



**Sample Pages from
Shakespeare's Super Snowy Seasonal Sleigh
Ride Stage Show!**

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SHAKESPEARE'S SUPER SNOWY SEASONAL SLEIGH RIDE STAGE SHOW!

A HOLIDAY PLAY IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



Shakespeare's Super Snowy Seasonal Sleigh Ride Stage Show!
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Characters

6M + 11W + 19 Any Gender

Puck: Any Gender

Peaseblossom: Any Gender

Cobweb: Any Gender

Romeo: Male

Juliet: Female

Hermia: Female

Helena: Female

Benedick: Male

Beatrice: Female

Dogberry: Any Gender

Verges: Any Gender

First Janet: Female

Second Janet: Female

Third Janet: Female

Hamet: Any Gender

Hamlet Sr.: Any Gender

Marcellus: Any Gender

Horatio: Any Gender

King Oberon: Male

Shylock: Any Gender

Othello: Male

Lady M: Female

Quince: Any Gender

Flute: Any Gender

Snout: Any Gender

Starveling: Any Gender

Snug: Any Gender

Bottom: Any Gender

Richard III: Male

Regan: Female

Goneril: Female

Tamora: Female

Lord M: Male

Tearlag: Any Gender

Tomag: Any Gender

Teasag: Any Gender

Scene Breakdown

Hosts	Puck, Peaseblossom, Cobweb
Scene One	Romeo, Juliet
Scene Two	Hermia, Helena
Scene Three	Benedick, Beatrice, Dogberry, Verges, Puck, First Janet, Second Janet, Third Janet
Scene Four	Hamet, Hamlet Sr, Marcellus, Horatio
Interlude	Puck, Peaseblossom, Cobweb, King Oberon
Scene Five	Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Shylock, Othello, Third Janet, Lady M
Scene Six	Quince, Flute, Snout, Starveling, Snug, Bottom
Interlude	Puck, Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Richard III, Regan, Goneril, Tamora, Lord M
Scene Seven	Tearlag, Tomag, Teasag, Lady M

Doubling

If every role is played by a single actor, there are 36 roles. The minimum doubling you can have is a cast of 17 to have actors play roles who aren't in subsequent scenes. You can make that number lower if actors are playing in scenes one after the other. It's up to you and what your students feel they can handle.

For a doubling of 17:

- The following roles are not doubled: Puck, Peaseblossom, Cobweb, First Janet, Second Janet, Third Janet, Bottom
- W: Juliet, Regan, Beatrice
- W: Helena, Goneril
- W: Hermia, Tamara
- M: Romeo, Oberon, Lord M
- M: Benedick, Richard III, Othello. (See note regarding Othello)
- AG: Tearlag, Hamlet
- AG: Tomag, Marcellus, Shylock
- AG: Teasag, Horatio
- AG: Dogberry, Hamlet Sr
- AG: Snout, Verges
- The roles of Quince, Flute, Starveling, Snug are then divided up among your M, F, and AG depending on your cast make up.

Casting Note

Shakespeare is notoriously male-heavy. You will note some traditionally male roles have been identified as AG (Any Gender). Some AG roles are referred to by male pronouns in the script. This is intentional. The purpose is to give more parts to a wider spectrum of actors. It is the intention of the author that all of the parts in this play should be played by a diverse cast of actors in terms of gender and race. Cast whomever presents the role best, regardless of their original gender in the original Shakespeare play, or how they are identified in the character list. Feel free to change pronouns.

The Role of Othello

The one caveat to the above casting note is the role of Othello. This character is to be played by a black actor. The gender is identified as male, which can be changed if you have an actor (male, female, non-binary, or trans) who is comfortable with the text as is. But the role must be played by a black actor. If you do not have such an actor you may cut the scene or replace it with the Hanukkah scene in the Appendix.

Set

A unit set of cubes and risers to create a variety of staging options. A painted backdrop upstage of the action is also suggested. Combine Shakespeare-esque symbols with holiday symbols and colours. Perhaps the title of the play in a Shakespearean font with holiday symbols around it.

It is highly recommended that everything you need for the various scenes is onstage throughout or can be easily grabbed from offstage without needing blackouts or scene changes. All of the scenes should run from one to the other without separation. There is no need for blackouts between scenes. Use short pieces of music (described as music stings) for your transitions and block the scenes so there is fluid motion with characters moving off and on. If you want the hosts to stay onstage to minimize the length of transitions, do that.

Costumes

While the characters are specifically Shakespearean, this is a modern play. It would be appropriate to combine Shakespearean era costume pieces with modern clothing. It would be appropriate for the three hosts to be dressed in period clothes with everyone else in basic black with accents for easy doubling. Everyone could wear show shirts, or shirts with their character's name on them. Everyone could be dressed as the modern equivalent of their Shakespearean character, based on their character's personality. Everyone could be dressed in holiday / winter colours. Costume the show as best fits your vision for the show, and your situation.

All the characters run onstage and form a tableau as PEASEBLOSSOM, PUCK, and COBWEB, our hosts for the evening, enter and address the audience.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Hello!

PUCK: Good evening!

COBWEB: Welcome!

PEASEBLOSSOM: It's the holidays.

PUCK: A time of celebration.

COBWEB: So let's celebrate!

PUCK: Let's celebrate Christmas!

ALL: Huzzah!

PEASEBLOSSOM: Except for those of us who don't celebrate and will feel excluded!

ALL: Huzzah!

PUCK: Just because we don't celebrate doesn't mean we can't be celebratory. There are many reasons to celebrate this time of year.

COBWEB: Let's celebrate the corporate machine that means we can put on a play every year till the end of time!

ALL: Huzzah!

PUCK: Stop that!

COBWEB: *(to audience)* Look. Shakespeare never wrote a Christmas play. He so would have, if he had known the behemoth juggernaut, *(makes a cash register sound)* cha ching, it would become.

PEASEBLOSSOM: We should say "Holiday" play. There are more holidays than Christmas this time of year.

COBWEB: Whatever makes people spend money.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Although, technically? Shakespeare did refer to the Epiphany *(pronounced Eh-pif-an-knee)* with the title *Twelfth Night* even though the visit of the Magi *(pronounced Maj-eye)* is never referred to in the play but if we look at the context – you know, I have an instructional presentation with a slide deck that would –

PUCK: (*interrupting*) Ha, ha, ha! Let's not scare our fair audience.

THIRD JANET: (*stepping forward*) Not even a little? It's kinda what we do best.

LADY M: Oh yes! Let's do a scary play.

SNOUT: I don't like to be scared.

THIRD JANET: Everyone likes to be scared.

COBWEB: No! There's more money in Christmas.

PEASEBLOSSOM: There are more holidays than Christmas...

BOTTOM: I think there should be rotating hosts. In fact, I should take over the whole thing.

STARVELING: Bottom for host!

SNOUT: Will it be scary if Bottom takes over?

SECOND JANET: Terrifying.

PUCK: (*pushing everyone back*) Ha, ha, ha! Oh you guys. (*to audience*) Shakespeare is fine. He's fine and he fits in the holiday oeuvre (*pronounced oov-rah*) of plays.

FIRST JANET: Oeuvre? We're getting eggs to throw at the audience?

ALL: Huzzah!

PUCK: Stop that! (*to audience*) We're here because Shakespeare is festive and we're all very festive. (*to others*) Aren't we?

There are a variety of levels of agreement from the others.

PUCK: We are! And we can prove it.

PUCK gestures at the characters who disperse, except for ROMEO and JULIET, who quietly psyche themselves up in the background.

PEASEBLOSSOM: There are so many traditions that happen at the end of an old year and the beginning of a new one. (*at this point, PEASEBLOSSOM either already has a basket with two presents in it, or they run offstage to retrieve two wrapped presents*)

COBWEB: People love to spend money, I mean celebrate, whether they're from around the corner, across the country or on the

other side of the world. Whether they're your friends, your family, or Shakespeare characters.

