angel he call. Why for seek him us, you-boy? What you will with us?

Join with. JACK (timorous)

ANGEL  
No join with. Why for? Know him not who we be.

Do so. JACK

(Ripple of laughter.)

ANGEL  
Angel he know Jack full-enough. Know him for a jack-scavenger, half new-man, half critter. Half woodlander.

BOY #1  
Three halves that is, Angel!

ANGEL  
Shut face.

(to JACK)

What Sylvia to Jack?

JACK  
Who she?

BOY #2  
Sylvi she Angel's jill, wood-boy.

BOY #3  
Mitts off.

JACK  
Don't want.

BOY #4  
She want thee, though, smithy-boy.

JACK  
Cannot help it.

ANGEL  
Cannot? May be elf can elf, even-though.

(Muttering. JACK cowers. Pause.)

Know you what day it be, boy?

(JACK shakes his head.)

BOY #1  
Lying.

BOY #2  
Sin-John's Eve, in it?

OTHERS (mutter reverentially)  
Sin-John's Eve ...

ANGEL  
Jack know him full-enough. An morrow?

(JACK shakes his head again.)

BOY #3  
Morrow west-of-all afire.

ANGEL  
Knows him his blooms of the forest, woodling?

BOY #4  
Can tell-tale seesaw's-hands from bee-balsam?

BOY #1

Can tell-tale mother-wood an stocks from dragon-mound an maller-leaf?

(Music.)

|  
JACK

I know wild thyme from elder flower. Gellins from hedge-peaks, white chicory from fern ...

|  
(Murmurs of approval.)

|  
ANGEL

Hear this, then, for strong herbs spurt an sprout now, when world is young ...

5. "Love-in-Idleness"

Song/Ensemble

ANGEL

DOG'S EARS  
RAT'S TAILS  
WARRIOR'S WOUND  
LARK-SEED  
ORPHAN JOHN

LOVE-STONE  
SNAKE'S GRASS  
YELLOW MOONS  
DANE-WEED  
SIMPLER'S JOY

MANY HERBS  
JACK  
MANY HERBS

BOY-WOODLANDERS (echoing)

MANY HERBS  
JACK  
MANY HERBS

(They continue under.)

ANGEL

A HERB FOR STRENGTH  
A HERB FOR SLEEP  
TO CURE A COLD  
TO CATCH A SHEEP  
A HERB FOR ACHES  
A HERB FOR SHAKES

A HERB FOR JOY

BOY-WOODLANDERS

MANY HERBS  
JACK  
MANY HERBS

ANGEL

A HERB TO SOOTHE  
A HERB TO SIRE  
TO SPUR A MARE  
TO SPARK DESIRE  
AH MANY MANY  
ARE THE HERBS  
WHICH MARK  
THE FESTIVAL  
OF FIRE

AND  
THERE IS A HERB  
A CERTAIN HERB  
WHICH KEEPS ITS FESTIVAL  
THIS NIGHT  
A SECRET BLOOM  
A PURPLE BLOOM  
OF PURE DELIGHT

SMEAR IT ON EYES  
DEEP SLEEPING EYES  
AND SURE THE SLEEPER'S EYES  
SHALL TAKE  
THEIR LOVE TO BE  
WHAT NEXT THEY SEE  
WHEN THEY AWAKE

JACK

No such herb, don't know such herb.

(Laughter and muttering.)

ANGEL

LOVE-IN-IDLENESS  
THEY CALL IT  
LOVE-IN-IDLENESS  
IT BRINGS  
TO THE SLEEPING PARTS  
OF THE BEATING HEARTS

OF LIVING THINGS  
MAKING TURTLE-DOVES  
OF DROVERS  
MAKING CUCKOO-BRAINS  
OF KINGS  
LIKE A LEVELLER  
LOVE-IN-IDLENESS  
LOVE-IN-IDLENESS

(He whistles. Then:)

Fetch it me, the herb.

JACK

Fetch it the self.

ANGEL

No -- you go. Test him now.

FIND ME THE HERB  
THE PURPLE HERB  
WHICH HIDES ON RIVERBANK  
BY MOON  
FETCH ME THE LEAF  
THE DOZING LEAF  
OF DEEPEST JUNE

WHOSE TIME IS NOW  
AND ONLY NOW  
FOR BY THE MORNING OF  
NEW DAY  
THE TRIPLE POWER  
OF MIDNIGHT'S FLOWER  
IS WASHED AWAY

JACK

How'll I know it?

ANGEL

It'll call you to it, Jack. A purple bloom, Jack, member.

BOY-WOODLANDERS

Member ...

(JACK runs out. The scene begins to change.)

ANGEL

LOVE-IN-IDLENESS  
BY NATURE  
LOVE-IN-IDLENESS  
BY NAME  
MIDNIGHT'S LOVING-CUP  
MOONLIGHT'S PICK-ME-UP  
MIDSUMMER'S FLAME  
FILLING MAIDEN HEARTS  
WITH HUNGER  
FILLING OLDEN HEADS  
WITH SHAME  
LOVE THE REVELLER  
LOVE-IN-IDLENESS  
LOVE-IN-IDLENESS

(whistles)

BOY #1

What now, Angel?

ANGEL

To my Sylvia. Linger till she sleep -- then smear the shame on Sylvi's sleep-him peepers.  
Fill her head with dream-song an with dark.

BOY #2

An then?

BOY #3

At waken, next thing Sylvia looks upon ...

ANGEL

... mole, stoat, goat or screech-owl ...

BOY #4

... she shall pursue it, soul a-brim with love!

(They laugh.)

ANGEL (BOYS echoing)

LARK'S EYE  
CAT'S FACE  
LOVER'S THOUGHT  
KISS-ME  
LOVE-IN-VAIN

HEART'S-EASE  
EYEBRIGHT  
KISS-ME-LOVE  
LOVE-TRUE  
BIDDY'S EYES

ANGEL (alone)

MANY NAMES  
JACK  
MANY NAMES

BOY-WOODLANDERS

MANY NAMES  
JACK  
MANY NAMES

ANGEL (fading, laughing)

LOVE-IN-IDLENESS  
LOVE-IN-IDLENESS  
LOVE-IN-IDLENESS

---

|  
(The BOY-WOODLANDERS drift away, their laughter fading  
as the scene begins to shift. They vanish. But ANGEL  
remains, just visible.)  
|

|  
Scene 4-A

|  
(As the scene changes, we hear offstage a MAN's VOICE calling: "Charlotte! Charlotte!" New music, angular and comical. ANGEL remains, a ghostly observer.)

|  
DAVID

Charlotte ... Charlotte ... Charlotte ...

|

|  
Scene Five

|  
(Woodland. Afternoon.

|  
DAVID stumbles in. He wears military officer's uniform. Aware of a presence, he stops and listens. Music out. Silence. He looks around. No-one there.)

Charlotte?

DAVID

(Sting: angular music.)

Charlotte?

(Again.)

Is that you?

(Again.)

Alexander?

(He looks around, peering into the gloom. Music resumes, strange this time.

|  
Suddenly he is face to face with ANGEL, eerie in the shadows. DAVID gasps and backs away. ANGEL makes a magical gesture and, bewildered, DAVID blinks: he can no longer see ANGEL, who smiles, withdraws and looks on, unseen. JENNIFER runs in. DAVID sees her.)

Damn.

|  
(Music out.)

JENNIFER

Honestly, David -- slow down a bit, can't you? Give a girl a chance.

DAVID

Why, Jennifer? Why -- when the last person in the world that I want hanging on my coat-tails happens to be you?

JENNIFER

Oh.

DAVID

Look, old girl -- it's possible, I suppose, that once I did love you. Slightly. But that was then, Jennifer. BC. Before Charlotte. Yes, I am in love. No, not with you. With Charlotte. I am in love with Charlotte.

(No response.)

Look at my lips.

(She stares at his lips and kisses them. He pushes her away.)

Don't do that! With Charlotte! I am in love with Charlotte! Not you! Now where are they?

JENNIFER

Who, David?

DAVID

Jennifer, you know perfectly well who I mean. Charlotte. And Alexander.

(quickly)

You told me -- did you not? -- that they were planning to elope, would hide out one night in these woods, wait for the brouhaha to blow over, cadge a lift from a carter whose palm they'd already have greased, and take the train to Gretna Green, connecting at Bristol and Crewe. That's what you said. Didn't you?

JENNIFER

Did I, David? I don't remember.

DAVID

Yes, you do. You told me that Charlotte had told you everything in the strictest confidence.

JENNIFER

Oh.

DAVID

Now, where are they? Ah! What's that?

(He has seen something on the ground. He picks it up.)

Ah-ha! Proof positive! A shirt-stud!

(thinking)

My God -- the beast! I must move swiftly, if I am to save her!

(He marches off. A beat.)

JENNIFER

Common.

DAVID (off)

What?

JENNIFER

Common. There's no other word, I'm afraid, and it's high time someone said it. And her teeth are crooked. You could do better, David, really you could.

DAVID (re-entering)

That is enough! You are speaking of the woman I love! Now go -- be off with you!

JENNIFER

Honestly, David -- you're not very grateful. I give you all this help, and in return you behave like a rotten old grouch. I thought you'd be nicer to me after all my help, I really did ...

(She becomes tearful.)

DAVID

Yes, well -- thanks. And don't cry, there's a good girl. Did I say -- thanks?

(An awkward pause. He is expecting her to leave. He makes a little shooing gesture.)

JENNIFER

You don't expect me to make my way back to the village all by myself?

DAVID

Did I force you to follow me here in the first place? Look -- I'm grateful to you for the info, old girl. But gratitude is not the same as love, now is it? Thank you for your help, Jennifer. Thank you -- and goodbye.

(He goes. She sits, sighs. Strange music. She starts up. Looks through ANGEL, peers.)

|  
ANGEL (softly)

Sad, sady lady! But for he leave his place, let him do all the ask-me an the love-me, maid.

|  
(An owl hoots. JENNIFER shudders, backs away and runs off.)

|

David! David! Wait! Wait for me!

JENNIFER (exiting)

(She leaves, stumbling. ANGEL looks after her. Seconds later, JACK runs in. Music out.)

ANGEL

Him got that leaf, then, woodling? Good lad, Jack!

(JACK hands him a bunch of greenery. ANGEL studies it.)

JACK

Join with now?

ANGEL

No. More test him.

(He pulls out a sprig and hands it back to JACK. Music.)

Here -- take you a tuft, go scour about the woods. Two strangelings come among us. Her, the lady-one, all fallow-eyed is an agog with love-him of some scornful bloke, what loves her not -- so, woodling, see you smear young love-me-not's ogles when the nextest thing which he shall see that sad-eyed lady-bird shall be.

JACK

How'll I know him? An her how will I know?

ANGEL

How? Who else but we be bout these wilds, come bat-light, boy?

JACK

Two strangelings.

ANGEL

Now gift rest bloom to Angel. An meet me here by morning of the day. Run, boy, run. Fast as moor-hen fly.

JACK

Fast as north-wind blow.

ANGEL

Fast as thought in mind of man, Jack! Go, be gone, Jack -- go!

(Exit JACK.)

|  
Scene 5-A

|  
(As the scene shifts we see, moving across ...

|  
... A MAN running: ALEXANDER. Elsewhere: FIGURES, dimly, searching. SOME have guns, SOME are in stalking clothes. Among them we can maybe make out JULIAN and MATTHEWS.

|  
JACK is also seen flitting through.

|  
ALL melt into the woods, as we are transported to ...)

|

|  
Scene Six  
|

(A clearing. Evening. SYLVIA and the GIRL-WOODLANDERS by the water.  
|

They occupy themselves, bathing, weaving, building a fire perhaps.)  
|

6. "Night and Silence"

Song/Ensemble

(SYLVIA gazes sadly into the water. In the background, the GIRL-WOODLANDERS quietly sing and hum.)

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

LONG GRASS  
CRADLE HER  
BLACK NIGHT  
BOSOM HER  
SLEEP AND SOLACE  
LET HER FIND

BINDWEED  
CUSHION HER  
BLINDWORM  
COSSET HER  
NIGHT AND SILENCE  
FILL HER MIND

SYLVIA

Jack, Jack, hammerman's boy ... wood-mite, moon-calf, diddakoi ...

A LADY LOVED A LAD  
BUT OH  
SHE KNEW HER LOVE WAS WRONG  
THE BOY HE MADE HER SAD  
AND YET  
THE LADY'S LOVE GREW STRONG

EACH EVENING SHE WOULD RIDE TO HIM  
AND WITH THE WIND SHE SIGHED TO HIM  
AND IN THE SHADOWS CRIED TO HIM  
BE MINE  
BE MINE  
BUT LOVER-LAD  
SAID SOONER MARRY SWINE  
HE DID

OH LOVER-LAD  
WOULD RATHER MARRY SWINE

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

SAD SAD LADY  
LOVELY LONELY LADY  
HOW CAN BOY  
BE SO UNKIND?  
SLEEP SWEET LADY  
SLEEP OH SLEEP SWEET LADY  
NIGHT AND SILENCE  
FILL YOUR MIND  
NIGHT AND SILENCE  
FILL YOUR MIND

SYLVIA

A LADY LOVED A LAD  
BUT AH  
THE LAD HE LOVED HER NOT  
SHE GAVE HIM ALL SHE HAD  
THOUGH ALL  
SHE HAD WAS NOT A LOT

SWEET HONEYCOMBS SHE SOUGHT FOR HIM  
BRIGHT STICKLEBACKS SHE CAUGHT FOR HIM  
RIPE HAZELNUTS SHE BROUGHT FOR HIM  
TO SHARE  
TO SHARE  
BUT NONE OF THIS  
MADE LOVER-LAD TO CARE  
NOT HE  
NO NONE OF IT  
MADE LOVER-LAD TO CARE

(She sleeps, as the GIRLS continue:)

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

SAD SAD LADY  
LOVELY LONELY LADY  
HOW CAN BOY  
BE SO UNKIND?  
SLEEP SWEET LADY  
DEEP OH DEEP SWEET LADY  
NIGHT AND SILENCE

(They freeze, mid-sentence. From nowhere, ANGEL is among them. Music continues, changed. Lights change too.)

ANGEL (coldly)  
FAIR LADY LOVED A LAD  
AND THOUGH  
THE LAD WOULD NOT BE CAUGHT  
FAIR LADY SHE WAS BAD  
AND TIME  
IT WAS THAT SHE WAS TAUGHT

(Unseen, he moves among the frozen FIGURES towards the slumbering SYLVIA. He produces the magic flower, squeezing it on her eyes.)

NOW MOUSE AND MOLE COME HERE TO HER  
AND BUCK AND BOAR DRAW NEAR TO HER  
FOR WHO SHALL NEXT APPEAR TO HER  
IS HERS  
IS HERS  
LET SOMETHING VILE  
BE BY HER WHEN SHE STIRS

(He unfreezes the GIRL-WOODLANDERS. SYLVIA sleeps on. Lights and music revert.)

GIRL-WOODLANDERS (as if mesmerized)

LONG GRASS  
CRADLE HER  
BLACK NIGHT  
BOSOM HER  
SLEEP AND SOLACE  
LET HER FIND

BINDWEED  
CUSHION HER  
BLINDWORM  
COSSET HER

ANGEL

WOLF'S-BANE  
WEAKEN YOU  
SCREECH-OWL  
WAKEN YOU  
OH LADY

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

NIGHT AND SILENCE  
NIGHT AND SILENCE



NIGHT AND SILENCE  
FILL HER MIND

ANGEL (heavily)  
YOU SHALL LEARN THAT  
LOVE IS BLIND

(He disappears into the night. Fade to black.)

---

Scene Seven

(Boathouse or beck. An abandoned rowing boat decaying in the bushes. Evening.

Sad, urgent music.

|  
ALEXANDER and CHARLOTTE enter, in flight, breathless. He carries a carpet-bag. She has a small, but well-equipped vanity-case.)

|  
ALEXANDER

My darling, you're exhausted, I can see.

CHARLOTTE

No, not a bit of it.

ALEXANDER

But you must be. Faint with walking, scrambling through the bracken. Now it's night. And -- to be truthful, Charlotte -- I've not the foggiest where we are.

CHARLOTTE (hearing something)

What was that? Did you hear?

ALEXANDER

Let's rest here, Charlotte, wait for daybreak and begin refreshed.

CHARLOTTE

Good idea.

ALEXANDER

Not sorry, are you?

CHARLOTTE

Sorry?

ALEXANDER

Sorry you loved me? Sorry you came?

CHARLOTTE

Darling Alexander! Of course not! I love you! Here -- have this ring!

(She hands him a ring from her vanity-case, then begins rummaging.)

ALEXANDER (putting it on)

It's lovely. So are you. You're lovely.

CHARLOTTE (examining herself in a pocket-mirror)  
I know. At times I wish I were not. It can be tiresome. David loves me too, you know.

ALEXANDER  
Yes.

CHARLOTTE  
Poor thing. For I could never in a hundred years love anyone even half so hairy as him.

ALEXANDER  
It will be all right, you know -- everything. I swear. I'll make it right. Once we're away from here and married, I'll make you happier than you could dream, I swear it.

CHARLOTTE  
Silly boy. Of course you shall. You are perfection. Not a hair out of place.

ALEXANDER  
It's just ... this wretched wood ... this whole damned ... Oh, I'm sorry ...

CHARLOTTE  
There, there. Hush, now. Let us sleep. We'll make a new start in the morning, and everything will be right as ninepence.

ALEXANDER  
But what if they're after us, Charlotte? Your father -- he'll have reported it all to Lord Melstock, you know. They'll have men and hounds on us by morning.

CHARLOTTE  
They'd be silly to start a search by night. No, Alexander -- we must rest.

ALEXANDER  
Yes. But where shall we sleep? In the boat? There's only room for one, my darling. You must take it!

CHARLOTTE  
Sweetheart, no! You take the boat. I shall be fine out here.

ALEXANDER  
In open ground? With adders and rats? No, Charlotte, I won't hear of it. Take the boat, I must insist.

CHARLOTTE  
Lambkin, no ...

ALEXANDER  
Charlotte! The boat!



(She smiles, kisses him and settles down in the wreck.  
Music.)

Darling boy! CHARLOTTE

Sweet girl! ALEXANDER

Good night. CHARLOTTE

Don't be afraid, my sweet. ALEXANDER  
Good night.

Lambkin! CHARLOTTE

Lambkin! ALEXANDER

(They sleep. After a beat, JACK appears in the shadows. He  
sees ALEXANDER and CHARLOTTE.)

JACK (quietly)  
Here be gentlers -- here be the pair. Clear as dew-drop, sleeping there.

(He moves forward.)

Just as Angel told it -- asleep in the greenery. These be the sleepers, jen and john ...

(approaching ALEXANDER)

... and these be the peepers that the juice goes on!

6A. "Love-in-Idleness" -- reprise #1 Song (fragment)

(JACK)

SMEAR IT ON EYES  
DEEP SLEEPING EYES  
AND SURE THE SLEEPER'S EYES  
SHALL TAKE  
THEIR LOVE TO BE  
WHAT NEXT THEY SEE  
WHEN THEY AWAKE



(He smears the flower on ALEXANDER's eyes, then merges back into the shadows.)

---

(He disappears. JENNIFER is heard offstage: "David, David". She runs in.)

JENNIFER

David! David, wait! Wait for me!

(He is nowhere to be seen. In frustration, she stops.)

Wait! David, wait! Oh, why won't you wait for me?

(She looks around with a sigh.)

Bugger. Little toe-rag. I should never have let him out of my sight. What am I to do now?

(She sees the sleeping ALEXANDER.)

Heavens! Alexander! And all alone! How odd. How very, very odd. Dead? Or asleep? I wonder.

(approaching him)

Alexander! Alexander! Are you dead? Or asleep? If dead, well then -- I'm sorry. If you are asleep, why then ...

(shaking him)

Wake up! Wake up! Alexander!

(He opens his eyes.)

Alexander, it's Jennifer ...

---

7. "Jennifer" Duet

JENNIFER ALEXANDER (waking, dazed)

That's right -- Jennifer. JENNIFER

JENNIFER JENNIFER ALEXANDER

JENNIFER  
Alexander, where's Charlotte?

ALEXANDER  
JENNIFER JENNIFER  
JENNIFER JENNIFER

JENNIFER  
Alexander, are you feeling quite well?

ALEXANDER  
JENNIFER JENNIFER  
SILKEN-SKINNED  
ANGEL-VOICED AS EVENING WIND

JENNIFER  
I'm sorry?

ALEXANDER  
JENNIFER JENNIFER  
ALMOND-EYED  
BE MY SUMMER BRIDE

JENNIFER  
Oh.

ALEXANDER  
JENNIFER JENNIFER  
FAIR OF FACE  
HIDE ME IN YOUR HEART'S EMBRACE

JENNIFER  
Alexander, stop this.

ALEXANDER  
AS BEE IS TO BLOSSOM  
AS BLOSSOM WAS EVER TO BEE  
SO JENNIFER JENNIFER  
IS TO ME

JENNIFER  
Alexander -- what are saying?

ALEXANDER (exultant)  
What am I saying? What am I saying? Could it be more clear, my dearest dear, what I  
am saying?

(She backs away.)

OH JENNIFER JENNIFER  
BURNING BRIGHT  
FLOOD MY WORLD WITH LOVE'S WHITE LIGHT  
JENNIFER JENNIFER  
HEART'S DESIRE  
FILL MY SOUL WITH FIRE

JENNIFER JENNIFER  
WARM AND WISE  
MELT ME WITH THOSE MOON-KISSED EYES  
AS TREE IS TO APPLE  
AND APPLE IN AUGUST TO TREE  
SO JENNIFER JENNIFER JENNIFER

JENNIFER

Stop it!

ALEXANDER

JENNIFER JENNIFER JENNIFER

JENNIFER

Are you listening to me?

ALEXANDER

JENNIFER JENNIFER JENNIFER  
IS TO ME

I love you, Jennifer! I love you! Be mine! Be mine, I beg of you!

(She lets out a scream.)

JENNIFER

YOU'RE INSANE QUITE INSANE  
ONLY MADNESS COULD EXPLAIN  
WHY THIS SEA-CHANGE IN AFFECTIONS  
WOULD OCCUR  
TELL ME WHY YOU WOULD FLY  
FROM THE APPLE OF YOUR EYE  
SHE'S A GODDESS AND I'M NOTHING  
NEXT TO HER

(He pursues her.)

I'M A BORE AND I SNORE  
LOVING ME WOULD BE A CHORE  
I AM NO-ONE TRULY NO-ONE'S  
CUP OF TEA  
I'M OBSESSIVE  
I'M DEPRESSIVE  
AND IMPOSSIBLY POSSESSIVE  
YOU COULD NEVER  
NEVER NEVER  
LOVE ME

ALEXANDER (rapturously)  
YOU ARE PERFECTION

JENNIFER  
PERFECTION?  
I'M SIMPLY A COLLECTION  
OF ALL THE FAULTS THAT CHARLOTTE  
HASN'T GOT  
NO SHE'S PERFECTION

ALEXANDER  
CORRECTION  
IT'S YOU WHO ARE PERFECTION  
SO HOW CAN WHAT YOU SAY BE TRUE?  
IF SHE WERE PERFECT SHE'D BE YOU

JENNIFER  
A PERFECT GIRL WOULD LOVE YOU TOO

ALEXANDER  
AND DEEP INSIDE I KNOW YOU DO

JENNIFER  
I DON'T I DON'T  
I CAN'T AND WON'T

ALEXANDER  
YOU'RE EVERYTHING  
SHE NEVER WAS

JENNIFER  
YOU CAN'T LOVE ME

ALEXANDER  
WHY NOT?

JENNIFER  
BECAUSE

ALEXANDER  
BECAUSE?

JENNIFER  
BECAUSE BECAUSE BECAUSE

ALEXANDER  
JENNIFER JENNIFER  
BURNING BRIGHT  
FLOOD MY WORLD  
WITH LOVE AND LIGHT  
JENNIFER JENNIFER  
HEART'S DESIRE  
FILL MY SOUL WITH FIRE

JENNIFER JENNIFER  
WARM AND WISE  
MELT ME WITH  
THOSE MOON-KISSED EYES

THE BEE AND THE BLOSSOM

THE TREE AND THE APPLE AGREE

OH  
JENNIFER  
PRETTY ONE  
DON'T BE CRUEL  
JENNIFER  
PITY A  
LOVE-SICK FOOL  
JENNIFER  
JENNIFER  
SAY THAT YOU'LL  
AGREE

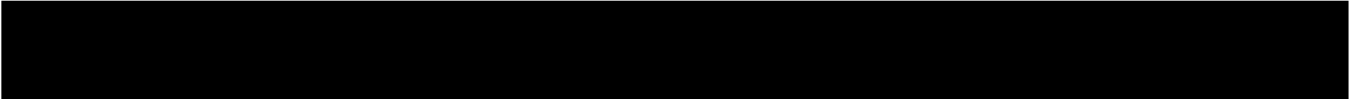
OH JENNIFER  
TO SPEND YOUR LIFE  
WITH ME

JENNIFER (contd)  
I'M A WITCH I'M A BITCH  
I HAVE PIMPLES AND A TWITCH  
NO IT'S TRUE I DO LOOK  
THERE IT GOES AGAIN  
I'M A HAG I'M A BAG  
PEOPLE LOOK AT ME AND GAG  
SAD TO SAY I HAVE A  
BAD EFFECT ON MEN

I'M A TWIT I'M A NIT  
AND I'M PATENTLY UNFIT  
TO BE ANYBODY'S  
BLUSHING BRIDE-TO-BE

SOD THE BEE AND THE BLOSSOM

I'M NOT PRETTY  
I'M NOT WITTY  
ALL I'M GOOD AT IS SELF-PITY  
I'M PEDANTIC  
THAT'S ROMANTIC  
AND MY BOTTOM IS GIGANTIC  
I HAVE SCABIES  
I HAVE RABIES  
NO SANE MAN WOULD WANT MY BABIES  
SO IT DOESN'T TAKE  
A GENIUS TO SEE  
THAT YOU COULD NEVER NEVER  
NEVER NEVER  
NEVER NEVER NEVER LOVE ME



(She storms off, without seeing CHARLOTTE. ALEXANDER runs off after JENNIFER. Before he goes, he turns, pulls the ring from his finger, and hurls it into the boat. Lights follow it, and as they fade, we are left with the image CHARLOTTE, still asleep.)

Blackout.)

---



---

Scene Eight

(Moon Hill. The stone-circle. Night.

Lit by moon and lamp-light, PLUM and the VILLAGERS are rehearsing their play. SOME are in costume.)

8. "The Banner of Saint George" Ensemble (fragment)  
-- pre-echo #1

---

VILLAGERS

BUGLE BELLOW  
SACKBUT BLAST  
LOW  
THE FOE  
IS LAID AT LAST

CHEEK

THREE CHEERS FOR THE FLAG WE HOLD SO DEAR

ALL

THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

CHEEK

WHICH FILLS THE INVADER'S HEART WITH FEAR

ALL

THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

CHEEK (the OTHERS backing)

PROUD YEOMEN LET THAT STANDARD FLY  
TILL ENGLAND'S EMBLEM CROWDS THE SKY  
AND YEOMEN'S POLES ALL BEAR ON HIGH  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

ALL

HURRAH  
FOR MERRY MERRY ENGLAND  
CRY ENGLAND  
AND ST GEORGE

---

PLUM (applauding enthusiastically)

Splendid, splendid, one and all -- well done, well done! Come, now, gather round, gather round, sit you down and rest you, good friends. But remember, good friends -- what is the largest room in the world?

---

VILLAGERS (sit, muttering)  
Room for improvement, Vicar.

PLUM  
Room for improvement, that's right.

GRUBB  
What's littlest room, then?

OTHERS (as one)  
Mushroom.

PLUM  
Now, just a couple of things. George ...

CHEEK  
Yes, Vicar?

PLUM  
Yes, Nick, excellent! Only -- when you smite the dragon, you must not do it quite so forcefully. Poor Seth was concussed.

SETH  
The weasels they flew to Manchesty. They was purple. It was lovely.

PLUM  
You see. So just be careful, Nick. And Bob ...

FRY  
Yes, Vicar?

PLUM  
Try to bring some dignity and authority to the role. You're a king, remember. And what do kings never do, Bob?

FRY  
Break wind before other folk.

PLUM  
That's right, Bob.

PLUM  
Oh, and everyone -- if you forget your line, the proper thespian convention is simply to say in a clear and clarion tone: "prompt".

(They echo him.)

It isn't acceptable simply to stand there like a sack of turnips saying "oh, turds". All right?

OTHERS

Yes, Vicar ... true enough ... mushroom ... sorry ... prompt ... horse ... colour ... room for improvement ...

PLUM

Good, well -- I think that's all. Now, please -- can we move on? In fact, I think that the only matter yet to be addressed is the "blocking" of the finale.

FRY

Why, Vicar -- whyever do it need blocking, Vicar?

GRUBB

'Cause you's a blockhead, Bob Fry.

(Laughter.)

PLUM

Blocking, Bob, is the term that professional players, or "luvvies", use to denote stage-movement. So, up with you, now!

(ALL rise, groaning.)

Now, Nick Cheek -- you've exited "opposite-prompt", if you recall, behind that standing stone. The others start the song, and your cue to enter will be ...

(He consults his score.)

"... the foe is laid ..."

OTHERS (completing the line)

"At last".

PLUM

"At last," exactly.

CHEEK

Righty-ho, then, Vicar.

(He goes off behind the stone.)

JESS

Vicar?

PLUM

Yes, Jess?

JESS

Vicar -- begging Vicar's pardon -- why moot I play dragon's arse?

PLUM

Lord, not this again. Jess, last year, if you recall, you were a hand in a lake holding aloft a *papier-maché* sword. Now would you or would you not agree that dragon's sit-upon constitutes some form of theatrical preferment?

JESS

I suppose. But why can't I play front-end?