PUCK: Let's see how our cast of festive famous characters fit right in celebrating traditions old and new.

COBWEB: Here's to making money till the end of time! Huzzah!

PUCK: Stop that!

PEASEBLOSSOM: We start with the tradition of gift giving.

PUCK: And everyone's favourite couple Romeo and Juliet.

ROMEO and JULIET hear their names and come downstage to pose. PUCK brings forward a cube (or two) for ROMEO and JULIET to use in their scene. PEASEBLOSSOM gives ROMEO and JULIET each a present. They take their presents and sit.

COBWEB: They come from two feuding families: Romeo is a Montague and Juliet is a Capulet. The families haaaaaaate each other. Their grudge match is so ongoing no one can remember why they started fighting. It seems impossible these two crazy kids could find true love amidst so much hate. But they do. Briefly. Really short.

PUCK: And then some death happens, but we'll skip that part. Google it.

PEASEBLOSSOM: What would happen if Romeo and Juliet exchanged presents?

A short music sting happens, or lights change to focus on ROMEO and JULIET. The three hosts exit.

SCENE ONE: The BEST at gift giving

JULIET: Can you believe it!

ROMEO: Our first Christmas together.

JULIET: Oh Romeo.

ROMEO: Oh Juliet.

JULIET: And they said it wouldn't last.

ROMEO: Who said that?

JULIET: Never mind. So. Did you get me a present...?

ROMEO: Of course.

JULIET: Awww, Romeo! That's so sweet.

ROMEO: Did you get me a present?

JULIET: I did.

ROMEO: Awww, Juliet! You didn't have to.

JULIET: I wanted to. I couldn't wait to go shopping. You are the first boy I've ever bought a Christmas present for.

ROMEO: That's so sweet.

JULIET: I hardly knew what I was doing! Nobody teaches you how to buy a present for the first boy you've ever bought a present for, especially when you're not supposed to think about boys at all, you're supposed to be happy for the one your parents throw at you! (*beat*) Nurse taught me a lot of things, but Christmas present shopping wasn't one of them.

ROMEO: You did fine. I'll even go so far to say that you did perfect.

JULIET: Perfect? That's a lot of pressure. This present is a representation of our relationship. If I've chosen the wrong gift that must mean my feelings are false.

ROMEO: No! No, no no. I know your feelings are true because I can feel them.

JULIET: Awww, Romeo! That's so sweet.

ROMEO: That's because you're so sweet.

JULIET: Awww. (*beat*) Are you... happy with the present you bought? For me?

ROMEO: (*confident*) Totally. I am an awesome gift giver if I do say so myself.

JULIET: Sounds like you do.

ROMEO: It was a little tricky because we've only been dating a day. But I'm not worried.

JULIET: Oh good.

ROMEO: I can't wait for you to open it! Too bad we have to wait till Christmas. (*beat*) Unless we don't...

JULIET: What?

ROMEO: I can't stand it! Let's not wait.

JULIET: Maybe we should.

ROMEO: Are you worried? Don't be! I know I'm going to love whatever you give me. So, yes?

JULIET: Ok... *(she gets her gift and hands it to him)* Here.

ROMEO: Ooooooh nice wrapping! I love the paper. We have to save that. Whoa, so much tape. Next time I'll show you how to use only three pieces. You'd be surprised how little you need. It's incredibly satisfying to use these teeny tiny squares, and be able to wrap something like a tennis racket which is not easy let me tell –

JULIET: Just open it! Open it! *(beat. She clears her throat)* Open it. Please.

ROMEO unwraps the present. It's socks.

ROMEO: Oh!

JULIET: You hate it.

ROMEO: No...

JULIET: They're socks.

ROMEO: I can see that. Blue socks.

JULIET: Your favourite colour?

ROMEO: Yes.

JULIET: You said you always have cold feet. Oh, I screwed everything up!

ROMEO: Relax. It was your first time. I've had more practice. Open mine. *(hands JULIET a present and she starts to open it)* Aren't you going to admire the wrapping?

JULIET: Nice wrapping?

ROMEO: I only used three pieces of tape.

The wrapping comes off and it's a hairbrush.

JULIET: A hairbrush. You gave me a hairbrush? *(or comb if that's what you have)*

ROMEO: This hairbrush is specifically designed to get the tangles out of your type of hair with the least amount of breakage. It has a non-slip ergonomic angled handle with a balanced load distribution so that your wrist will always be in the exact right position. A work of art and a work of science. *(sighs)* It's beautiful. I had it engraved with your family crest.

JULIET: Yes, you did. *(beat)* Can I ask a question?

ROMEO: You want to learn. I'm touched.

JULIET: A hairbrush is better than socks?

ROMEO: It has your family crest.

JULIET: Everything I own has my family crest!

ROMEO: This is a good present! You spent an hour brushing your hair this morning! An hour! And you have to count every stroke! I had to sit there waiting for you to finish, which is not interesting by any stretch of the imagination, let me tell you. And you got it wrong!

JULIET: Ohhhhhhhhhh. So this isn't a present about me. It's a present about you.

ROMEO: What? No.

JULIET: Yes.

ROMEO: You're crazy.

JULIET: The socks are way better.

ROMEO: How dare you!

JULIET: 100 lambs died to get you the wool for those socks. The knitter wept because I made her redo the pattern three times. That is a mark of a fine present, chosen with love and care, so you can suck it Romeo Montague!

ROMEO: I'm not sure I can wear socks lambs died for. I'll hear their death bleating when I walk.

JULIET: *(not loud, arms folded)* You are impossible.

ROMEO: *(sulky)* You are.

JULIET: *(imitating)* You are.

ROMEO: You. *(beat)* Maybe we don't really know each other.

JULIET: Maybe. Maybe this relationship isn't going to work out.

ROMEO: Maybe. Maybe we shouldn't buy each other presents.

JULIET: Maybe.

ROMEO: But I do have a great idea for your birthday.

JULIET: What?

PUCK enters with a broom, shooing ROMEO and JULIET off. PEASEBLOSSOM starts picking up the wrapping paper and puts it in a basket.

PUCK: Oh those crazy kids. Makes you do crazy things...

PEASEBLOSSOM: Like kill a hundred lambs?

COBWEB: Spending money is always festive! And lucrative. You know, maybe we should go into the Shakespeare character gift business instead of the annual holiday play business. Romeo and Juliet bobble heads? (or another popular figurine toy) Huh? Huh?

PUCK: Moving on!

PEASEBLOSSOM: Moving!

PEASEBLOSSOM and PUCK continue to clean up the wrapping paper and move the cubes out of the way.

COBWEB: Nothing says the holidays like people together in love.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Except for the people who are alone and find the holidays really stressful.

PUCK: (sweeping at PEASEBLOSSOM) Stop that!

COBWEB: Let's meet two more characters who are in love. Hermia and Helena are near and dear to our hearts, they're in our play! *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. At the end of the play, Hermia loves Lysander and Helena loves Demetrius. And Lysander loves Hermia and Demetrius loves Helena.

HERMIA and HELENA enter from either side of the stage. They pose in character. Note: HELENA is wearing an engagement ring.

PUCK: And their love is totally natural and no love juice or fairy intervention was involved in the coupling of these couples. At all. It's fine. 100% natural. Love is awesome!

PEASEBLOSSOM: And these ladies... love each other? Sure they do.
Best friends.

COBWEB: Or best enemies.

PUCK: Frenemies! Let's find out how they spent the holidays.

A short music sting as the hosts exist. HERMIA and HELENA turn to see each other.

SCENE TWO: Happy New Year!

HERMIA: *(crossing the stage toward HELENA)* Helena!

HELENA: *(crossing the stage toward HERMIA)* Hermia!