SETH

'Cause I am, you daft pillock, and you couldn't never do the lines.

JESS

Bish, bosh. 'Tis all only roaring and breathing fire and that.

GRUBB

Vicar?

PLUM

Yes, Walter?

GRUBB

I don't mind relieving Jess Dunn of his most burdensome part. In fact, I should quite enjoy it.

PLUM

Really, Walter? And take the hindmost part?

GRUBB

That's all right, Vic. I don't mind.

(PLUM considers the options. WALTER is fitter for the female role. But JESS's griping is grating on him.)

Meanwhile we see behind the stone, where CHEEK waits. Behind him, unseen by CHEEK, JACK and the BOY-WOODLANDERS look on, an eerie presence in the gloom. JACK is wearing the goat's head.)

PLUM

Well, Walter Grubb! That is most gallant, I must say. What do you say to that, then, Jess, my boy?

JESS  
God bless, Walter. You're gentry, you are.

PLUM  
That settles it, then. Walter, you are the new draconic rear-end. Jess, you now play Bel. I only hope you'll fit into Walter's dress.

JESS  
What's that, Vicar? Dress?

PLUM  
Dress, Jess, yes.

JESS  
But, Vicar -- no-one didn't say nothing about no dress ...

PLUM (tartly)  
You're a princess, Jess. Princesses have dresses.

FRY  
Ay, loads of 'em.

SETH  
Ay, and tresses.

JESS  
But, Vicar ...

PLUM  
Ah, ah! No buts, Jess, no buts. All right -- places, everyone, places! After one. And, one ...

8A. "The Banner of Saint George" Ensemble (fragment)  
-- pre-echo #2

(The VILLAGERS rehearse. But this time there seems something odd. A change of light. A lantern gutters in the wind. Unseen eyes watch. Sensing this, the VILLAGERS are perturbed. Perhaps we hear a hint of muttering incantation: "Capra hircus ... capra hircus". A collective shudder goes round.)

VILLAGERS (except CHEEK)  
BUGLE BELLOW  
SACKBUT BLAST  
LOW  
THE FOE  
IS LAID AT LAST

(CHEEK does not appear. Silence.)

ALL  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

(Silence.)

ALL  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

(No melody, but the OTHERS still provide humming backing. PLUM calls a halt.)

---

PLUM  
Stop, stop! Saint George, where are you? Enter -- you've missed your cue.

(to the OTHERS)

Give him his cue again. From "bugle bellow". After one. And, one ...

8B. "The Banner of Saint George" Ensemble (fragment)  
-- pre-echo #3

VILLAGERS  
BUGLE BELLOW  
SACKBUT BLAST  
LOW  
THE FOE  
IS LAID AT LAST

(As before, silence.)

ALL  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

(Again.)

ALL  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

(Still nothing, apart from the humming backing. The VILLAGERS are made more uneasy by a new sound: murmuring voices -- quiet at first, but building little by little. Perhaps the same chanting as before, increasing in volume. Suddenly ...

---

|  
... all the lanterns are blown out at once. It is very dark. CHEEK is pushed into the stone ring, wearing the goat's head. He has been gagged, and so is unable to do anything more than moan. In addition to this, his hands have been tied behind his back, so it appears to the VILLAGERS that they are confronted with a groaning, armless half-beast. To compound the nightmare, behind him are the black OUTLINES of JACK and ALL the BOY-WOODLANDERS.)

|  
BOY-WOODLANDERS (chanting)

Bog, bush and briar.  
Briar, bush and bog.  
Be you hare  
Or be you dog?

|  
(PLUM and the VILLAGERS recoil in terror. New music.)

|  
PLUM

|  
Help! Help! Oh, dear God! Run, everyone! For the love of God, run!

|  
FRY

|  
'Tis horrible! Horrible!

|  
PLUM

|  
Oh, Cheek, Cheek -- what a change of flesh is here!

|  
SETH

|  
Heaven help you, dear Cheek! What has happened, dear friend?

|  
(CHEEK meanwhile struggles to remove the absurd headdress. He cannot see properly, and blunders about, mistaking people for stones, trees for people, moaning all the while.)

|  
VILLAGERS (severally, fleeing)

|  
Horrible ... help ... Mister Cheek ... spare us ... flesh ... change ... Cheek ... horror ...  
horror ... horror ...

|  
(The action shifts to ...)

Scene Nine

|  
(The forest. Deep night.)  
|

9. Finale

Ensemble

(A sequence of dream-like scenes unfolds swiftly.)

JACK and the BOY-WOODLANDERS lead the VILLAGERS in a mad chain-dance about the woods, surprising and scaring them at every moment, so that whichever way they turn, some fresh shock forces them to wheel about and back-track. This they do in mounting turmoil.)

VILLAGERS

HORROR HORROR HORRIBLE SCENE  
HORROR WE SAY AND HORROR WE MEAN  
HORRIDEST THING THAT EVER HAS BEEN  
OH HORROR HORROR  
HORROR HORROR

TERROR TERROR TERRIBLE SIGHT  
NEVER HAS SUCH A TERRIBLE BLIGHT  
EVER BEEN KNOWN OF COMING TO LIGHT  
OH NIGHT OF HORROR  
OH HORRIBLE NIGHT

HORRIBLE HORNS  
HORRIBLE EYES  
HORRIBLE MOUTH  
MAKING HORRIBLE CRIES  
RUN AWAY FAST  
DISAPPEAR QUICK  
NOTHING WE DO  
CAN SAVE OLD NICK  
SAVE OLD NICK

OH POOR OLD NICK  
OH POOR OLD SOUL  
THIS NIGHT HAS TOOK  
A TERRIBLE TOLL  
A HORRIBLE TOLL

OH TERRIBLE HORRIBLE  
HORRIBLE TERRIBLE

(disappearing)

HORRIBLE

(ALEXANDER is heard in the distance.)

ALEXANDER (off)

Jennifer!

VILLAGERS (exiting)

TERRIBLE

ALEXANDER

Jennifer!

VILLAGERS

TERRIBLE HORRIBLE (etc)

(They run off, CHEEK blundering after. Lights change.)

ALEXANDER (off, approaching)

Jennifer! Jennifer!

(JENNIFER crosses. She runs off. ALEXANDER stumbles on.)

ALEXANDER

JENNIFER JENNIFER  
WAIT FOR ME  
HEAR OH HEAR MY HEART-FELT PLEA  
BUMBLE-BEE  
WAIT FOR ME

(He follows her into the dark, his voice fading.)

Jennifer! Jennifer!

(The BOY-WOODLANDERS run across in glee, leaping.)

BOY-WOODLANDERS (springing into formation)

Briar, bush and bog.  
Bog, bush and briar.  
Be you air?

(running off)

SOME  
Or be you  
Fire?  
Be you  
Fire

OTHERS  
Be you  
Fire?  
Be you  
Fire?

(They fade and vanish. PLUM and the VILLAGERS rush across again in panic.)

VILLAGERS  
HORROR HORROR HORRIBLE SOUND  
HORRIBLE GROANING ECHOING ROUND  
HORRIBLY GAINING MORE AND MORE GROUND  
OH HORROR HORROR  
HORROR HORROR

(CHEEK stumbles in after them. Seeing him, they scream, scatter and flee. He follows them out, as the scene again shifts. DAVID crosses.)

DAVID  
Charlotte! Charlotte! Is that you?

(He runs out. We hear PLUM's VOICE in the distance, calling CHEEK.)

PLUM's VOICE (off)  
Mister Cheek! Mister Cheek!

(We are by now in another part of the wood.)

MISTER CHEEK  
OVER HERE  
THIS WAY THIS WAY  
OVER HERE

(JACK appears.)

MISTER CHEEK  
HAVE NO FEAR

JACK (in PLUM's voice)

(He laughs. He has been mimicking PLUM's voice. The BOY-WOODLANDERS follow him in.)

BOY-WOODLANDERS (chanting, clapping)  
MAD JACK  
BAD JACK  
LIVE HIM LIKE A KING  
IN THE GREEN-OH (etc)

JACK  
SWIFTER THAN HOUND  
AM I  
DULLER THAN EARTH  
ARE THEY  
MIDSUMMER DOLTS  
WHO BOLT LIKE DEER

BOY-WOODLANDERS  
Jack-of-the-Lantern! Jack-in-the-Green! (etc)

JACK  
BORN TO THE WILDS  
ARE WE  
BORN TO BE BLIND  
ARE THEY  
WHY DO THEY THINK  
TO BUMBLE HERE?

BOY-WOODLANDERS  
MANY HAVE WANDERED  
IN THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
BLUNDERED TOO FAR  
AND LOST THEIR WAY

SOME  
EASY FOR FOOLS TO  
GO ASTRAY

OTHERS  
EASY FOR FOOLS TO  
GO ASTRAY

EASY FOR FOOLS TO  
GO ASTRAY

EASY FOR FOOLS TO  
GO ASTRAY

EASY FOR FOOLS TO  
GO ASTRAY

(They run off, laughing, whooping, baying. Lights shift. The VILLAGERS again scurry across. PLUM has taken a switch of hazel as a divining-rod, and is attempting to use it as a guide.)

VILLAGERS  
TERROR TERROR TERRIBLE PLIGHT  
NEVER HAD HEART MORE HORRIBLE FRIGHT  
NEVER WERE FOLK PUT QUICKER TO FLIGHT  
OH NIGHT OF HORROR  
OH HORRIBLE NIGHT

(They disappear. We move to another part of the forest.  
JACK appears. CHEEK staggers in, moaning and bumping  
into things, blindly following the luring JACK to SYLVIA's  
sleeping-place.)

SYLVIA is still sleeping, the GIRL-WOODLANDERS  
slumbering around her. The BOY-WOODLANDERS creep  
in.)

JACK (whispers)  
You hide an watch now, woodsters all, sad lady's fall.

(They melt back into the darkness, whispering. Pause.  
Stillness. CHEEK moans. One by one, the  
GIRL-WOODLANDERS wake.)

GIRL-WOODLANDERS (quietly)  
WHO THAT THERE?  
WHO THAT BE?  
BE HE THE YOUNGLING?  
BE THAT HE?

WHO THAT THERE?  
WHO THAT BE?  
BE HE THE YOUNGLING?  
BE THAT HE?

JACK JACK JACK JACK  
JACK JACK JACK JACK (etc)

(SYLVIA wakes and sees CHEEK.)

SYLVIA  
A LADY DREAMED A DREAM  
SHE DID  
THAT FLINTY-HEARTED JACK  
DID HAVE A CHANGE OF HEART  
HE DID  
AND LOVED THE LADY BACK

AND BY BLACK NIGHT HE CAME TO HER  
THE SAME YET NOT THE SAME TO HER  
AND HONEY-TONGUED LAID CLAIM TO HER  
IT SEEMED  
IT SEEMED  
AND EVERYTHING  
WAS AS THE LADY DREAMED  
IT WAS  
WAS EVERYTHING  
SHE WISHED OR ELSE SHE DREAMED

You come, my loving one -- you come to me, an all is good ...

(taking CHEEK in her arms)

COME COME  
LOVE ME LOVE ME  
COME COME  
LOVE ME LOVE ME  
COME COME  
LOVE ME LOVE ME

GIRL-WOODLANDERS

IS IT MADNESS  
WHICH MAKES HER HIS SLAVE?  
IS IT SUMMER  
MAKES SYLVI LOVE'S FOOL?

SYLVIA

TAKE THE LAD  
CROWN HIS BROW  
JACK CAPRICORN  
IS HE  
AMONG US NOW

(The scene begins to dissolve, lights changing.)

GIRL-WOODLANDERS (disappearing, awed)

BOW BOW  
BOW BOW  
JACK CAPRICORN  
IS HE  
AMONG US NOW

LAP-WEED  
HONEY HIM  
SNAKE'S MEAT  
SUCKLE HIM  
LUST AND LONGING  
LUST AND LONGING  
LUST AND LONGING  
FILL HIS MIND

(They have vanished. Lights shift. JACK and the BOY-WOODLANDERS emerge gleefully from their hiding-place.)

FLEET AS A FOX JACK

ARE YOU BOY-WOODLANDERS

DAFT AS A BRUSH JACK

ARE THEY BOY-WOODLANDERS

LOST IN A NIGHT JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS  
WITHOUT AN END

MIDSUMMER GAMES JACK

ARE THESE BOY-WOODLANDERS

WEAVERS OF DREAMS JACK

ARE WE BOY-WOODLANDERS

HEART OF THE JACK  
WOOD

HEART OF THE BOY-WOODLANDERS

WOOD

JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS (SOME)  
OUR ONE TRUE FRIEND

(Scene begins to shift. JENNIFER's VOICE in the distance. Hearing it, JACK and the BOY-WOODLANDERS begin to withdraw.)

David! Wait!  
JENNIFER (off)

SOME  
OUR ONE TRUE FRIEND  
OTHERS  
OUR ONE TRUE FRIEND

OTHERS  
OUR ONE TRUE FRIEND  
JENNIFER (off)  
Wait for me! David!

SOME  
OUR ONE TRUE FRIEND  
OTHERS  
OUR ONE TRUE FRIEND

(DAVID crosses. Hunting-horns and the baying of hounds offstage. DAVID disappears. JENNIFER runs on.)

JENNIFER  
David! David! Wait for me! Wait!

(She runs across and off. JULIAN and MATTHEWS appear over a ridge leading a SEARCH-PARTY. They carry shot-guns.)

JULIAN, MATTHEWS & SEARCH-PARTY  
HUNTING WILD  
HEART-BREATH HEAVY  
SCENTING FEAR  
ON THE SOFT BLACK BREEZE  
ON WE STALK  
THROUGH THE MIST  
AND TWISTING TREES

(advancing)

STUMBLING BLIND  
FOOTFALLS FUMBLING  
WILD AS WE  
IN THE HEAT OF FLIGHT  
ON THEY FLY  
THROUGH THE SMOOTH  
AND MOON-BRUSHED NIGHT  
ON ON ON  
AND OUT OF SIGHT

OFF OFF OFF  
THEY DART  
BLACK SHADOWS  
ON ON ON  
WE DELVE  
LIKE DOGS  
THROUGH STABBING BUSHES  
STUBBORN BRIARS  
AND SULLEN BOGS

(They trudge across and away.)

ON ON  
THROUGH DARKNESS  
LIKE THE DREAMINGS  
OF AN ELFIN CHILD  
HUNTING WILD

(distant)

HUNTING WILD  
HUNTING WILD

(They have gone, as again the scene begins to dissolve.)

VILLAGERS (in the distance)

HORROR HORROR  
HORROR HORROR

JACK (appearing, mocking)

HORROR HORROR  
HORROR HORROR

BOY-WOODLANDERS (joining, hysterical)

HORROR HORROR  
HORROR HORROR

HORROR HORROR  
HORROR HORROR (etc)

ALL (overlapping)

(In mirth, the BOY-WOODLANDERS appear and muster round JACK. The VILLAGERS reappear, creeping downstage, as the music develops into a contrapuntal melange.)

VILLAGERS  
I'VE HEARD TELL OF TERRIBLE THINGS  
SEVEN-FOOT CRAYFISH ADDERS WITH WINGS  
HORRIBLE TALES BUT THIS'D RUN RINGS  
ROUND ALL SUCH TERRORS  
TERRORS HORRORS

HORROR HORROR  
HORROR HORROR

HORROR HORROR HORRIBLE NIGHT  
RUN AWAY NOW WITH ALL OF YOUR MIGHT  
ONLY A FOOL WOULD PUT UP A FIGHT  
WITH SUCHLIKE TERRORS  
TERRORS TERRORS

FLEET AS THE FOX  
ARE WE  
SLOW AS THE SLUG  
ARE THEY  
LOST IN A NIGHT  
WHICH KNOWS NO END

JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS

MIDSUMMER GAMES  
ARE THESE  
DREAMERS OF DREAMS  
ARE WE

VILLAGERS  
ON THIS HORRIBLE TERRIBLE  
TERRIBLE HORRIBLE  
NIGHT OF HORROR  
THIS HORRIBLE NIGHT

JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS  
HEART OF THE WOOD  
OUR ONE TRUE FRIEND  
(OUR ONE TRUE FRIEND)  
THE DREAMER'S FRIEND

VILLAGERS  
HORRIBLE NIGHT  
HORRIBLE NIGHT (etc)

JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS  
OUR ONE TRUE FRIEND  
THE DREAMER'S FRIEND (etc)

(Through lighting they are now joined, in separate parts of the forest, by: CHEEK, SYLVIA and the pampering GIRL-WOODLANDERS in orgiastic freeze; DAVID and JENNIFER, separate, though both exhausted and confused; and JULIAN, MATTHEWS and the SEARCH-PARTY.)

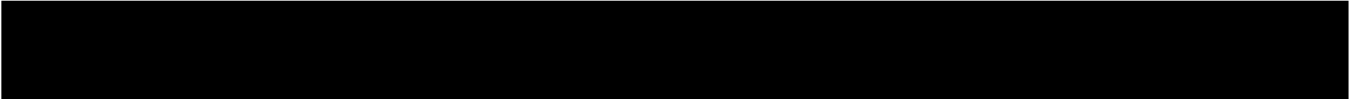
ALL (except CHARLOTTE, ALEXANDER & CHEEK)  
MIDSUMMER DREAMERS  
WHO HAVE WANDERED TOO FAR  
ARE WE/THEY TO WANDER  
HERE FOR GOOD?

LOST IN THE BLACK  
RUNNING WILD AND BLIND  
TURNING OUR/THEIR BACK  
ON THE WORLD BEHIND  
FAR FROM THE TRACK  
WE/THEY WOULD SURELY FIND  
IF WE/THEY COULD

THE TRACK THE TRACK  
THE TRACK THE TRACK

SOME  
OUT OF  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
OUT OF  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
OUT OF  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
OUT OF

OTHERS  
OUT OF  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
OUT OF  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
OUT OF  
THE HEART OF THE WOOD  
OUT OF



THE HEART  
OF THE  
WOOD

ALL (except CHARLOTTE, SYLVIA & CHEEK)

(Blackout.)

End of Act One

---



ACT TWO

Scene One

(Black night. Faraway clock faintly striking midnight. The GIRL-WOODLANDERS encampment, SYLVIA slumbering in the hirsute arms of the goatish CHEEK.

Music. Lights reveal ANGEL. He looks on in satisfaction. JACK is with him.)

|  
ANGEL

Oh see, see, my Jack, this sweet an sorry scene. This same and very moon-calf, master Jack, take she for you, poor girlie. An so supped full of love-him sleeps all horned up in her beastly bed of lies. I almost pity her.

|  
JACK

Excellent.

|  
ANGEL

An did Jack also juice the juicy on the strangeling's eye?

|  
JACK

Crep up on him sleep-him -- that's done an all, captain! The jilted jill close by him beside, so when he woked she'd be the first he'd spied.

(New music.)

|  
ANGEL

Now go, boy Jack, and bring my wood-brats home. For next night sees the birthing of the year, and we must mark the hour with fire and feast. So go!

|  
(JACK runs off.)

This night come out besser than could of dreamt.

|  
(Distant drumming and ululation. ANGEL moves away. SYLVIA, CHEEK and the GIRL-WOODLANDERS disappear gradually from view, as ...)

---

|  
(... the scene shifts, and ANGEL makes his way to ...)

|  
Scene Two  
|

(Derelict pottery kilns, caves or quarry.  
|

ANGEL alone, silhouetted by the cave's flickering fire, weird  
and lupine.)  
|

1. "Under the Hill"

Ensemble

ANGEL

UNDER THE HILL  
I BROOD HEAD HEAVY  
GUARDING THE HEARTH  
WHICH HEATS OUR BLOOD  
HARBOURED BENEATH  
THE DARKENED HEATH  
WRAPPED ROUND IN MUD

UNDER THE HILL  
LIKE EARTH-BORN SERPENT  
DREAMING ALONE  
WHERE TREE-ROOTS TWIST  
SILENTLY CURLED  
I HOLD THE WORLD  
WITHIN MY FIST

(ANGEL throws a handful of dust into the flames, which spit  
acknowledgement. The BOY-WOODLANDERS are seen  
moving like shadows through the moonlit woods, stalking  
with stone and spear.)

OUT IN THE DARK  
THEY SMELL THEIR QUARRY  
BOYS OF THE WILD  
WHO RACE THE DEER  
BORNE ON THE BREEZE  
OF ROSE-RED SUMMER  
STALKING BY NIGHT  
THE SCENT OF FEAR

SOON THEY WILL STRIKE  
MY SLANT-EYED ADDERS  
MAKING BY MOON  
THEIR SILENT KILL  
SOON TO RETURN  
NIGHT'S HEROES  
UNDER THE HILL

(The HUNTERS are returning with their booty, JACK leading them.)

BOY-WOODLANDERS (dancing)

UNDER THE HILL  
THE HUNTERS GATHER  
DRAGGING THEIR SPOIL  
INTO THE GLOOM  
SEEKING ONCE MORE  
THE SECRET DOOR  
OF EARTH'S  
DARK WOMB

UNDER THE HILL  
WE MEET OUR MASTER  
BEARING THE BEAST  
INTO THE HOME  
FEEDING THE FLAMES  
WHICH LIGHT OUR GAMES  
BELOW THE LOAM

HERE IN THIS HEAT  
OUR HEARTS BREAK COVER  
RISING LIKE SHOOT  
THROUGH NEW-BORN LAND  
ROAMING THE WILDS  
WHERE ONCE THERE WANDERED  
MANY A BOLD  
AND BARE-FOOT BAND

MORNING DESCENDS  
AND DOWN WE VANISH  
KEEPING ALIVE  
BY LYING STILL  
HUDDLED ONCE MORE  
NIGHT'S CHILDREN  
UNDER THE HILL

(Baying, the BOY-WOODLANDERS enter the cavern with

the butchered beasts. JACK leads them in triumphant procession around ANGEL.)

ANGEL

Pome-pirk an hum-water for the know-him boy!

(The BOY-WOODLANDERS give JACK a flagon, chanting "know-him-boy, know-him-boy".)

TAKE THE BOY  
MARK HIS BROW  
LORD CAPRICORN  
HE IS  
AMONG US NOW

BOY-WOODLANDERS

VULPES VULPES  
CANIS LUPUS  
CAPRA HIRCUS  
CAPRA HIRCUS

(JACK is swept up and, during the following the head is hacked off the goat's carcass, the body prepared for roasting. The blood is let from the animal's throat, and JACK is marked with the blood. He bears the mark for the remainder of the act.)

ALL (except JACK)

UNDER THE HILL  
WHERE BLACK FEET BURROW  
CARVING A PATH  
THROUGH AGE-OLD CLAY  
DEEP IN OUR SEAM  
WE LIE AND DREAM  
OF DISTANT DAY

UNDER THE HILL  
BELOW DARK ACRES  
SOWN WITH THE FLESH  
OF ANCIENT KINGS  
DESTINED TO SLEEP  
IN CAVERNS DEEP  
ONE THOUSAND SPRINGS

(At the same time we see SYLVIA, CHEEK and the GIRL-WOODLANDERS, in their setting, in erotic tableau.)

SYLVIA & GIRL-WOODLANDERS

GOAT'S BEARD  
TICKLE HER  
BEAR-BIND  
SHACKLE HER  
MUSK AND MUSIC  
LET HER FIND

ANGEL, JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS

WE ARE THE CHILDREN  
OF THE DANCING CORN  
WE ARE THE STILL POINT  
OF THE WHIRLING WORLD

SYLVIA & GIRL-WOODLANDERS

LAP-WEED  
HONEY HIM  
SNAKE'S MEAT  
SUCKLE HIM  
LUST AND LONGING  
FILL HIS MIND

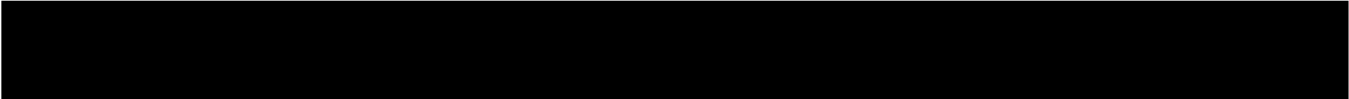
ANGEL, JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS

THIS IS DEEP SOLSTICE  
WHEN THE WORLD IS GREEN  
THIS IS OUR DREAM-TIME  
WHEN THE WORLD IS OURS (etc)

(The goat's head has been impaled on a tall, swaying pole, which now is brandished like a gruesome banner, as the BOY-WOODLANDERS muster and parade.)

ALL (overlapping again)

UNDER THE HILL  
WE DANCE IN DARKNESS  
UNDER THE HILL  
WE SLEEP LIKE DRAGONS  
UNDER THE HILL  
WE DREAM OUR SUMMER  
UNDER THE HILL  
WE WAKE TILL SUN-BREAK



WE DANCE  
WE SLEEP  
WE DREAM  
WE WAKE (etc)

(together)

DEEP IN THIS DARK  
WHERE NO MAN WANDERS  
SAFE FROM THE HEARTS  
WHO WISH US ILL  
HERE LET US MARK

SOME  
HIGH SUMMER  
  
HIGH SUMMER

OTHERS (overlapping)  
HIGH SUMMER

HIGH SUMMER

UNDER THE  
HILL

UNDER THE  
HILL

UNDER THE  
HILL

UNDER THE  
HILL

UNDER THE HILL

ALL

(Blackout.)

---

Scene 2-A

(The scene shifts, and we hear offstage a MAN's VOICE calling: "Charlotte! Charlotte!".)

DAVID (off)

Charlotte ... Charlotte ...

(The WOODLANDERS melt back into the dark, as the scene changes to ...)

Scene Three

(By the stream. Night, the atmosphere far more sombre than before. CHARLOTTE is still asleep in the abandoned boat. Eerie underscoring throughout -- not quite music, not quite noise.)

DAVID staggers in. He is considerably more dirty and dishevelled than in Act One.)

DAVID (entering)

Charlotte! Charlotte!

(He blunders over the sleeping CHARLOTTE, falling.)

Charlotte! Darling! And all alone! My God! The absolute boulder! To abandon you like this! In a ghastly, mildewed old boat!

(shaking her)

Charlotte! Charlotte! Are you all right? Charlotte, old girl, it's me -- David!

CHARLOTTE (waking)

David ...

(CHARLOTTE wakes. Her clothes too are stained and crumpled.)

DAVID

That's right, old girl. David.

CHARLOTTE

David ...

DAVID

All alone? No Alexander?

CHARLOTTE

What?

DAVID (imitates him)

You know -- Alexander.

CHARLOTTE (understanding)

My lambkin! My Alexander! Where is he? What have you done with him? What have you done with my lambkin?

(She stands and staggers around, searching.)

DAVID

Nothing, I ...

CHARLOTTE

You're lying, lying! I can see it in your horrid, squinty eyes ...

DAVID

They're not squinty ...

CHARLOTTE

You've done something -- something dreadful. Where is he? Alexander! Lambkin! Oh, why did I ever come to this horrid place?

DAVID

Then let me take you back, my love. Back to the safety of your father's hearth and home ...

CHARLOTTE

Without my Alexander? Without my lambkin? What are you saying?

DAVID

Darling girl ...

CHARLOTTE

David, if I find that you have hurt so much as his feelings, then I will have no hesitation in pulling those horrid hairs one by one from your horrid, heartless breast!

(DAVID winces. Underscoring out.)

Now what have you done with him?

DAVID

Nothing, I swear.

CHARLOTTE (moans)

Then why would he have wandered from his sleeping Charlotte?

DAVID

Well, I hate to say it, Charlotte, but hang it all -- not everyone in this forest is in love with you. Perhaps he just thought that it -- well, just wasn't on. Hogging you all to himself.

CHARLOTTE

Can't you understand? I don't want you. I have never wanted you. I will never want you. Now have you finished?

DAVID  
Yes. I think so.

CHARLOTTE  
Good!

(She stalks off. A beat.)

1A. "The Rising of the Sun" -- pre-echo Song (fragment)

---

DAVID (sinking to his knees)  
NO DREAM HOWEVER DEEP  
NO DARK HOWEVER LONG  
NO NAKED NIGHT IS THERE  
SO BLACK OR BLEAK IT DOES NOT SEE  
BRIGHT LIGHT BREAK FREE  
CLEAR RIVERS RUN  
TO MEET  
LIKE CHILDREN  
THE RISING OF THE

(He crumples up, drops and falls into a dead sleep.)

ANGEL & JACK (off)  
SUN  
THE RISING OF THE SUN

---

(ANGEL and JACK are revealed. They have been watching.)

ANGEL  
Her were never the lady.

JACK (astonished)  
Him were never the bloke.

ANGEL  
What you talking, woodling? Him were the bloke, right enough.

JACK  
Oh, rat's teeth! Was never this bloke's peepers Jack did paste!

ANGEL (collaring him)  
What saying, wood-mite?

BOTH (thinking it through, counting)

Four strangelings!

ANGEL

Oh, woodling -- what you been an gone an done? Been a twist-up here, meseems. Seems to me woodling's gone an pasted potion on some true-lover's peepers!

JACK

I dint, I never! A true-lover, captain Angel, sir? Rarer than rocking-horse shit, this day an age!

ANGEL

Shut you up an get you off about these woods now, wosset, an see you fine a girlie name of Jenny Fur.

JACK

Jenny Fur.

ANGEL

All love-sick, she is, an sigh an as can be. Use tricks an what-not to snare her here to me. Off with you now, woodster!

JACK (trudging away)

I'm off, I'm off.

(He goes. Music: "Lark's eye/Cat's face" ...)

|

ANGEL

Meantime I'll wipe wood's magic on these love-lorn ogles here.

|

(He squeezes the flower on DAVID's eyes.

|

JACK runs back in.)

JACK

Captain sir, Angel, hey -- her she comes now, that Jenny -- an in her footfalls the same an very gent which I mistaken. An all loved up after her, is he, captain Angel.