HERMIA: Darling, how are you?

HELENA: I'm fine. Happy New Year!

HERMIA: Happy New Year. How's your family?

HELENA: They're fine. You know. Family. You?

HERMIA: You know. Family. Can't live with them, can't live with them.

HELENA: *(laughing lightly)* So true.

HERMIA: How's Demetrius?

HELENA: He's fine. *(trying not to make a big deal)* We've been together for the whole holiday.

HERMIA: Oh really? Wow. That's a long time.

HELENA: *(now gushing)* It's been great. He fits in so well with my family.

HERMIA: *(not happy)* Does he.

HELENA: *(not hearing her tone)* How's Lysander?

HERMIA: Oh good. Good. He's good. He's great. We're great.

HELENA: Glad to hear it...

HERMIA: *(turning away through gritted teeth)* We're fabulous.

HELENA: *(now getting it)* Oh. Oh good... *(overly cheerful)* That's good. So good for you. I'm so glad that you're so... good.

During the above line, HELENA slowly puts her left hand in her pocket. HERMIA doesn't see what HELENA is doing.

HERMIA: Well. Isn't this peachy? You and Demetrius. Me and Lysander. All great!

HELENA: It sure is! You know what? I'm going to go. Gotta go, busy busy! We must do lunch. Ok. Talk soon! Bye! *(she turns and is on the verge of breaking into a run when...)*

HERMIA: *(almost dead)* Helena. *(HELENA stops and cringes. She knows what's coming.)* Did Demetrius give you anything...special? While you were "together?" A special Christmas present?

HELENA: Hmmm?

HERMIA: Did you get a special present? A once in a lifetime special present?

HELENA: Aren't all presents special? He did a great job, I didn't even prompt him, or give him hints, or –

HERMIA: *(interrupting, again dead)* You know the type of present I mean. A special present that one gives when they are ready to demonstrate their love and tell the world their relationship should go to the next level?

HELENA: *(Looking at her wrist. She's not wearing a watch.)* Is that the time?

HERMIA: He did, didn't he.

HELENA: I don't know what you're –

HERMIA: *(lightly)* Show me your hand.

HELENA: It's the same as yours.

HERMIA: *(lightly)* So show it to me.

HELENA: *(showing her right hand)* Here you go...

HERMIA: *(grabbing HELENA by the hair)* Not that hand!

HELENA: Ow!

HERMIA: Show it! Show it to me!

HELENA: Ok! Ok! Let go!

HERMIA lets go.

HELENA: You didn't have to pull my hair. (*shows left hand*) There. Happy?

HERMIA: (*grabbing the hand and staring at it*) I don't believe it. (*tapping the engagement ring*)

HELENA: (*taking her hand back*) It's real.

HERMIA: You. It happened to you!

HELENA: That's right, me. Demetrius proposed.

HERMIA: This is not happening. (*with a bit of a primal scream*) No!

HELENA: I'm guessing Lysander didn't propose? Gee. That's tough.

HERMIA: How could you get engaged before me? Lysander loves me way more. And let's not forget Demetrius wanted to marry me before he wanted to marry you, I am obviously the better catch!

HELENA: And yet... (*she flashes her ring*)

HERMIA: No, no, no! This is not possible.

HELENA: Wait, aren't you already engaged?

HERMIA: (*matter of fact*) Not officially. We were going to elope when my dad threatened to kill me for not marrying Demetrius. You know. Family.

HELENA: (*with a sigh*) Family.

HERMIA: But now we're legitimate, I want to do things legitimately. And I've hinted, oh boy have I hinted, and he is not picking up! Where's my ring? (*grabbing HELENA*) Where is it? Where?

HELENA: I don't have it!

HERMIA: (*letting go*) Oh. Of course you don't.

HELENA: Cheer up Hermia. He's probably going to propose on New Year's eve. That's romantic.

HERMIA: Is it?

HELENA: Sure! (*beat*) Not as romantic as Christmas but...

HERMIA: (*deadly*) Oh no?

HELENA: (*not catching HERMIA's tone*) I mean, Demetrius really went all out. He gave me roses, he cooked my favourite meal, there was music and soft lighting. It was so amazing with the lights

twinkling... *(she sighs)* I'm sure one day you'll know what this feels like. You'll know what it means to experience true love and –
(HERMIA grabs HELENA by the hair) Ow! Ow! Ow! Hermia!

HERMIA: Take it back!

HELENA: Can I help it that Demetrius loves me more than Lysander loves you?

HERMIA: Take it back!

HELENA: Ow! Ow!

HERMIA: Take it back before I rip every single hair out of your head!

HELENA: Ok, ok! *(HERMIA lets go)* Lysander loves you more. And he's going to propose.

HERMIA: He is. With a much bigger ring. That goes without saying.
(beat, changing tone completely) It's so good to see you Helena!

HELENA: *(holding her head and wincing)* Likewise. Happy New Year.

HERMIA: We must do lunch. Happy New Year!

They exit as PEASEBLOSSOM, PUCK and COBWEB enter. BOTTOM and STARVELING sneak on behind.

ALL: *(entering)* Happy New Year!

BOTTOM: *(slightly behind, louder with a grand flourish)* Happy New Year!

STARVELING: *(slightly behind BOTTOM)* Happy New... Year...*(trails off seeing everyone staring)*

PUCK: What are you doing?

BOTTOM: Demonstrating that a host should have flourish and flair. I was born to host! *(starts demonstrating flourish and flair)*

PEASEBLOSSOM: This is Bottom and Starveling *(STARVELING gives a shy wave)*, they're also from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

PUCK: And they were just leaving.

STARVELING: Bottom for –

PUCK: Out!

STARVELING runs off at full speed.

BOTTOM: I'll go but I won't be forgotten. *(to the audience with a flourish)* Flourish and flair.

BOTTOM exits with flair.

PUCK: Moving on!

PEASEBLOSSOM: Moving! There are so many New Year's traditions.

COBWEB: Shove out the old year and bring in the new!

PEASEBLOSSOM: In many places New Years is the bigger holiday.

COBWEB: The start of a new year is a big deal.

PUCK: Some let the old year out by opening doors and windows at midnight.

PEASEBLOSSOM: In China they buy new clothes, cut their hair, and clean everything in preparation. (to PUCK) That sounds like something you would do.

PUCK: (*serious*) Don't sweep the first few days of the year, you'll sweep away any good luck. That is a fact.

COBWEB: In Columbia they run around the block with empty suitcases for the hope of happy travels.

PUCK: And in some countries they eat 12 grapes at midnight. One grape for each month.

PEASEBLOSSOM: How would some of our characters eat 12 grapes?

COBWEB: Specifically our friends from Much Ado About Nothing.

PUCK: The play is literally an ado. About nothing. (*BEATRICE/ BENEDICK enter and pose while PUCK talks*) All you need to know is that Beatrice and Benedick hate each other at the beginning of the play.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Which, of course, means they fall in love by the end.

COBWEB: And Dogberry... I don't think I need to explain Dogberry.

PUCK, PEASEBLOSSOM, and COBWEB exit as VERGES enters, counting grapes. DOGBERRY follows on behind.

NOTE: Do not actually speed eat grapes in this scene. Do NOT eat real grapes. It's theatre. Mime the grapes. Safety first!

SCENE THREE: Lucky Grapes

VERGES: (*entering, holding a small bowl*) 9, 10, 11, 12...

DOGBERRY *What are you doing?*

VERGES: Counting.

DOGBERRY: Why?

BEATRICE and BENEDICK unfreeze. BEATRICE has one hand behind her back. BENEDICK is focused on a small bowl he is holding.

BEATRICE: What are you doing?

VERGES & BENEDICK: (*in unison*) It's the eating of the 12 grapes.

BEATRICE: That's an odd turn of phrase.

DOGBERRY: 12 what?

VERGES: Grapes.

BENEDICK: It's a tradition.

BEATRICE: Who's tradition?

BENEDICK: Mine.

BEATRICE: Since when?

BENEDICK: It's not my fault you can't keep up.

BEATRICE: With your traditions? Why should I?

DOGBERRY: You are not eating grapes.

VERGES: I'm about to – as soon as the clock strikes 12.

BENEDICK: On New Years Eve, at midnight you eat 12 grapes, one at a time to the gong of the clock tower.

DOGBERRY: No man on my watch is going to eat 1 grape let alone 12.

VERGES: But it's New Year's Eve.

DOGBERRY: No man on my watch is going to eat 1 grape let alone 12 on New Year's Eve.

VERGES: But it's lucky to eat 12 grapes at midnight on New Year's Eve.

DOGBERRY: Never!

BEATRICE: We don't have a clock tower.

BENEDICK: Don't be so literal.

BEATRICE: And what happens if you happen to eat 12 grapes in 12 seconds?

BENEDICK: Good fortune and luck.

BEATRICE: And if you don't manage it? Ruin and despair?

VERGES: If you eat 12 grapes at midnight on New Year's Eve, you are guaranteed to have an entire year of good fortune.

DOGBERRY: Preposterous! Ridiculous! Ludicrous!

BENEDICK: You're jealous because I'm going to have a great year.

BEATRICE: Not if you don't eat them all.

VERGES: What do you have against grapes?

DOGBERRY: Marry sir, grapes are utterly detestable. Moreover, they represent untruths in the fruit world. Secondly, they make raisins which, sixthly and lastly, they are worse than grapes. Thirdly, the seeds are impossible and unjust. And to conclude grapes are lying knaves.

VERGES: You're the lying knave! Grapes don't talk!

DOGBERRY: I wouldn't put it past them.

BEATRICE: OR... if someone eats them faster... (*revealing the bowl behind her back*)

BENEDICK: Where did you get those?

BEATRICE: (*looking in the bowl*) 12 you say? I think that's exactly the number I have here.

BENEDICK: (*whining*) It's my tradition.

BEATRICE: I think entire countries would disagree.

BENEDICK: You can't do it.

BEATRICE: I can. And, I can do it faster.

VERGES: I'm going to eat my grapes and I'm going to get my good luck.

DOGBERRY: Not if I have anything to say about it. (*grabs the "grapes"*)

PUCK: (*leaping out*) Freeze! Before they get going, we thought we'd add some more grape eaters to the mix. Our three favourite witches from *Macbeth*.

Everyone onstage gasps, breaks character, turns in a circle three times, runs offstage, runs back on, and fake spits. If you really want to go all out, when the actors run offstage have them call out to the audience to ask permission to come back onstage. "Hey Audience! Can we come back onstage?"

PUCK: (*when everyone is back onstage and the moment is over*) And that's the only time we're doing that.

COBWEB: We're superstitious. Google it.

PUCK: From now on we're going to call it *The Scottish Play*. Got it? Repeat after me: *The Scottish Play*. (*they encourage the audience to repeat The Scottish Play*) Don't forget.

Everyone moves back to their frozen positions. PUCK stands to the side, watching the action as the THREE JANETS (our witches) enter. The area where the THREE JANETS end up should have two cubes. One for FIRST JANET to sit on, and one for SECOND JANET to stand on as the clock tower.

FIRST JANET: All right, this is a good spot.

SECOND JANET: What are you doing?

FIRST JANET: It's not what I'm doing, Janet, it's what we're doing.

SECOND JANET: All right, Janet, what are we doing?

FIRST JANET: 12 grapes, New Year's Eve, midnight. A year of guaranteed luck.

THIRD JANET: We don't have a clock tower.

FIRST JANET: Oh.

THIRD JANET: And we don't have grapes. I mean we could, they exist. But we don't.

SECOND JANET: This is a problem.

THIRD JANET: And we don't use the Gregorian calendar.

SECOND JANET: Why are we doing this?

FIRST JANET: Ok. You be the clock tower, (*referring to SECOND JANET*) and Janet (*referring to THIRD JANET*) and I will do the thing.

SECOND JANET: Done.

FIRST JANET: So what do we eat instead? What do we have 12 of, if we don't have grapes?

SECOND JANET: We have newts.

THIRD JANET: I am not eating 12 frogs in 12 seconds.

FIRST JANET: You would if you knew you were going to be really lucky.

THIRD JANET: So you eat them.

SECOND JANET: How about 12 rocks?

THIRD JANET: No.

SECOND JANET: 12 worms?

THIRD JANET: (*to SECOND JANET*) You are not helping.

FIRST JANET: That might not be too bad.

THIRD JANET: You're going to swallow 12 worms in 12 seconds?

FIRST JANET: Sure. They'll slide right down. (*she holds her hand out, does a gesture and "poof" 12 worms are in her hand*)

THIRD JANET: This is why people think witches are weird.

FIRST JANET: 12 worms. One on each gong of the clock tower. I can do that.

SECOND JANET: That's me. (*standing on a cube*) Are you ready?

FIRST JANET: (*to THIRD JANET*) Janet?

THIRD JANET: I am prepared to have a rotten year. But I'll hold the worms for you. (*she mimes taking the worms out of FIRST JANET's hand*)

FIRST JANET: (*sitting*) This won't be too bad.

THIRD JANET: Keep telling yourself that.

SECOND JANET: Ready? (*to PUCK, referring to the frozen pairs*) Are they ready?

PUCK: Ready! 1, 2, 3, go!

“Eating” the grapes is mimed. Everyone unfreezes as SECOND JANET “gongs” à la a clock tower 12 times. During this time. SECOND JANET “hands” FIRST JANET 12 worms to try and get down, BENEDICK and BEATRICE are in a competition. By gong 7 BEATRICE starts to slow down as BENEDICK goes faster, and is really struggling, his cheeks are bulging. She “appears” to lose. DOGBERRY does everything he can to keep the grapes from VERGES.

SECOND JANET: Gong, gong, gong, gong, gong, gong, gong, gong, gong, gong, gong, gong!

BENEDICK & FIRST JANET: I did it!

They both keel over, clutching their stomachs.

VERGES: No!!!!

DOGBERRY: (at the same time) Yes!!!

DOGBERRY runs off, VERGES following.

BEATRICE: Do you feel lucky? (BENEDICK groans) I guess that's a no. These grapes are good.

BEATRICE strolls off. BENEDICK follows, crawling in pain.

THIRD JANET: You know what we have? Blueberries. You could have eaten 12 blueberries. (FIRST JANET groans) Whoops.

SECOND JANET: I love blueberries.

THIRD JANET: (to FIRST JANET) Do you want some? (FIRST JANET groans) Probably not.

SECOND JANET and THIRD JANET exit, with FIRST JANET following, crawling in pain.

PEASEBLOSSOM and COBWEB join PUCK onstage.

PEASEBLOSSOM: I'm not sure swallowing worms puts me in the holiday spirit.

PUCK: I know what will change your mind. Snow! The holidays don't seem like the holidays without snow.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Unless you're in a place that doesn't get snow. Although, technically? Any area with mountains is going to get a dusting.

COBWEB: There are so many snow traditions. (*singing*) “Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh!” Snow men, snow angels, snowball fights. Nothing says “family” like fun in the snow!

PEASEBLOSSOM: I like this, we need scenes that don’t focus on Christmas. Except that not everyone has a family. And not everyone thinks snow is fun.

PUCK: (*ignoring PEASEBLOSSOM*) Let’s look at some family fun in the snow with Shakespeare’s most upbeat and festive character, Hamlet, Prince of Denmark! (*the other two don’t say anything. PUCK tries again*) Hamlet, Prince of Denmark! (*turns to them*) What?

PEASEBLOSSOM: Upbeat and festive?