ANGEL

Now what you done, woodling? Can't see? Two man-folk now they'll dog same bit of skirt. Quick, quick, now! Way with you!

(He yanks JACK back into the shadows, where they watch. Weird underscoring resumes. Enter JENNIFER, ALEXANDER following. Like the OTHER TWO, they are dirty and unkempt.)

|

ALEXANDER

How? How can you say that, sweet one, dearest? How can you think I mock you with my love, my love? Look in my eyes! See my tears! Sweetness, lightness -- such things cannot be forged!

JENNIFER

A day ago you had eyes only for Miss Charlotte. Why so soon should I be the sorry object of your schoolboy affections? Now, what is all this? Some ruse? Some wager with your callous friend?

ALEXANDER

Dear thing, sweet -- believe me. I was young and foolish when I loved, or thought I loved Thingalina. I lacked taste, lacked judgement, lacked wisdom. Now, knowing you, I know far, far better!

JENNIFER

It was yesterday, Alexander. Is your heart so hasty, that today you decide to chuck your poor, spent love like a worn-out sock?

ALEXANDER

Love, David loves her, not you. And I love you, my Jennifer, not her. Agreed? Why, then -- happy ending guaranteed!

JENNIFER

Don't be absurd. You are in love with Charlotte.

ALEXANDER

No ...

JENNIFER

Yes!

(Underscoring out.)

You cannot be in love with me. You are devoted to Charlotte. You barely know me. Listen, Alexander. Go -- find her. Find Charlotte. Elope with Charlotte. Marry bloody old Charlotte! Just go. Please, go. And leave me here alone.

ALEXANDER

But, Jennifer ...

JENNIFER

Enough! We both know perfectly well that no-one has ever loved, will ever love, can ever love poor, sad Jennifer ...

(DAVID wakes, sits bolt upright and sees JENNIFER.)

JENNIFER DAVID (waking, dazed)

(ALEXANDER and JENNIFER look round in alarm.)

David! JENNIFER

JENNIFER DAVID

David! ALEXANDER

JENNIFER JENNIFER DAVID  
JENNIFER JENNIFER

David? JENNIFER & ALEXANDER (stunned)

JENNIFER JENNIFER DAVID  
SILKEN-SKINNED  
ANGEL-VOICED AS EVENING WIND

What? JENNIFER

JENNIFER JENNIFER DAVID  
ALMOND-EYED  
BE MY SUMMER BRIDE

What is this nonsense? JENNIFER David?

JENNIFER JENNIFER DAVID  
FAIR OF FACE  
HIDE ME IN YOUR HEART'S EMBRACE

All right, David, that's enough. JENNIFER

DAVID & ALEXANDER

AS BEE IS TO BLOSSOM  
AS BLOSSOM WAS EVER TO BEE  
SO JENNIFER JENNIFER  
IS TO ME

Jennifer!

ALEXANDER

Jennifer, be mine!

BOTH

I beg of you!

JENNIFER

What?!

BLOODY HELL YOU AS WELL  
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL  
WHO EXACTLY IS THE SICKER  
OF YOU TWO  
NO DON'T TRY TO DENY  
THAT THIS LOVE-SONG IS A LIE  
DO YOU THINK THAT I CAN'T TELL WHEN  
LOVE IS TRUE?

AND IN FACT THIS WHOLE ACT  
IS A HORRID LITTLE PACT  
MADE BY SCHOOLBOY BRAINS NO BIGGER  
THAN A PEA  
WELL YOU'RE VICIOUS  
AND MALICIOUS  
AND QUITE FRANKLY REPETITIOUS  
AND YOU'VE NEITHER  
OF YOU EVER  
LOVED ME

DAVID & ALEXANDER  
JENNIFER JENNIFER  
BURNING BRIGHT  
FLOOD MY WORLD WITH  
LOVE AND LIGHT  
JENNIFER JENNIFER  
HEART'S DESIRE  
FILL MY SOUL WITH FIRE

JENNIFER JENNIFER  
WARM AND WISE  
MELT ME WITH THOSE  
MOON-KISSED EYES

THE BEE AND THE BLOSSOM  
THE TREE AND THE APPLE AGREE

OH  
JENNIFER  
PRETTY ONE  
DON'T BE CRUEL  
JENNIFER  
PITY A  
LOVE-SICK FOOL  
JENNIFER  
JENNIFER  
SAY THAT YOU'LL  
AGREE

OH JENNIFER  
TO SPEND YOUR LIFE

JENNIFER  
GO AWAY RUN AND PLAY  
RUIN SOMEONE ELSE'S DAY  
GO AND TAKE ANOTHER  
NINNY FOR A RIDE  
DON'T YOU DARE SAY YOU CARE  
WHEN I'M JOLLY WELL AWARE  
THAT YOU WOULDN'T EVEN  
NOTICE IF I DIED

UNDER OATH YOU WOULD BOTH  
SOONER COUPLE WITH A SLOTH  
AND IF I SO MUCH AS  
LEERED AT YOU YOU'D FLEE

YOU'RE BOTH SPITEFUL  
AND WHAT'S FRIGHTFUL  
IS YOU'RE FINDING IT DELIGHTFUL  
COULD YOU TRULY  
ACT MORE CRUELLY?  
BE MORE RUDE OR MORE UNRULY?  
IT'S DISTRESSING  
IT'S DEPRESSING  
BLOODY NORA WHAT A BLESSING  
THAT DESPITE THIS ACT  
OF DOTING DEVOTEE  
YOU WILL NEVER  
NEVER NEVER

(They are interrupted by ...)

---

Alexander!

| CHARLOTTE (off)

Alexander!

| (Chord. ALL THREE freeze.)

Alexander ...

| (Chord again. CHARLOTTE enters.)

(She stares at him in disbelief, then rushes into his arms.)

Lambkin -- Where have you been? Poor Charlotte has fretted so. What was it, my love, caused you to up sticks and leave poor Charlotte to the mercy of bats, badgers and heaven knows? And oh! My fevered and horrid imaginings! Do you realize, my love, how I've fretted over your safety? Do you? Have you nothing to say to your poor lambkin who's fretted so?

(looks round)

Jennifer! David! Heavens! All here!

(to ALEXANDER)

Well?

ALEXANDER

Well, lambkin ...

CHARLOTTE

Yes?

ALEXANDER

Lambkin, there's something which you need to know.

(Slow music. CHARLOTTE looks around at the OTHERS.)

|

(ALEXANDER)

I'm afraid -- lambkin -- that I can, in fact, be your lambkin no longer.

|

(Music out.)

CHARLOTTE

But I do not understand.

JENNIFER

Don't listen to him, Charlotte. They are both insane, I declare.

CHARLOTTE

Quiet, please. I am talking to my Alexander. Alexander, lambkin -- I am quite certain that you do not intend to tell me that you have dragged me into this unpleasant forest, through moss, mire, bracken and bramble -- all for nothing?

ALEXANDER  
Well, yes.

(The OTHERS look away.)

Yes, Charlotte. I'm afraid I do.

CHARLOTTE (after a moment)  
Well, no matter. There are others in these woods who care for Charlotte.

(turning to DAVID)

David! Darling! Until now I have shunned you. But I see now that I may have been hasty. And since I am no longer to have truck with this ... false lambkin -- now, new darling, you may take me. For there is nothing to prevent our speedy union.

DAVID  
Charlotte, I am most awfully sorry. But I am afraid that neither one of us is even the smallest bit in love with you any longer.

CHARLOTTE  
What's that?

ALEXANDER  
That's right.

DAVID  
We are sorry.

ALEXANDER  
But there it is.

DAVID  
You see, we ...

ALEXANDER  
... are in love ...

BOTH  
... with Jennifer!

CHARLOTTE  
What?!

(CHARLOTTE) (to ALEXANDER and DAVID)

YOU SWORE I WAS  
YOUR EARTH AND SKY  
THAT IF YOU LOST  
ME YOU WOULD DIE  
YOU NASTY MEN  
WAS ALL THAT THEN  
SOME JEST AT MY EXPENSE?

JENNIFER

YOU SEE WHEN ALL  
IS SAID AND DONE  
WE DON'T ALL SHARE  
YOUR SENSE OF FUN  
SO IF YOU WOULD  
PERHAPS YOU COULD  
DISPENSE WITH THIS PRETENCE

CHARLOTTE & JENNIFER

AND TALK SOME BLOODY SENSE

ALEXANDER & DAVID

BUT THIS WE SWEAR  
IS WHAT WE FEEL  
THIS NEW-FOUND LOVE  
IS REAL REAL REAL

CHARLOTTE

IT'S MIDSUMMER MADNESS  
PLAIN AS DAY  
HOW ELSE COULD A MAN  
GO SO ASTRAY?  
WHY ELSE WOULD HE TREAT  
A GIRL THIS WAY  
IF HE WEREN'T COMPLETELY MAD?

JENNIFER

IT'S MIDSUMMER MADNESS  
IT WOULD SEEM  
WHY ELSE WOULD YOUR ONCE  
DEVOTED TEAM  
GO ALL OVERBOARD  
TO HATCH A SCHEME  
THAT WOULD MAKE YOU FEEL SO BAD?

CHARLOTTE & JENNIFER

IT'S A PLOT  
IT'S A TRICK  
IT'S A SICK SICK GAME  
AND IT'S MIDSUMMER MADNESS  
I BLAME

MADNESS MADNESS  
MIDSUMMER MADNESS  
MADNESS MADNESS  
MIDSUMMER MADNESS (etc)

DAVID

IT'S HARD WE KNOW  
BUT THERE IT IS  
YOU SEEMED A PRIZE  
WHEN YOU WERE HIS  
BUT NOW YOU'RE FREE  
YOU SEEM TO ME  
A TAD THE WORSE FOR WEAR

ALEXANDER

WHILE YOU NEW LOVE  
ARE FRESH AS DEW  
TO THINK THAT I  
REJECTED YOU  
WAS I DERANGED?  
WELL THAT'S ALL CHANGED  
I SEE NOW YOU ARE FAIR

ALEXANDER & DAVID

SUCH LOVELINESS IS RARE

CHARLOTTE & JENNIFER

YET YESTERDAY  
YOU BOTH SWORE BLIND  
MISS CHARLOTTE WAS  
LIFE'S FINEST FIND

ALEXANDER

TO MIDSUMMER MADNESS  
I SUCCUMBED  
MY HEAD WAS ADRIFT  
MY HEART WAS NUMBED  
I BLANCH AT THE DEPTHS  
IT MUST HAVE PLUMBED  
WHEN I BEGGED HER FOR HER HAND

DAVID  
BUT MIDSUMMER MADNESS  
DOES HAVE BOUNDS  
THOUGH HURTFUL IT SEEMS  
AND HARSH IT SOUNDS  
THE LOVE THAT I THOUGHT  
HAD GOOD FIRM GROUNDS  
WAS A HOUSE I'D BUILT ON SAND

ALEXANDER & DAVID  
AND A HOUSE  
BUILT ON SAND  
I'M AFRAID MUST FALL  
IT WAS MIDSUMMER MADNESS  
THAT'S ALL

DAVID  
BUT NOW

ALEXANDER  
BUT NOW

DAVID  
I SEE

ALEXANDER  
I SEE

BOTH  
THE FOLLY OF MY WAYS

DAVID  
AND NOW

ALEXANDER  
AND NOW

DAVID  
I SEE

ALEXANDER  
I SEE

BOTH  
THAT CHARLOTTE WAS  
A PASSING PHASE

BUT HOW CHARLOTTE

BUT HOW JENNIFER

CAN SHE CHARLOTTE

CAN WE JENNIFER

MAKE SENSE OF WHAT YOU SAY? BOTH

WHEN JENNIFER  
FIRST YOU IGNORE ME

CAUSING SADNESS CHARLOTTE

THEN YOU ADORE ME JENNIFER

THAT'S JUST MADNESS CHARLOTTE

MADNESS MADNESS  
MIDSUMMER MADNESS  
MADNESS MADNESS  
MIDSUMMER MADNESS (etc)

NOW CAST YOUR VOTE ALEXANDER  
OH DEAREST MISS

YOUR SAY IS KEY DAVID  
IN ALL OF THIS

YOU WANT MY AID? JENNIFER

IT'S YOU WHO'VE MADE CHARLOTTE

CHARLOTTE & JENNIFER  
THIS WHOLE UNHOLY MESS

CHARLOTTE  
YOU BOYS ARE QUITE  
BEYOND BELIEF

JENNIFER  
YOU TALK OF LOVE

CHARLOTTE  
YET DOLE OUT GRIEF

ALEXANDER  
OH PLEASE DON'T TEASE

DAVID  
DON'T TEASE US PLEASE  
DON'T SCOFF AT OUR DISTRESS

ALEXANDER & DAVID  
JUST TELL US NO OR YES

JENNIFER  
No!

ALEXANDER & DAVID  
BE MINE BE MINE  
MY SUMMER DREAM

CHARLOTTE & JENNIFER  
YOU STOP THIS NOW  
OR WE SHALL SCREAM

JENNIFER (pushing them away)  
STOP LOVING ME

ALEXANDER (pushing DAVID)  
STOP LOVING HER  
YOUR LOVING  
ISN'T WANTED SIR

CHARLOTTE (pushing ALEXANDER)  
STOP LOVING HER

DAVID (pushing ALEXANDER)  
STOP LOVING HER  
IT'S YOUR LOVE  
THAT SHE HATES YOU CUR

ALEXANDER (pushing CHARLOTTE)  
STOP LOVING ME

JENNIFER (pushing DAVID)  
STOP LOVING ME  
I HATE YOU  
BOTH AND SO DOES SHE

DAVID (pushing ALEXANDER)  
STOP LOVING HER

CHARLOTTE (pushing ALEXANDER)  
START LOVING ME  
I LIKED IT  
LIKE IT USED TO BE

ALL (pushing ONE ANOTHER)  
TO LOVE LIKE THIS  
CAN COST YOUR WITS  
A LOVE LIKE THIS  
IT'S IT'S IT'S IT'S IT'S

MADNESS MADNESS  
MIDSUMMER MADNESS  
MADNESS MADNESS  
MIDSUMMER MADNESS (etc)

(ALL)  
IT'S MIDSUMMER MADNESS  
THAT'S FOR SURE

CHARLOTTE  
MY EYES ARE AWASH

JENNIFER  
MY BRAIN IS SORE

CHARLOTTE  
MY POOR LITTLE HEART  
CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE

CHARLOTTE & JENNIFER  
THIS HAS TRULY BEEN A NIGHT

ALEXANDER & DAVID  
ALL RIGHT

CHARLOTTE & JENNIFER  
OF MIDSUMMER MADNESS

ALEXANDER & DAVID  
WE AGREE

CHARLOTTE & JENNIFER  
OR MIDSUMMER MADMEN  
THAT SHOULD BE

ALEXANDER & DAVID  
A CHAP HAS A RIGHT  
TO CHANGE HIS MIND

CHARLOTTE & JENNIFER  
A CHAP HAS A RIGHT  
OF NO SUCH KIND

AND JILTING A GIRL  
IS JUST NOT NICE

(A beat.)