COBWEB: Are we talking about a different Hamlet, Prince of Denmark? Is there a hidden play that doesn’t include the main character in an indecisive funk for most of the story?

PEASEBLOSSOM: Well, technically? His dad is dead and his mother married his uncle. Lots to be funky about.

COBWEB: (*to audience*) This is another one of those plays where everybody’s dead by the end. A massive funk fest for all involved. Oh Shakespeare.

PUCK: (*shoving COBWEB out of the way*) Did I mention it snows a lot in Denmark? Whee! So festive. (*gesturing offstage*) Take it away!

PUCK, PEASEBLOSSOM and COBWEB exit as...

SCENE FOUR: Do you want to build a snowman?

Ghostly music plays. HORATIO and MARCELLUS enter from one side and start to pace.

MARCELLUS: Do you think he’ll believe us?

HORATIO: I don’t know. I can hardly believe it myself.

MARCELLUS: We’ll look like fools if he doesn’t.

HORATIO: Here he comes.

HAMLET enters slowly looking pensive.

HAMLET: Horatio. Marcellus? You too?

MARCELLUS: My lord. Thank you for meeting us.

HAMLET: (*sighing*) What else have I to do? Am I going to hang out with my mother? No.

HORATIO: My Lord we need to –

HAMLET: Am I going to hang out with my old-uncle-new step-dad? No.

MARCELLUS: My Lord –

HAMLET: It all sucks so bad. So. Why are we out here on the battlements?

HORATIO: (*really fast*) We have something extremely important to tell you.

HAMLET: (*looking around*) I never come out here.

HORATIO: It's going to be hard to believe. But if you –

HAMLET: (*getting distracted by something*) Hey... Hey!

HORATIO: Hamlet, I need you to listen.

HAMLET: It snowed!

HORATIO: My Lord?

HAMLET: It snowed overnight!

MARCELLUS: It did...

HAMLET: This is the first big snow, right? The first big snow of the year!

HORATIO: Can we focus on –

HAMLET: This is awesome! Look at it! Look! You're not looking.

MARCELLUS: We've seen snow before.

HORATIO: We live in Denmark. It snows all the time.

HAMLET: Sure, but the first big snow? I haven't seen that in years, I'm always cooped up in some castle or something. This is the best!

HORATIO: Hamlet, we really have to –

HAMLET: Marcellus, you're with me on this. You're down with snow, right? (*kneels down to start packing a snowball*)

MARCELLUS: (*puzzled*) Sure, my Lord...

HORATIO: (*trying to keep things on track*) Hamlet, we have something –

HAMLET: This is perfect packing snow. Who wants to build a snowman?

MARCELLUS: Can we do it after we talk?

HAMLET: Oh yes, you have something to tell me. Talk and build.
Marcellus, you start working on the middle, I'm going to work on the bottom, and Horatio, you take the top.

MARCELLUS: Horatio?

HAMLET: (*working on snowman*) You're not helping.

HORATIO: (*getting it out fast*) Hamlet, we saw your father.

HAMLET: (*not really listening*) Uh huh...

HORATIO: (*trying to get his attention*) Your dad! We saw your dad! You! Dad!

HAMLET: Horatio... Dad's dead.

HORATIO: (*sighing*) I know.

HAMLET: (*to MARCELLUS*) Can you believe it? Trying to get out of building a snowman by bringing up my dead dad.

MARCELLUS: Um, I saw him too, my Lord? That's what we want to talk to you about.

HAMLET: (*not really listening*) We should build a snowman version of him.

HORATIO: We both saw your father. Your dead father. In front of us. Dead dad. Ghost dad. White like this snow. But dead. So dead! You see?

HAMLET: (*still building the snowman*) Sure you did.

MARCELLUS: (*looking offstage*) In fact... (*pointing*) Horatio!

HORATIO: (*pointing off*) Look my Lord! It comes!

HAMLET: What comes? (*turns*) Uh... That's my dad.

HORATIO: (*sighing*) We know.

HAMLET SR, a ghost/zombie walks onstage. He points at HAMLET.

HAMLET SR: (*ghostly voice*) Hamlet... Mark me...

HAMLET: (*kneeling*) Speak I am bound to hear!

HAMLET SR: Hamlet, if you ever did love your father... *(totally breaks from the zombie walk and the ghostly voice)* Is that a snowman version of me?

HAMLET: *(jumping up)* Do you like it?

HAMLET SR: *(totally kid like)* It's awesome! You even got the hair swoop.

HAMLET: Thanks!

HAMLET SR: Man, I miss the snow.

HAMLET: It's the best.

HAMLET SR: I know, I know, it's Denmark. It snows all the time.

HAMLET: It's cold, it's wet...

HAMLET SR: But it's so satisfying.

They high five. They laugh and are really bonding.

HAMLET SR: The number of knights I winged with a snowball...those were the days.

MARCELLUS: What's going on?

HORATIO: I have no idea.

HAMLET SR: Do you know what we should do? Make snow angels. I love me a snow angel.

HAMLET: Awesome!

HORATIO: Ah, Sire? My liege?

HAMLET SR: What?

HORATIO: Isn't there something you wanted to say? To Hamlet? Being dead? Being a ghost? Being here?

HAMLET SR: Oh yeah. There was something, what was it... huh. It'll come to me I'm sure. Snow angel time!

HAMLET and HAMLET SR dive to the ground and start making snow angels.

HORATIO: *(to MARCELLUS)* I think this is going to be awhile. Why don't you go inside?

MARCELLUS: Let me know how it...

HAMLET & HAMLET SR: *(as they make snow angels)* Whee!

MARCELLUS: Yeah. *(exits)*

HAMLET: Why did we never do this when you were alive?

HAMLET SR: Oh you know. Being king is hard. Not a lot of time for snow.

HAMLET: I wish we had spent more time together.

HAMLET SR: Time is short, Hamlet. It's so short.

HAMLET: It is, isn't it. Like this snowball. Here today, melted tomorrow.

HAMLET SR: Sometimes you don't know how short.

HAMLET: *(holding the snowball up)* Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him, Horatio.

HORATIO: *(fed up about the whole thing)* Uh huh.

HAMLET SR: You never know when your brother is going to put poison in your ear and murder you in your sleep.

HORATIO: *(now paying attention)* What?

HAMLET: What what?

HORATIO: Claudius *(pointing to HAMLET)* his uncle, the guy married to Queen Gertrude, your widow, killed you?

HAMLET SR: Nice summary.

HORATIO: Thanks.

HAMLET SR: *(to HAMLET)* You need to avenge my death. Like any good son would.

HAMLET: Oh. That's a bummer.

HAMLET SR: Yeah. Good snowman though.

HAMLET: I don't really feel like playing in the snow anymore.

HAMLET SR: Death will do that to ya. *(back to zombie walk and ghostly voice)* Hamlet... Hamlet... Remember me!

HAMLET SR exits walking backwards in a ghostly manner and the rest follow.

PEASEBLOSSOM, PUCK and COBWEB enter.

COBWEB: You know, maybe Shakespeare characters aren't meant for a Christmas play.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Holiday play. And technically? A Snowy Seasonal Sleigh Ride Stage Show.

PUCK: (*trying to keep everyone on track*) So let's look at another snowy seasonal tradition. The Polar Bear Plunge.

COBWEB: Nope. Not for me. No way. Never.

PEASEBLOSSOM: The plunge is a New Year's Day Tradition in Canada dating back to 1920. And technically? We should have a warning here. Exposure to extreme cold can cause hypothermia and heart attacks. Don't try this at home.

COBWEB: Oh come on, this looks like a smart audience. They understand the difference between watching a play and real life. (*to the audience*) Right? Repeat after me: I am a smart audience. (*encourages the audience to repeat*)

INTERLUDE: Polar Bear Sub

PUCK: (*getting back on track*) This seems like a task fit for a king. (*calling offstage*) Calling all kings!

There is a grumble from offstage.

PUCK: (*calling offstage*) Your majesties don't want people to think you're afraid of a little cold water. Do you?

There is a louder grumble from offstage.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Technically? Minus eight degrees Celsius (*or 16 degrees Fahrenheit*) is more than a little cold.

PUCK: You're not helping. (*OBERON struts on*) Ah ha! Excellent well! (*to audience*) Here we have Oberon, King of the Fairies, and my boss.

PUCK, PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB: (*bowing*) All hail King Oberon.

OBERON: Thank you. And as your boss, I demand that you take my place.

PUCK: What what?

OBERON: Certainly I am not afraid of a little cold water...

PEASEBLOSSOM: Minus eight degrees celsius is –

PUCK shoves PEASEBLOSSOM.

OBERON: But as a king, I hardly have the time to take part in such an inconsequential task. But you should. For the good of the play, after all.

COBWEB: (*cheering*) For the good of the play! Can we live stream it? We should put this on Twitch. (*or similar*)

PUCK: But... but –

PEASEBLOSSOM: Are you prepared? Do you have a list? You should have a list of things you need when you get out.

PUCK: But this is theatre! I don't actually have to plunge?

OBERON: (*clapping hands*) I want some cold water, immediately.

COBWEB: On it. (*runs off*)

PEASEBLOSSOM: (*calling off*) Minus eight degrees. (*to PUCK*) Are you going to go in slowly or quickly to get the shock over with?

BOTTOM runs on with STARVELING behind.

BOTTOM: Sounds like you need a new host.

STARVELING: Bottom for –

PUCK: Out!

BOTTOM and STARVELING run off. COBWEB runs on.

COBWEB: Water's ready!

PUCK: That's impossible!

COBWEB: That's theatre!

OBERON: Let's go.

COBWEB grabs PUCK and starts off. PUCK resists.

PUCK: Wait!

PEASEBLOSSOM: Don't stay in longer than two minutes.

COBWEB: (*to PEASEBLOSSOM*) I'll take pictures.

PUCK: What about the show?

BOTTOM runs on with STARVELING behind.

BOTTOM: Did I hear you need someone to save the show?

PUCK: Out!

BOTTOM runs off with STARVELING behind.

PEASEBLOSSOM: I'll handle it. Have fun!

PUCK screams as they are taken off with OBERON following.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Now. While that is happening I think we should look at a non Christmas tradition. There's Hanukkah which is celebrated for 8 days and nights. There's Kwanzaa; Kwanzaa comes from the Swahili phrase *matunda ya kwanza* which means first fruits.

There is an offstage scream. PUCK is in the water.

PEASEBLOSSOM: And a little earlier in the year there's Diwali which is a festival of lights and celebrates new beginnings and the victory of good over evil. *(smiles looking around)* I like being the only host. And we *(the fairies)* celebrate the winter solstice, which is the shortest day of the year. And technically? Many countries don't see Christmas as an official holiday and some don't celebrate it at all.

There is another offstage scream. COBWEB enters.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Where shall we start? I think an instructional presentation with a slide deck would be the most effective way –

COBWEB: What are you doing?

PEASEBLOSSOM: I'm informing.

COBWEB: Shouldn't we be scene-ing? And play-ing?

PEASEBLOSSOM: Where's Puck?

COBWEB: Puck is...a little indisposed. Let's say, frozen in time. We can handle this. Moving on!

PEASEBLOSSOM: Moving! On to Hanukkah!

SCENE FIVE: No.

OTHELLO enters with SHYLOCK.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Welcome Shylock from *The Merchant of Venice*... and Othello from *The Tragedy of Othello*! Does this mean we're covering both Hanukkah and Kwanzaa?

OTHELLO: No.

PEASEBLOSSOM: What?

SHYLOCK: We should get our own scenes.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Of course you should. The more details the better!
On to Hanukkah!

SHYLOCK: No.

PEASEBLOSSOM: What?

OTHELLO: Shylock doesn't want to do the scene.

SHYLOCK: And neither does Othello.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Um... I'm confused.

OTHELLO: We SHOULD get our own scenes. But, we don't WANT to do them.

COBWEB: Ok... We'll do something else. (*calling off*) Rude Mechanicals! You're next!

OTHELLO: No. Not yet.

COBWEB: Ok...

PEASEBLOSSOM: I'm really confused.

OTHELLO: We want to say WHY we don't want to do our scenes.

PEASEBLOSSOM: (*loves this idea*) This sounds really informational.

COBWEB: Go ahead. (*pointing to the audience*) They're a smart audience.

SHYLOCK: I'm not a Shakespeare fan. I got a raw deal in my play.

OTHELLO: We both did.

PEASEBLOSSOM: (*to SHYLOCK*) You got a really good speech though.

SHYLOCK: One speech? I got one speech. (*so sarcastic*) Awesome. Yay Shakespeare. Thanks a bunch.

COBWEB: (*to OTHELLO*) And you got a play named after you?

OTHELLO: I'm a general. A successful general who has to go on trial because there's no way a girl would be attracted to me because of my skin colour and when I win that little brouhaha (*pronounced*

broo-ha-ha), I suddenly doubt the whole universe over a little bit of circumstantial evidence and kill my wife? Yay Shakespeare.

SHYLOCK: So we don't feel like helping.

THE THREE JANETS and LADY M run on.

THIRD JANET: If they don't want to go on, can we switch to the "scare the audience" plan?

LADY M: I've got so many ideas.

FIRST JANET: I've got black spray paint and some mouldy bread.

OTHELLO: Hey, hey, hey! Back off. This is our moment.

SHYLOCK: You had your moment.

SECOND JANET: You said you didn't want your moment.

OTHELLO: He said he didn't feel like helping.

SHYLOCK: That's what I said.

OTHELLO: We still want a moment.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Please let me help with an collaborating slide deck.

OTHELLO: We want our moment. And we want to say... *(Beat. A spotlight if you have it.)* No. We want to say no. You want us to fit into your space. Your shell. But the fact of the matter is, we never will. We are outsiders. Outsiders in Shakespeare. Outsiders everywhere. Outsiders now. It's easier to hate an outsider than to accept them for who they truly are. It is not our job to make you understand or make you comfortable. It is not our job to fit in, it is not our job to change. So, no. Who am I? Is the bulk of my existence based on what you see? If you truly looked, you'd see who I am beyond your eyes. My soul is visible and always has been.

The lights are restored.

THIRD JANET: That was wonderful.

OTHELLO: Was it?

SECOND JANET: Yes.

OTHELLO: I got the one serious monologue in a comedy. Sounds like the author is trying to overcompensate. Anyway, that is my moment. *(exits)*

SHYLOCK: (*following off*) Wasn't I supposed to get the one serious monologue in a comedy?

At the same time, PUCK enters with a huge blanket, a water bottle, and a cup of tea. They make a big deal about appearing sick. They give a huge sigh and sink onto a cube.

COBWEB: Puck! You're thawed!

PUCK: (*a cold in the nose sound*) Codbeb? Peadebloddom? Id thad youd?
(*sneezes in the direction of everyone*)

SECOND JANET: Well, that's gross.

PEASEBLOSSOM: We're going to introduce the Rude Mechanicals.
Should we?

PUCK: (*sighing*) Id dond knowd. (*translation: I don't know*)

COBWEB: It's just a cold, Puck.

PUCK: (*trying to stand*) Jud a code? Jud a code? (*falls dramatically back on the cube*)

PEASEBLOSSOM: Technically? Fairies don't get colds.

PUCK: Tdis cud bee de dead ud me (*translation: this could be the death of me*) Tdis cud bee myd fydal breadth. (*translation: this could be my final breath*)

LADY M: This sounds like the perfect opportunity to switch to the "scare the audience" plan!