JENNIFER  
AND SOMEBODY HERE  
SHOULD PAY THE PRICE

(A beat.)

CHARLOTTE (turns to JENNIFER)  
I VOTE THAT IT'S YOU  
YOU SCHEMING SOW  
YOU STOLE MY MAN

(pushes her)

ALEXANDER (moving to defend JENNIFER)  
NOW NOW

DAVID  
NOW NOW

DON'T PUSH ME MISS  
I'VE DONE NO WRONG

JENNIFER

I'LL BET YOU PLANNED  
THIS ALL ALONG

CHARLOTTE

HANDS OFF MAD MISS  
YOU KEEP YOUR COOL

ALEXANDER

HANDS OFF YOURSELF  
YOU FOUR-EYED FOOL

DAVID

YOU HOG

ALEXANDER (shoving him)

YOU HAG

CHARLOTTE (shoving JENNIFER)

YOU DOG

DAVID (shoving ALEXANDER)

YOU SLAG

JENNIFER (shoving CHARLOTTE)

YOU NIT

ALEXANDER & CHARLOTTE

YOU SHIT

DAVID & JENNIFER

ALL RIGHT  
THAT'S IT

ALL

(Pause.)

(ALL) (advancing on ONE ANOTHER)

THIS MIDSUMMER MADNESS  
HAS TO END  
TOO BAD THAT IT MEANS  
I CRUSH A FRIEND  
SO SAD WHEN YOU SEE  
YOURSELF DESCEND  
TO THE LEVEL OF BRUTE BEASTS

BUT ONCE IN A WHILE  
ONE CAN MAKE A CASE  
FOR FORCING A FIST  
IN SOMEBODY'S FACE  
AND THIS I WOULD THINK  
MIGHT WELL BE THE PLACE  
AND TIME

SO WHAT I DO NOW  
I DO NOW  
IN THE NAME OF ALL HUMANITY  
IN THE CAUSE OF WOUNDED VANITY

ALEXANDER & DAVID

TO PUT TO RIGHTS

CHARLOTTE & JENNIFER

TO PUT TO BED

ALEXANDER & DAVID

THE SHAMES AND SLIGHTS

CHARLOTTE & JENNIFER

AND STOP THE SPREAD

ALL

OF THIS MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S  
THIS MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S  
THIS MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S  
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S  
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S  
INSANITY

(ALL exeunt in struggle and in flight, DAVID chasing  
ALEXANDER, CHARLOTTE chasing JENNIFER.)

---

(The BOY-WOODLANDERS emerge, gleefully chanting and



|  
Scene Four

|  
(The forest. Night.)  
|

4. "Catch Me If You Can"

Song/Ensemble

(Total blackout. JACK appears, very dimly spot-lit, the only thing visible to us in the murk.)

JACK (quietly, far downstage)

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN  
SAID THE MOTH TO THE SPIDER  
THE BREEZE IS A STALLION  
AND I AM THE RIDER  
OH CATCH ME SAID THE MOTH  
AS SHE SLIPPED IN THE CIDER  
AND SANK  
WHAT DID SHE WEEP  
AS HER SLEEP  
IN THE AMBER BEGAN?

BOY-WOODLANDERS (appearing)

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

(The BOY-WOODLANDERS emerge out of the gloom carrying lanterns, which flicker and flit magically in the darkness.)

JACK

WHO SHALL BE MASTER  
AND WHO SHALL BE MAN?

BOY-WOODLANDERS

WHO?

JACK

OH WHO SHALL BE MASTER  
AND WHO SHALL BE MAN?

BOY-WOODLANDERS

WHO?

(He calls out loudly in DAVID's voice.)

COME AND  
CATCH ME

JACK (as DAVID)

CATCH ME

BOY-WOODLANDERS

CATCH ME

JACK (as DAVID)

CATCH ME

BOY-WOODLANDERS

CATCH ME  
CATCH ME  
CATCH ME

JACK (as DAVID)

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS

David! David!

ALEXANDER (offstage)

(JACK and the BOY-WOODLANDERS vanish into the darkness. ALEXANDER appears, angry, searching. We also hear JACK imitating DAVID offstage, a goading echo.)

ALEXANDER  
I'LL KILL  
YOU  
I'LL KILL  
YOU  
I'LL KILL  
YOU  
I'LL KILL  
YOU

DAVID's VOICE (off)  
I'LL  
KILL YOU  
I'LL  
KILL YOU  
I'LL  
KILL YOU  
I'LL  
KILL YOU

COME COME  
KILL ME KILL ME  
COME COME  
KILL ME KILL ME

BOY-WOODLANDERS (offstage, receding)

David! David!

ALEXANDER

(He exits, following the VOICE. JACK and the BOY-WOODLANDERS creep back in.)

JACK

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN  
SAID THE WORM TO THE SPARROW  
THE EARTH SHALL BE WORM'S  
WHEN HE'S KING OF THE BARROW  
OH CATCH ME SAID THE WORM  
AS THE BLADES OF THE HARROW  
DREW NEAR  
WHAT SAYS HE NOW  
THE ROUGH PLOUGH  
HAS PUT PAID TO WORM'S PLAN?

BOY-WOODLANDERS

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

(JACK calls out in JENNIFER's voice.)

JACK (as JENNIFER)

COME AND  
CATCH ME

BOY-WOODLANDERS

CATCH ME

JACK (as JENNIFER)

CATCH ME

BOY-WOODLANDERS

CATCH ME

JACK (as JENNIFER)

CATCH ME  
CATCH ME  
CATCH ME

JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

CHARLOTTE (offstage)

Jennifer! Jennifer!

(JACK and the BOY-WOODLANDERS vanish again.  
CHARLOTTE appears, searching. We hear JACK imitating  
JENNIFER offstage.)

CHARLOTTE  
I'LL KILL  
YOU  
I'LL KILL  
YOU  
I'LL KILL  
YOU  
I'LL KILL  
YOU

JENNIFER's VOICE (off)  
I'LL  
KILL YOU  
I'LL  
KILL YOU  
I'LL  
KILL YOU  
I'LL  
KILL YOU

BOY-WOODLANDERS (offstage, receding)

COME COME  
KILL ME KILL ME  
COME COME  
KILL ME KILL ME

CHARLOTTE

Jennifer! Jennifer!

(She exits, following the VOICE. JACK and the  
BOY-WOODLANDERS re-enter. Perhaps JACK imitates  
BOTH voices, alternating bizarrely.)

JACK (& BOY-WOODLANDERS)

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN  
SAID THE HARE TO THE EAGLE  
YOU CLAIM TO BE KING YET  
THE RAT IS AS REGAL  
OH CATCH ME SAID THE HARE  
AS THE LIGHT-FOOTED BEAGLE  
MOVED IN  
HOLDING HER FAST  
IN THE LAST  
EVER RACE THAT SHE RAN

(BOY-WOODLANDERS

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN)

(ALL FOUR LOVERS are seen, in different parts of the forest. Again and again the LOVERS' paths criss-cross, but they never actually come face to face. Instead they become increasingly fatigued by the fleeing and chasing, the wandering and searching. At the end of the section, ALL depart.)

JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS

Catch me! Catch me!

(JENNIFER and DAVID reappear -- lamplit? -- in separate parts of the forest, breathless, hounded and lame.)

JENNIFER & DAVID

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN  
SAID THE PIKE TO THE OTTER  
I SCUD LIKE A SWALLOW  
AND YOU BARELY TOTTER  
OH CATCH ME SAID THE PIKE  
AS THE WATER GREW HOTTER  
THAN HELL  
WHAT DID PIKE SAY  
AS HE LAY  
IN THE CHIRRUPING PAN?

JENNIFER  
CATCH ME IF YOU  
CAN  
CATCH ME IF YOU  
CAN

DAVID  
CATCH ME IF YOU  
CAN  
CATCH ME IF YOU  
CAN

(Confused, DAVID and JENNIFER wander off.

Drained, ALL FOUR LOVERS wander in circles. Unseen, JACK and the BOY-WOODLANDERS weave amongst them, guiding and bamboozling them. One by one JACK lures the weary LOVERS, leading them, hypnotically, into a clearing.)

JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN  
SAID THE WREN TO THE VIPER  
THE GREENWOOD IS DANCING  
AND I AM THE PIPER  
OH CATCH ME SAID THE WREN  
AS THE SHARP-SIGHTED SNIPER  
TOOK AIM

SHOWING AGAIN  
THAT THE WREN  
LIKE THE HARE  
AND THE WORM  
AND THE MOTH  
AND THE PIKE  
IS NO MATCH FOR THE MAN  
CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

(The LOVERS fall, one after the other, senseless, into the arms of the BOY-WOODLANDERS, who lay them out on the floor of the clearing. ALL FOUR sleep. NONE sees the OTHERS. JACK oversees matters.)

JACK & BOY-WOODLANDERS (in canonic imitation)

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN  
SAID THE  
HARE TO THE EAGLE  
AND CATCH ME IF YOU CAN  
SAID THE  
WORM TO THE SPARROW  
OH CATCH ME IF YOU CAN  
SAID THE  
MOTH TO THE SPIDER  
THE PIKE TO THE OTTER  
THE WREN TO THE VIPER

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN  
SAID THE  
HARE TO THE EAGLE  
AND CATCH ME IF YOU CAN  
SAID THE  
WORM TO THE SPARROW  
OH CATCH ME IF YOU CAN  
SAID THE  
MOTH TO THE SPIDER  
THE WREN TO THE VIPER

(ALL)

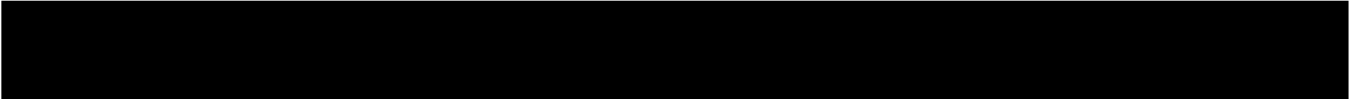
OH YOU SHALL BE MASTER  
AND I SHALL BE MAN  
BUT FIRST YOU MUST  
CATCH ME CATCH ME  
CATCH ME CATCH ME  
CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

(The BOY-WOODLANDERS vanish, leaving JACK. Dead segue.)

4A. "Dreaming (The Dreaming)" -- pre-echo Song (fragment)

JACK

Close your eyes fast, my dears ... time and the bell, they shall bring morning, and all will be well, my dears ... all will be well ...



DID YOU LOVE HIM  
MY DEAR?  
DID HE LOVE YOU?  
WAS SHE UNKIND  
MY DEAR?  
WAS HE UNTRUE?  
AND FANCY-FREE  
DID LOVER FLEE  
MY DEAR  
HIS HONEY'S KISS?

(squeezing the flower on ALEXANDER's eyes)

YOU MUST FORGET  
MY DEARS  
THE HURTS YOU'VE FELT  
THE NICKS AND KNOCKS  
MY DEARS  
THIS NIGHT HAS DEALT  
AND WHEN YOU WAKE  
AT LONG DAY'S BREAK  
MY DEARS  
THINK ONLY THIS

IT WAS NOT MADNESS  
WOVE SO MUCH WOE  
AH NO  
MY DEARS  
AH NO  
IT WAS BUT DREAMING  
THE DREAMING  
WHICH MADE IT SO

---

(Fade to black.)



Scene Five

(The GIRL-WOODLANDERS encampment. SYLVIA, CHEEK and GIRL-WOODLANDERS by the water, ALL asleep.)

Music. Lights change weirdly. ANGEL is gazing on. He comes forward.)

4B. "Love-in-Idleness" -- reprise #2 Song (fragment)

---

ANGEL

DOG'S EARS  
RAT'S TAILS  
WARRIOR'S WOUND  
LARK-SEED  
ORPHAN JOHN

LOVE-STONE  
SNAKE'S GRASS  
YELLOW MOONS  
DANE-WEED  
SIMPLER'S JOY

(Discarding the purple flower, he squeezes another plant on her eyes.)

MANY HERBS  
JACK  
MANY HERBS

---

|  
(Music continues under.)

|  
SYLVIA (waking)

Hey, Angel -- oh, what dreamings have I seen! What knowings an half-knowings!

|  
ANGEL

Talk on, my queenie -- what you dream?

|  
SYLVIA

I dreamt us two did fight, an I did seek me out another love -- the sweet, young sapling, Jack. Yet when did clutch him to me close, oh love -- I found that I did couple with a goat!

|  
ANGEL

A goat, my coney? Very queer indeed.

SYLVIA

Now all is good. You here with me, my sweet.

ANGEL

Ay -- now less hear you screams, as you look see what you did love in dreams!

(He pulls the head off CHEEK. She is appalled. ANGEL roars with laughter. CHEEK, sleeping, is oblivious to all. New music.)

Come you, now -- take mitts with Angel.

(Furious, she lashes out at him. He recoils, hurt.)

Hey, come!

SYLVIA

No, trickster!

ANGEL (assuaging)

Come, come ...

5. "Dreaming (The Dreaming)"

Duet/Ensemble

ANGEL

THE BAT-BLACK NIGHT  
MY LOVE  
WITH SILKEN WINGS  
LINKED HANDS WITH LUST  
MY LOVE  
TO SHAPE THESE THINGS  
WOVE THEM A SHROUD  
WHICH SERVED TO CLOUD  
MY LOVE  
YOUR MOON-STRUCK MIND

AND IF IT CHANCED  
MY LOVE  
YOU WAS MISLED  
WAS NEVER I  
MY LOVE  
DID CHURN YOUR HEAD  
NO CHARM NOR DRUG  
NOR NIGHT-BORN BUG  
MY LOVE  
MADE YOU LOVE-BLIND

WHO THEN MY LOVE-QUEEN  
LAID YOU SO LOW?  
WHAT FIEND  
MY LOVE?  
WHAT FOE?  
IT WAS YOUR DREAMING  
THE DREAMING  
MADE THESE THINGS SO

BOTH

IT WAS BUT DREAMING  
THEY WERE NOT SO

SYLVIA

AND THE BOY  
WHO LED  
YOUR LOVE ASTRAY

BOTH

IS AS A THOUSAND  
THOUSAND MILES AWAY

ANGEL

AND THE LOVE  
SHE BORE  
THAT GREY-EYED LAD

BOTH

IS BUT A BUTTON-BUG  
A BUTTERFLY  
WHICH BLAZES BRIGHT  
BUT BY THE LIGHT OF NOON  
MUST DIE

(ANGEL seduces her with dance, rather as JULIAN did  
HENRIETTA in Act One.)

ANGEL

LET US DANCE NOW  
IN VELVET DARKNESS  
THE DAY IS DAWNING  
WHEN WE MUST SLEEP

SYLVIA

LET US REST US  
BY GOLDEN LIGHT-BREAK  
UNTIL THE NEW NIGHT

BOTH

WHEN WE HAVE FESTIVAL  
GREAT FESTIVAL  
WHICH WE MUST KEEP

BOTH/ALL

LET US DANCE NOW  
LET US DANCE  
LET US DANCE NOW  
LET US DANCE (etc)

(Strange dance, elegant and stately, as SYLVIA sings:)

SYLVIA (dancing)

WAS SHE THEN MAD  
YOUR LOVE?  
OR WAS SHE SICK?  
WAS IT THE STARS  
MY LOVE  
OR ANGEL'S TRICK  
MADE ME TO PINE  
AND WEEP AND WHINE  
WITH LOVE  
OF THIS PIG'S EAR?