PUCK: Whad?

FIRST JANET: I've got black spray paint and some mouldy bread.

SECOND JANET: I've got some terrifying Christmas witch stories.

THIRD JANET: Don't forget the cat who eats children on Christmas Eve!!

BOTTOM runs in with STARVELING behind.

BOTTOM: Did I hear you're in need of a new host?

STARVELING: (*chanting*) Bottom for host! Bottom for host!

PUCK: (*losing all sickness*) No, no, no. We don't need a new host and we're not switching any plans. (*getting caught in the blanket*) Somebody get rid of this blanket. And I hate tea!

PEASEBLOSSOM: *(taking the blanket)* You sound better.

COBWEB: *(taking the hot water bottle and the mug)* Sure do.

PUCK: This is the plan, I like this plan, it's a good plan. Get back there!
All of you!

THIRD JANET: Touchy, touchy. *(existing with the other WITCHES)*

LADY M: *(exiting)* Don't be afraid to consider other options.

BOTTOM: Come on, Starveling, we're up! *(running off with STARVELING)*

PUCK: Let's go, let's go. Moving on!

PEASEBLOSSOM: Moving!

COBWEB: Moving on to another tradition. Pantos!

PEASEBLOSSOM: Pantos are a long time tradition holiday especially in Britain.

COBWEB: So let's return to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and our resident performers, the Rude Mechanicals.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Who aren't rude at all. Rude means rough in this context and in actual fact they're all skilled laborers even though –

PUCK: Moving on!

PEASEBLOSSOM: Moving!

The three run off as...

SCENE SIX: Cinderella Redux

QUINCE enters quickly and the rest (except for BOTTOM) follow on. QUINCE holds a stack of papers.

QUINCE: Are we all here?

FLUTE: Here, Peter Quince.

SNOUT: Here.

STARVELING: Here, here!

SNUG: Hi.

QUINCE: Where's Bottom?

STARVELING: Doing something important, I'm sure.

SNOUT: I could never be as important.

BOTTOM: (*enters with a grand flourish*) Fellows I am here!

SNUG: (*copying the flourish, badly*) Bottom has arrived.

BOTTOM: Snug! You're supposed to do that before I enter.

SNUG: Oh. Sorry. I forgot.

SNOUT: That was some flourish Bottom. Wow.

STARVELING: Amazing!

BOTTOM: Thank you. It's my signature move.

SNOUT: Signature move? How do you get one of those?

STARVELING: Be as amazing as Bottom.

BOTTOM: It's true.

During the following, SNOUT quietly tries out a couple of signature moves that look lame and lack flourish.

FLUTE: (*not challenging, just puzzled*) How was Snug supposed to know you've arrived if you're out there and he's (*or she's or they're*) in here?

STARVELING: Are you questioning the great Nick Bottom?

FLUTE: No!

BOTTOM: Do it again, again! (*exits with a flourish*)

QUINCE: What is happening?

STARVELING: Bottom is making an entrance, as he should.

SNOUT does a signature move and ends up on the floor.

SNOUT: My signature move tried to trip me!

There is a pause. SNUG sits, content, staring into space. There is a loud offstage Pssst! Pssst!

QUINCE: Snug. I think you're supposed to go.

SNUG: Oh. (*bad flourish*) Bottom has –

BOTTOM: (*enters with grand flourish*) Fellows I am here. (*beat, and then to SNUG*) You didn't say the whole thing, did you?

SNUG: I said most of it.

BOTTOM: Do it again, again!

QUINCE: Not now Bottom, we don't have much time. We only have one rehearsal.

SNOUT: One?

SNUG: That's not good.

STARVELING: Bottom will be great no matter what.

QUINCE: It'll be fine. It's a holiday panto. You've all been in one before. (*SNUG puts their hand up*) Yes, Snug.

SNUG: Is there a lion?

QUINCE: No lion.

FLUTE: Good point, Snug. People don't like lions.

BOTTOM: People like it when I'm a lion.

STARVELING: You're the best lion.

SNOUT: Better than me.

STARVELING: A stump would be better than you.

SNOUT: I can't argue.

STARVELING: (*to FLUTE*) And how dare you say Bottom wouldn't make the best lion.

FLUTE: I didn't...

QUINCE: It's *Cinderella*. No lions.

BOTTOM: *Cinderella*? Ugh. Can't we do *Peter Pan*?

QUINCE: I've already written *Cinderella*.

SNUG: I like *Peter Pan*.

STARVELING: Bottom would be a great *Peter Pan*.

BOTTOM: Peter Quince, why don't you whip up a *Peter Pan* skit? It shouldn't take any time.

STARVELING: You could write it, Bottom.

BOTTOM: I could. How hard could it be?

FLUTE: (to SNOUT) Can you write?

SNOUT: I get my vowels all mixed up.

SNUG: Are there any lions in *Peter Pan*?

QUINCE: It's *Cinderella*. We're doing *Cinderella*. And we have to start right now because we only have one rehearsal.

SNOUT: One?

SNUG: That's not good.

QUINCE: It's fine.

FLUTE: We all know the story.

QUINCE: That's the spirit, Flute! Let me divide the parts.

FLUTE: (*stepping forward*) Peter Quince, I'm ready to accept whatever role you wish to give me.

QUINCE: (*handing a script*) You will be *Cinderella*.

FLUTE: Oh.

QUINCE: What's the matter? It's the main role.

FLUTE: (*in the most non-villain way possible*) I was hoping for the villain. I really feel up to it, Peter Quince. I have "villain" written all over me!

QUINCE: *Starveling* is going to play the villain. (*to STARVELING, handing a script*) You're the stepmother.

STARVELING: Oh.

QUINCE: What's the matter?

STARVELING: I wanted *Cinderella*.

BOTTOM: Why this is perfect! You want what the other has. Why don't you switch?

QUINCE: What?

FLUTE: Can we do that?

BOTTOM: Why not?

QUINCE: What?

STARVELING: Great idea. We'll switch!

FLUTE: You don't mind, do you Peter Quince?

BOTTOM: Oh, it's fine.

SNOUT: Peter Quince. Do I have to play a speaking part? Isn't there a tree, or a log, or a shrug or a bush that I could take on instead?

QUINCE: Why? You had a speaking part last time.

SNOUT: But I get so dreadfully nervous. And then I mix up my vowels and it's a disaster.

FLUTE: It wasn't such a disaster, only a little one.

QUINCE: You're supposed to be the Fairy Godmother but –

BOTTOM: Peter Quince, what am I to play? I can't stand to wait another second!

STARVELING: Yes, yes, I can't believe you've waited so long! (to FLUTE) Why did you make Bottom wait!

FLUTE: I didn't...

QUINCE: It's not a surprise. Principal boy, as usual. The hero. The Prince.

BOTTOM: (*posing*) The hero. The role I was meant to play.

STARVELING: It's perfect!

QUINCE: And then I will –

BOTTOM: (*interrupting*) But I can do more, you know. I'm a multi-fauceted (*sic*). If Snout doesn't want to be the Fairy Godmother, I'll happily step into the additional role.

SNOUT: That would be a load off my mind.

BOTTOM: And I can play both the Prince and the Prince's companion!

QUINCE: (*handing a script*) Snug is playing the Prince's companion.

SNUG: Is he a lion?

QUINCE: No lions.

BOTTOM: What if he was a lion? That would be fantastic!

STARVELING: You are so right, Bottom.

BOTTOM: The hero would have a lion as a companion.

SNUG: I don't want to play a lion...

BOTTOM: No fear, I will play the Prince and the Prince's companion, who will be a lion.

STARVELING: Great idea!

SNOUT: And I will play the Prince's tree!

BOTTOM: You don't mind, do you Peter Quince?

QUINCE: You will play the Prince, and only the Prince. Snug will play the companion, who is not a lion.