(She indicates the sleeping CHEEK.)

FOR IF FRESH FLESH  
MY LOVE  
WAS SYLVI'S WHIM  
THE LOVE SHE FISHED  
MY LOVE  
WAS NEVER HIM  
THIS GOATISH GHOUL  
THIS FARTING FOOL  
MY LOVE  
HOW CAME HE HERE?

WAS I HIS BRIDE THEN?  
AND HE MY BEAU?

BOTH

AH NO  
MY LOVE  
AH NO  
IT WAS BUT DREAMING  
THE DREAMING  
DID MAKE IT SO  
IT WAS THE DREAMING  
WHICH MADE IT SO

ALL

WAS THIS HER BUCK THEN  
AND SHE HIS DOE?

ANGEL & SYLVIA

AH NO  
SWEET LOVE  
AH NO

ALL

IT WAS BUT DREAMING  
THE DREAMING  
DID MAKE IT SO  
IT WAS THE DREAMING  
WHICH MADE IT SO

(They kiss. Dancing, they wander away. CHEEK grunts in his sleep. Lights fade.)

---

|

|  
Scene Six  
|

(Under the oak-tree, the LOVERS' clearing. Darkness.)  
|

Dawn silhouettes FIGURES: JULIAN, MATTHEWS and the SEARCH-PARTY on the brow of a hillock overlooking. ALL gaze across the clearing. At first they do not see the sleeping LOVERS.)  
|

6. "The Rising of the Sun"

Ensemble

JULIAN & SEARCH-PARTY

NO DREAM HOWEVER DEEP  
NO DARK HOWEVER LONG  
NO NAKED NIGHT IS THERE  
SO BLACK OR BLEAK IT DOES NOT SEE  
BRIGHT LIGHT BREAK FREE  
CLEAR RIVERS RUN  
TO MEET  
LIKE CHILDREN  
THE RISING OF THE SUN

(As day breaks, other MEMBERS of the COMPANY appear in different parts of the forest. By the end of the number the only characters not singing are CHEEK, ANGEL, SYLVIA and the FOUR LOVERS.)

ALL the OTHERS turn their eyes towards the sunrise.)

JULIAN, SEARCH-PARTY & OTHERS

NOW LAKES SERENE AND STILL  
AND LEAVES AS COOL AS DEW  
AND DOZING DOVES AWAKE  
AS GREY-GREEN DARKNESS SUAVELY EBBS  
AND FINE WHITE WEBS  
SLY NIGHT HAS SPUN  
ARE STRUNG  
LIKE MUSLIN  
BY ROADSIDE AND ON ROSE  
TO GREET  
LIGHT'S CATCHERS  
THE RISING OF THE SUN

(Very slowly, light fills the stage.)

ALL

SUN MIDSUMMER SUN  
WOODS BROUGHT BACK TO BIRTH  
STAY PROUD BIRDSONG STAY  
AND LET US SEE  
ALL SUMMER IN A DAY

DAY MIDSUMMER DAY  
DAWN AS OLD AS EARTH  
WORLD TURNS  
AIR SINGS  
CLOUDS CALL  
ALL THINGS  
SAY FLY FLOW GROW TALL  
THIS LONGEST DAY OF ALL

---

(ALL apart from JULIAN and the SEARCH-PARTY melt back into the forest. The advancing light has revealed once more the sleeping LOVERS. JULIAN and the OTHERS see them.)

JULIAN

Well, well -- what tender scene of reconciliation have we here? Not gone away at all, not gone to ground, but barely lost before they're found. Come, let's wake these poor bedraggled sleepers!

(Horns sound. The LOVERS wake.)

Good morning, friends. Long nights we've been out searching for you bright young things -- an explanation wouldn't come amiss.

(The LOVERS stand, in amazement and embarrassment. JULIAN addresses ALEXANDER and DAVID. MATTHEWS strides forward.)

MATTHEWS

Charlotte! My daughter, sir -- safe at last, thanks be!

(pulling ALEXANDER to his feet)

Little dog! Lordship will see you whipped for this!

JULIAN

Now, hold your horses, Matthews -- let them speak. Come then, friends -- two arch-rivals, asleep like fox-cubs side by side? What brings this on, I'm keen to know?

ALEXANDER

My lord -- the truth is ... I cannot truly say what the truth is, nor truly how I came to be here.

JULIAN

I see.

ALEXANDER

I mean, my lord -- as far as I remember, I came into these woods with Charlotte -- with Miss Matthews -- and yes, our aim it was to run away to somewhere we could marry without fear of retribution ...

MATTHEWS

My lord, we've heard enough, more than enough! Bring down that retribution on the arrogant young puppy's head. Your father would have done as much.

JULIAN

My father, Matthews, was a miserable old goat.

MATTHEWS

My lord!

JULIAN

And you are cut of cloth that's much the same. Now hold your tongue, and let a fellow speak!

ALEXANDER

Sir -- we are in love!

(Music under.)

|  
DAVID (to JULIAN)

My lord ... Jennifer -- Miss Farthing -- told me of their plan ...

|  
JENNIFER

I'd hoped to win his gratitude and love ...

|  
DAVID

And, full of jealousy, hell-bent to win Miss Matthews from Alexander, I tracked them through the forest, night and day.

|  
JENNIFER

While, fool for love, I followed in his wake.

|  
DAVID

But sir, the strangest is -- by some mysterious power, my love to Charlotte suddenly ...

|

Yes?

JULIAN

Vanished.

DAVID

Vanished?

JULIAN & MATTHEWS

Like dew on summer moss!

DAVID

Ha!

JULIAN

And all I desire now is ... Jennifer, Jennifer and yet more ... Jennifer!

DAVID

We were promised, you see. Before Miss Matthews came on the scene.

JENNIFER

(A slightly awkward beat.)

I think I can explain.

CHARLOTTE

(Music out.)

You see, for a time, Captain Swan succumbed to a strange sickness ...

DAVID  
A sickness, yes -- which turned me away from my poor Jen.

JENNIFER  
As an invalid might turn from food.

DAVID  
That's right.

JENNIFER  
But now, good health has returned his normal appetite to him. Hasn't it, darling?

JULIAN  
Excellent, I see. And you once again crave the "wholesome food" that is your Jennifer -- yes, well -- that's lucky. Lucky in love, indeed. Matthews, I override your grievance, for you've been a twit.

MATTHEWS

I ...

JULIAN

No more -- I'd say things had worked out for the best, wouldn't you? Of course they have. Let them be married. Let all be married. After all -- what day is it today?

OTHERS (mumble)

Midsummer's Day.

JULIAN

And?

(Silence.)

Someone's birthday.

OTHERS (realizing)

Happy birthday ... many happy returns, my lord ... (etc)

JULIAN

It is my birthday, yes -- and today I can have anything I want. Now -- all this talk of food has whetted my appetite.

(Noises of pleasure and assent. JULIAN begins to move off.)

Then off, off with us, one and all -- back to Broxton for a cook-up. And tonight, the ball -- all in the village welcome, all -- yes, you too, Matthews! It seems we found these wanderers just in time. Come along, come along!

(seeing something offstage)

Oh look, I say -- Panaeolus copraphilia. Quite extraordinary ...

(He goes, MATTHEWS and the SEARCH-PARTY following.  
The FOUR LOVERS linger a moment.)

CHARLOTTE

I had the strangest dream last night.

(CHARLOTTE)

I dreamt you left me.

DAVID

I dreamt we four were fighting ...

JENNIFER

And I found myself in a dark wood ...

ALEXANDER

And I was lost ...

CHARLOTTE

And ...

FOUR LOVERS (severally)

A WOODED HILL  
THERE WAS  
AN ANCIENT LAIR  
A RING OF STONES  
THERE WAS  
AND YOU WERE THERE  
AND LED ME BACK  
ALONG THE TRACK  
WHICH YOU HAD LOST

WAS IT LAST NIGHT THOUGH  
OR LONG AGO?  
CAN'T SAY  
NOR I  
DON'T KNOW  
AND WERE WE DREAMING  
ALL DREAMING?  
OR WAS IT SO?  
OR WAS IT SO?

(Exeunt DAVID, JENNIFER, ALEXANDER and  
CHARLOTTE. Lights fade.)

---

Scene Seven

(Woodland. Midday. The VILLAGERS and PLUM sit forlornly.)

SETH

Well, my lads -- tonight's the night. Tonight's the ball. We must do what we can do. Hearts of oak, my boys, remember, hearts of oak!

PLUM

It's no good, Seth. It's the high notes. I can't reach.

FRY

Vicar, you don't even know what the notes are for which you're trying for to reach for, do you, now, then, Vicar?

PLUM (sadly)

No.

JESS

Couldn't some other fellow sing it, Reverend?

PLUM

Alas, Jess, no. I fear there's none in Midsomer Magna knows the role of St George.

GRUBB

Ay -- and none could sing as sweet as Cheeky. He had a rare old voice, did Cheeky.

OTHERS (murmuring agreement)

Ay ... that he did ... truly said ... a sweet voice ... old Cheeky ... a rare old voice ... prompt ... horse ... colour ... etc

PLUM

Has, Walter -- has. He's not dead, we hope.

THE OTHERS (mumble)

Amen to that ... not dead ... prompt ... room for improvement ... good as dead ... horse ... turned into a goat ... (etc)

(A troubled pause, broken by:)

PLUM

All right -- one more time, then. And everyone, remember -- with feeling, please. With feeling.

OTHERS

Ay ... feeling ... not dead ... prompt ... goat ... etc

FRY  
After one, then, my boys. And -- one ...

(The VILLAGERS start the song. PLUM sings Saint George's lines.)

6B. "The Banner of Saint George" Song/Ensemble (fragment)  
-- pre-echo #4

VILLAGERS  
BUGLE BELLOW  
SACKBUT BLAST  
LOW  
THE FOE  
IS LAID AT LAST

PLUM  
THREE CHEERS FOR THE FLAG WE HOLD SO DEAR

ALL  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

PLUM  
WHICH FILLS THE INVADER'S HEART WITH FEAR

ALL  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

PLUM  
PROUD YEOMEN LET THAT STANDARD FLY  
TILL ENGLAND'S EMBLEM CROWDS THE SKY  
AND YEOMEN'S POLES ALL BEAR ON HIGH

(Suddenly, offstage, we hear CHEEK's VOICE, singing his part on cue. Not yet hearing him, PLUM continues to sing too.)

CHEEK (as GEORGE, drowning out PLUM)  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

(To PLUM's astonishment, the notes are coming out much better than expected. ALL turn in amazement as, stumbling out of the bushes, the BUTCHER reappears, singing his line where he left off in Act One. ALL sing joyfully:)

VILLAGERS (& PLUM)

HURRAH  
HURRAH FOR ENGLAND  
FROM CHEAM TO CHEDDAR GORGE  
HURRAH  
FOR MERRY MERRY ENGLAND  
CRY ENGLAND  
AND ST GEORGE

---

(CHEEK turns round to see the OTHERS all staring at him, as the singing peters out. Suddenly there is joyous commotion, as ALL talk at once.)

PLUM

Mister Cheek! My dear fellow! What a happy sight!

THE OTHERS

Nick! Cheeky! Where the devil you been, boy? How are you, my dear boy? What happened? Talk and tell! Tell, tell all!

CHEEK (embracing them)

Reverend Plum! Walter! Bob Fry! Seth Wilmot! Heavens! All crep away and left me there asleep, did you? You devils! Well, never's the worry. But, my masters, oh my masters -- I had myself a most mysterious dream.

VILLAGERS (at once)

Say, say, dear Nick. Oh, tell us everything, quick, dear Cheek! Yes, yes! Quick, quick!

PLUM

No, no. Not yet, not yet -- no time. Come along, one and all, come along. Marshall your frocks, meet as soon as maybe upon the terrace, look over your parts. Warm up your cords. We must hurry! For, gentlemen ...

(expansively)

... the show must go on!

ALL

Hurrah!

(ALL rush out in excitement. CHEEK is last to leave. He looks around the clearing, scratches his head, shrugs and waddles off.

Fade to black.)

Scene 7-A

|  
(As the scene shifts we hear music more distinctly, prelude to the night's festivities, full of anticipation.

|  
It is midsummer's night, early evening. We pass round and about the grounds of Broxton. Suggestion of fireworks, a hint of bucolic dancing and whooping.

|  
We fade into ...)

|

|  
Scene Eight

|  
(The terrace and lawns of Broxton. Marquee, bunting, garlands, Chinese lanterns, flags and roses. Evening.

Elegant chamber music within: "Dream-Nights".

|  
JULIAN is looking out at the hills. He holds a tray of canapes, from which he is eating. HENRIETTA appears from the house.)

|  
HENRIETTA

There you are! I've been looking.

|  
JULIAN

Can't be.

|  
HENRIETTA

What can't?

|  
JULIAN

Bonfires.

|  
HENRIETTA

Where?

|  
JULIAN

Moon Hill. Haven't been bonfires for years.

|  
HENRIETTA

What is it, then?

|  
JULIAN

Who, more to the point. I haven't seen a fire up there since I was a child. Old Abel Baker used to light one, but he's been under the clay these past twelve winters. No-one goes up there now.

|  
HENRIETTA (lightly)

What about your precious spirits, darling? The ghosts of midsummers past. The ploughman and the yeoman. Maybe it's them.

|  
JULIAN

Ah, no -- I don't imagine they appear much these days, either. Chased away by fools like us, with our noisy parties ...

|

|  
(ALEXANDER, DAVID, CHARLOTTE and JENNIFER enter from the house. They wear evening-dress. JULIAN spins round and sees them.)

|  
HENRIETTA

Ah! The returning prodigals!

|  
JULIAN

My midsummer dreamers! Welcome!

|  
FOUR LOVERS (severally)

My Lord ... Good evening, sir ...

|  
(Music out. BOWLES appears.)

BOWLES

My lord, the persons from the village are here and ready to perform.

DAVID

Perform? I say, Jules, have you laid on some theatricals? First-rate!

JULIAN

Oh, Christ. I forgot. It's this annual thing. Some local chaps come up and put on a bit of a show. Brainchild of the local vicar chappy. Here.

(He hands to HENRIETTA a crudely manufactured programme.)

HENRIETTA (reads)

"The Midsomer Mummers proudly present a Midsummer Mummers-play". How marvellous!

ALEXANDER

What's it to be this year?

JENNIFER (looking over HENRIETTA's shoulder)

"The Legend of Saint George". Splendid!

DAVID

God. Will it go on long?

JULIAN

Well, no-one yet complained of the Reverend Plum's entertainments being too short.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, but we must see it!

JULIAN  
Yes. It will be quite bad, you know.

OTHERS (severally)  
Excellent!

JULIAN (to BOWLES)  
Show them in.

(The SIX of them take their seats on the stone steps in readiness for the play. On the lawn, a makeshift stage has been erected, framed in patriotic bunting.)

HENRIETTA  
Honestly, Julian -- give the poor chaps a fighting chance. I'm sure it's ... marvellous!

JULIAN (eating canapes)  
You wait.

7. Finale

Ensemble

(The VILLAGERS process in playing their crude instruments -- bugle, cymbals, drum, tin-whistle etc. Business. PLUM faces them, beating time.)

CHEEK is to play George, GRUBB the Princess, FRY the King, with flowing stuck-on beard; and ABEL and JESS the Dragon. Or perhaps glove or stick puppets are used, the VILLAGERS providing the voices.

Applause. PLUM acknowledges it.)

ALL  
The Ballad of St George.

CHEEK  
An entirely new and original ballad-opera.

GRUBB  
In three axe.

CHEEK  
Axe one.

(Gong struck. CHEEK exits, followed by ALL VILLAGERS except PLUM.)

PLUM  
The play's the thing, our bard once said;  
Well, sad to say, the bard is dead;  
And we who live to bear his flame  
Can only pray we'll bring no shame  
To drama's great and sacred name.

(Applause. PLUM stays it with his hand. "Exotic" music starts.)

Where is it that we lay our scene?

HECKLER  
Where?

PLUM  
'Tis Lybia, 'midst the folk Sylene.  
A moorish setting has our tale,  
Where moorish mores yet prevail.  
There doth a grisly dragon prey,  
Who eats a virgin every day!  
They choose one blindly from the town,  
For fear he'll burn their city down.  
But who is this? He wears a crown.

(FRY appears as the KING.)

KING (FRY)  
I am the ruler of this land.  
But, ah! I need a helping hand.

(Keening music.)

CHORUS (SETH, JESS & GRUBB)  
WOE WOE WOE  
WOE WOE WOE

KING  
WOE WOE WOE  
WAS EVER SUCH A FOE?  
HE MAKES OF ALL OUR MAIDENFOLK  
HIS FEAST  
AND WOE WOE WOE  
NOW COMES THE CRUELLEST BLOW  
MY DAUGHTER DEAR IS SOON TO BE DECEASED

(Music, "woe" etc under.)

PLUM

The folk, you see, each day drew lots,  
And even kings must bow to what's  
Dictated by the hand of fate;  
And, though it grieves me to relate,  
It happened that the beast's high-tea  
(Oh, wicked fate!) was next to be  
The king's fair daughter, Bel by name  
And nature. Oh, it was a shame!

KING

OH WHO WHO WHO?

CHORUS

WHO?

KING

YES WHO WHO WHO?

CHORUS

WHO?

KING

WILL RID ME  
OF THIS TURBULENT BEAST?

CHORUS

OH PUT A GAG ON  
THAT GHASTLY DRAGON

KING & CHORUS

WE'RE MIGHTLY PERTURBED TO SAY THE LEAST

WOE WOE WOE  
WOE WOE WOE

(New music.)

GEORGE (CHEEK -- offstage)

FEAR NOT

KING

WHAT?

FEAR NOT  
WHAT?  
FEAR NOT  
FEAR NOT  
WHAT?  
WHAT?  
FEAR NOT  
WHAT?  
Who art thou, friend?  
Why, George, of course.  
And this proud beast?  
This is my horse.  
FEAR NOT  
OH KING  
FOR I BEAR HAPPY HAPPY TIDINGS  
I BRING  
OH KING  
AN ANTIDOTE TO GRIEF

GEORGE  
CHORUS  
GEORGE  
KING/CHORUS  
GEORGE  
KING/CHORUS  
(GEORGE rides up as Saint George.)  
KING (to GEORGE)  
GEORGE  
KING  
GEORGE  
(GEORGE manoeuvres it. Business.)  
GEORGE

TAKE HEART  
MY LIEGE  
AND HEAR MY HAPPY HAPPY TIDINGS  
MY HAND  
MY LORD  
SHALL BRING YOU SWIFT RELIEF

KING

BUT WHO  
ARE YOU  
WHO BEAR THESE HAPPY HAPPY TIDINGS?  
YES OH  
ARE YOU?  
PRAY TELL ME AND BE BRIEF

GEORGE

TAKE HEART  
MY LIEGE  
AND HEAR MY HAPPY HAPPY TIDINGS  
MY HAND  
MY LORD  
SHALL BRING YOU SWIFT RELIEF

KING

IF WAGING WAR  
ON DRAGONS BE THY THING  
THEN HAPPY HAPPY  
HAPPY HAPPY  
HAPPY HAPPY  
HAPPY HAPPY TIDINGS  
YOU TRULY BRING

GEORGE

FOR WAGING WAR  
ON DRAGONS IS MY THING  
AND HAPPY HAPPY  
HAPPY HAPPY  
HAPPY HAPPY  
HAPPY HAPPY TIDINGS  
I DULY BRING

(Applause.)

JESS

Axe two.

(Gong struck. Music.)

PLUM  
The scene now shifts to stagnant lake,  
Where dragon doth his dwelling make:  
A loathsome beast with foetid breath,  
His fangs are foul ...

HECKLER  
His name is Seth.

SETH (off)  
Oi!

PLUM  
His venom, death!  
And here lies he in murky mud,  
Till roused by thirst for virgin blood.

(Change of scene: outside the DRAGON's lair. JESS as PRINCESS BEL, tied to a rock. He is unhappy in this role.)

BEL (JESS)  
LADY OF SORROW  
AM I AM I  
TEA-TIME TOMORROW  
I DIE I DIE  
OH BOTTOMLESS GRIEVING  
OH GRIEF PAST CONCEIVING  
SMALL WONDER I'M HEAVING  
A SIGH

(sighs:)

AY

(sings:)

SING AY ME  
OH WHY ME?  
OH LADY OF SORROW  
AM I

(Music under.)

PLUM

The merest thought of maiden thighs  
Brings tears of lust to dragons' eyes.  
Small wonder that poor Bel doth quake:  
Her fate is sealed ...

HECKLER

Her breasts are fake.

PLUM

Her life's at stake.

PRINCESS BEL

SING AY ME  
OH BLIMEY  
FOR LADY OF SORROW  
MUST DIE

(Applause, wolf-whistles. GEORGE appears.)

GEORGE

Oh fragrant virgin, quail no more!  
I know right well that thou art sore  
In need of very pressing succour!

PLUM

The thought of rescue had not struck her!  
Now all at once the sweet, young thing  
Felt knightly George might succour bring.

(Ominous music. Smoke.)

But horror, horror, hark who nears?  
It is the dragon!

GEORGE (preparing for battle)

Guard your rears!

(The DRAGON -- SETH & GRUBB -- appears. During the following, GEORGE and the DRAGON do battle, much as PLUM describes.)

PLUM  
INTO THE JAWS OF DARKNESS  
GALLOPED THE GOODLY KNIGHT  
FULL BOLDLY DID HIS CHARGER PRANCE  
AS BRAVE SIR GEORGE WITH ANGRY LANCE  
DID ON HIS SHAPELY MOUNT ADVANCE  
INTO THE JAWS OF DARKNESS

OH CHEER HIM  
YES FEAR HIM  
HE LAUGHED IN  
THE JAWS OF DARKNESS

LONG IN THE JAWS OF DARKNESS  
VALIANT GEORGE DID FIGHT  
BUT ERE THE EVE THE BEAST DID FEEL  
THE MANLY PRICK OF GEORGE'S STEEL  
AND SURE ENOUGH WAS BROUGHT TO HEEL  
CLOSING THE JAWS OF DARKNESS

OH CHEER HIM  
REVERE HIM  
HE MUZZLED  
THE JAWS OF DARKNESS

BEL (overlapping, screams:)

GET NEAR HIM  
AND SPEAR HIM  
OH MUZZLE  
THE JAWS OF DARKNESS

PLUM  
OUT OF THE JAWS OF DARKNESS  
ISSUED A CRY CONTRITE

DRAGON (moans)  
I AM REPENTANT TO THE CORE  
I'LL LAY OFF VIRGIN FLESH

PLUM  
HE SWORE

DRAGON  
IF YOU WILL PLUNGE YOUR BLADE NO MORE  
INTO THE JAWS OF DARKNESS

GEORGE, BEL & PLUM (quietly)

COME NEAR NOW  
OH HEAR NOW  
THE VOICE FROM  
THE JAWS OF DARKNESS

(The DRAGON groans and slumps. PRINCESS BEL  
embraces GEORGE.)

PLUM

The beast was stunned (the feeble thing),  
Not half as stunned, though, as the king  
To see the trio homeward trek,  
Bel's garter round the dragon's neck.

(A beat.)

Act Three.

(Gong struck. Music. GEORGE and the PRINCESS return  
to the city, she leading the DRAGON -- defeated, but walking  
-- by her girdle.)

KING (with telescope)

OH OH OH  
WAS EVER SUCH A SHOW?  
MY MAID RETURNING WITH  
THE KNIGHT  
AND OH OH OH  
THE BASILISK IN TOW  
I MUST CONFESS I'M QUIVERING WITH FRIGHT

THE KNIGHT UNBEATEN  
THE MAID UNEATEN  
OH HORROR INTERMINGLED WITH DELIGHT

GEORGE

FEAR NOT  
OH KING  
FOR I BEAR HAPPY HAPPY TIDINGS  
THIS BEAST  
IS BUT  
A BIRD WITH BROKEN WING

KING

FORSOOTH  
SIR KNIGHT  
YOU DO BRING VERY MERRY TIDINGS  
IN TRUTH  
BY GEORGE  
A COMELY LAY YOU SING

GEORGE

FOR SEE OH SEE  
OH CHEERY TEARY KING  
WHAT VERY VERY  
VERY MERRY TIDINGS  
I BRING

KING

COME NEAR AND GREET  
A CHEERY TEARY KING  
FOR VERY VERY  
VERY MERRY TIDINGS  
YOU BRING

PLUM

And thus it was the hero bold  
That day into the Christian fold  
Some fifteen thousand heathens brought,  
Who switched their faith without a thought.

(then, indicating the DRAGON, with a smile:)

Well -- fifteen thousand souls plus one,  
If you include this errant son.

GEORGE

Why, bless my soul! I quite forgot  
To slay the beast.

DRAGON

Behead me not.

(GEORGE raises his sword to behead the DRAGON.  
Alarmed, the DRAGON -- GRUBB, that is -- produces  
dragon-droppings.)

PLUM

The dragon's plea was all in vain,  
And George did cleave the beast in twain.

(He does so. The DRAGON dies. ALL laugh. Music.)

PLUM

And so it is the hero gay  
Is hallowed as "Saint" George today!

VILLAGERS & PLUM

Hooray!

BUGLE BELLOW  
SACKBUT BLAST  
LOW  
THE FOE  
IS LAID AT LAST

VILLAGERS

A HEALTH TO THE MAN WHO FIRST UNFURLED  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE  
WHO MADE IT HIS QUEST TO SHOW THE WORLD  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE  
THE MAN WHO BRAVED THE TYRANT'S TEETH  
WHOSE BLADE SLEPT BARELY IN ITS SHEATH  
WHO NOBLY HELD HIS OWN BENEATH  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

WHO NOBLY HELD HIS OWN  
WHO NOBLY HELD HIS OWN  
WHO NOBLY HELD HIS OWN BENEATH  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

SOUND THE CORNET  
STRIKE THE DRUM  
BLOW  
THE FOE  
TO KINGDOM COME

(ALL assemble clumsily for the final pose.)

GEORGE

THREE CHEERS FOR THE FLAG WE HOLD SO DEAR

ALL

THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

GEORGE

WHICH FILLS THE INVADER'S HEART WITH FEAR

ALL  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

GEORGE  
PROUD YEOMEN LET THAT STANDARD FLY  
TILL ENGLAND'S EMBLEM CROWDS THE SKY  
AND YEOMEN'S POLES ALL BEAR ON HIGH  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

VILLAGERS & PLUM  
AND YEOMEN'S POLES ALL BEAR  
AND YEOMEN'S POLES ALL BEAR  
AND YEOMEN'S POLES ALL BEAR ON HIGH  
THE BANNER OF ST GEORGE

HURRAH  
HURRAH FOR ENGLAND  
FROM CHEAM TO CHEDDAR GORGE  
HURRAH  
FOR MERRY MERRY ENGLAND  
CRY ENGLAND  
AND ST GEORGE

(The piece ends with a splendid, banner-waving tableau vivant. Applause, curtain-calls.

Full of laughter, the GUESTS wander inside for the dancing, while BOWLES grudgingly dispenses punch and food to the VILLAGERS, who nod in gratitude. Pleased and relieved, they amble off, patting ONE ANOTHER's backs and removing their less comfortable items of apparel.

Rumble of thunder. SOME look up and around fearfully, as they make their way indoors. At last, alone, CHEEK lingers a moment, dazed.)

CHEEK (slow and hesitant)

A WOODED HILL  
THERE WAS  
A HILLY WOOD  
A RING OF STONES  
THERE WAS  
WHICH ON IT STOOD  
A RING OF STONES  
GREAT STANDING STONES  
THEY WAS  
AND THERE I SLEPT

AND IN THIS SLEEP  
I SLEPT  
DREAMT ME A DREAM  
THAT CHEEK WAS TOOK  
HE WAS  
YET COULD NOT SCREAM  
TOOK TO THIS PLACE  
THIS PERFECT PLACE  
AND THEN  
I WOKE AND WEPT

(in a reverie)

MY PERFECT PICTURE  
DISSOLVED LIKE SNOW  
BUT OH  
MY BOYS  
BUT OH  
IF BUT THAT DREAMING  
SWEET DREAMING  
MIGHT MAKE IT SO

IF BUT THAT DREAMING  
SWEET DREAMING  
MIGHT MAKE IT SO  
MIGHT MAKE IT SO  
MIGHT MAKE IT SO

(He looks around, scratches his ears, and wanders off into the house. Stage empty. Lights dim downstage, but warm up gradually behind. In the upstage gloom, we can make out the shadowy figures of ANGEL, SYLVIA and the WOODLANDERS, swaying in slow-motion dance in the glow of their bonfires.

They disappear.

A FIGURE appears out of the gloom: JACK, a scruffy boy of about twelve, with haunted eyes. He has in his hand a little purple flower.)

THURSDAY'S CHILDREN WILD AS	JACK
THE SUMMER DEW	VOICES (off)
WHEN WILL	JACK
THEY VISIT YOU?	VOICES
EYES BURNING BRIGHT	JACK & VOICES
THURSDAY'S CHILDREN CURTAIN	JACK (alone)
YOUR WAKING MIND	VOICES (distant)
DRAW DOWN	JACK
THE WINDOW-BLIND	VOICES (disappearing)
DREAM THEM TONIGHT	JACK

(The upstage FIGURES disappear. He wipes the red smear



from his forehead. Very faintly, we hear a VOICE offstage.)

VOICE (off)

Jack ... Jack ... Jack ...

(He tosses the flower into the darkness, and runs off in the direction of the VOICE.

Fade to black.)

End of Act Two

---