SNUG: Oh good.

QUINCE: And Snout will play the Fairy Godmother.

SNOUT: I'd rather be a tree.

QUINCE: And then I will play a step sister. All right shall we get –

BOTTOM: What about the second step sister?

QUINCE: We are out of players, we'll make do with one.

BOTTOM: But here I stand before you, willing and able to take on the challenge, nay, the duty of playing more than one role and you deny me Peter Quince, you stand in my way.

STARVELING: *(to QUINCE)* How dare you!

QUINCE: You'll have quite enough to do with the Prince. Especially since we have so little time! Open your scripts. We start with Snout, the Fairy Grandmother.

SNOUT: Do I have to?

QUINCE: Yes. *(prompting SNOUT)* Ladies and Gentlemen...

SNOUT: *(nervously getting the vowels mixed up – say the line wrong!)*
Ladies and Gantlemon...

BOTTOM: I have a fantastic idea! The Prince should introduce the play.

QUINCE: The Fairy Godmother is introducing the play.

SNOUT: I don't mind, Bottom can do it. I'd rather be a tree.

BOTTOM: Then it's settled. Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to our show! Why don't we jump ahead and do the scene with the

Prince. You don't mind, do you Peter Quince? The Prince and the Prince's Companion, who is a lion!

SNUG: Oh Bottom, do I have to play a lion?

BOTTOM: Of course not. I will take on both parts. And I will take on the Fairy Godmother.

SNOUT: Can I be a tree?

BOTTOM: Of course. And you know what? (*leafing through the script*) I should also be the villain. It only makes sense. And Starveling –

STARVELING: I know you'd be so great at Cinderella, you'd be the best, the absolute best and I can't imagine anyone being a better Cinderella but I've always wanted to be Cinderella and perhaps this one time I could play the part, please?

BOTTOM: (*looking up*) Did you say something?

STARVELING: No...

BOTTOM: (*to QUINCE*) What do you think? Doesn't it sound marvellous?

There's a beat as everyone stares at QUINCE.

QUINCE: So what you're saying is that you should play all the parts. Nick Bottom from beginning to end.

STARVELING: And me as Cinderella.

BOTTOM: That's a great idea.

STARVELING: I'd really like to play Cinderella.

BOTTOM: Peter Quince you're a genius!

STARVELING: Cinderella?

SNUG: No lion!

SNOUT: Tree!

BOTTOM: You don't mind, do you Peter Quince?

QUINCE: (*throwing arms up*) Ugh! (*exits*)

BOTTOM: To the rehearsal!

BOTTOM gives a grand flourish and exits with the rest following.

INTERLUDE: LETTERS TO SANTA

At the same time, PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB and PUCK enter. BOTTOM has also circled right back around to enter again.

PUCK: And now, something for the children.

BOTTOM: You're sounding rather hoarse, Puck. Maybe you should take a break.

PUCK: Out!

BOTTOM runs off.

PUCK: Now. Letters to Santa.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Technically? We should mention that the Santa Claus we know with the red suit and the ho ho ho is a complete commercial manifestation of the Coca Cola company.

COBWEB: Long live commercialism!

PEASEBLOSSOM: And further, he's called a myriad of names around the world: Father Christmas, Père Noël, Sinterklaas and some countries don't have the tradition at –

PUCK: (*interrupting*) Are you finished?

PEASEBLOSSOM: Actually I have a whole presentation that I could –

PUCK: Moving on! Back to Santa. First, we have Richard, from *Richard the Third*.

RICHARD enters and poses.

COBWEB: A ruthless, bloodthirsty, manipulative, guy, barely a human being.

PUCK: He will do anything to become king. Including writing to Santa!

The three stay onstage and observe.

RICHARD: Dear Santa. How are you? Enough with the small talk. Let's get right to the list. World domination. My list is short. World domination, is that too much to ask? I want to dominate the world, like, all at once. I'm trying to get it done, but there are so many people in the way. There are people who do not want me to have world domination, if you can believe it. Actually, you know what? I'm changing my list. Forget world domination. I can accomplish world domination on my own, but what I really

want is all the people in my way to (*poof as in disappear*) poof poof gone so I can instantly become King. (*he sighs*) King Richard. That has such a lovely ring to it. And then world domination is a piece of cake. But removing your enemies takes so much time, effort, and energy. It takes so much time to plan people's deaths. And they won't, you know, die. Like I want them to. I want them poof poof gone! It's exhausting and I'm not in the best of health. I know I should take better care of myself. You don't have anything if you don't have your health. I can't be King, and dominate the world if I'm not in tip top shape. I promise Santa I'll eat better, I'll exercise, if you keep up your end of the bargain. All I want, please, pretty please, is everyone poof poof gone so I can be king. Is that so much to ask?

RICHARD freezes. GONERIL and REGAN enter.

PUCK: At the beginning of *King Lear*, King Lear plans to divide up his kingdom between his daughters.

PEASEBLOSSOM: I could do a presentation about it...

COBWEB: One of his daughters, Cordelia, is loving, kind, and the absolute sweetest person you could ever meet.

PUCK: His other daughters are...not.

The three stay onstage and observe.

GONERIL & REGAN: Dear Santa.

REGAN: We only have one wish this year.

GONERIL: Death.

REGAN: No, no, no. We want our father, King Lear, to give us all his land and not give any to our sister.

GONERIL: And his death.

REGAN: No, no, no. (*back to the letter*) Goneril and I have been mostly good this year.

GONERIL: Mostly good? Did we kill Cordelia for being Daddy's favourite? No, we did not. Do you know how many times I could have poisoned the little twit? I deserve a medal for that.

REGAN: That's probably not something you should admit. When you're trying to convince someone you've been good all year.

GONERIL: Whatever. Santa doesn't exist anyway.

REGAN: Goneril! How can you say that?

GONERIL: Really? We're writing a letter to a guy who's going to make our wishes come true?

REGAN: You have no faith.

GONERIL: I have realism.

REGAN: I think we should cover all our bases and it wouldn't hurt to write a letter, Ok?

GONERIL: (*rolling her eyes*) Fine.

REGAN: Dear Santa, we want our father to give us our fair share.

GONERIL: And be dead.

REGAN: No, no, no.

GONERIL: Is it my fault I'm not a boy and I don't get all the land for being the oldest? That is so unfair.

REGAN: How do you think that makes me feel? I thought we were in this 50/50, sisters forever, partners, amigas, and now I hear you want all the land for yourself.

GONERIL: I don't get it, do I? So it doesn't matter. Unless this Santa guy can do that. Give me all the land. (*taking the letter from REGAN*)

REGAN: (*taking the letter back*) No. No he can't. And he wouldn't want to.

GONERIL: What good is he then?

REGAN: You know what? I'm going to write my own letter. And if you want to write your own give-me-all-the-land letter, you can do that.

GONERIL: Fine.

REGAN: Fine.

GONERIL: (*as she exits*) Dear Santa, whatever Regan tells you, she's a big liar. She has been so bad all year long, she even drowned our cat.

REGAN: (*following*) Hey!

As PUCK talks, TAMORA and LORD M enter.

PUCK: So... you probably don't want to know that much about Tamora. *Titus Andronicus* is not a comedy.

COBWEB: There's stuff WORSE than death in *Titus Andronicus*.

PUCK: It's a revenge play. To a 100.

PEASEBLOSSOM: A presentation about the revenge model in Shakespeare would be so appropriate right now...

PUCK: (to TAMORA) You should go.

TAMORA: (getting in PUCK's face) Go? You think you can tell ME when to go? I am the one who decides when I will go. Bah. Santa. Who is this Santa? Does he know how to take revenge against his enemies? Is that something he can do? Why would I ask for help with that? Why would I ask for help from a fat man in a red suit, when I can do it myself? Does he know how to slaughter without morals? What does he know about slaughtering? And what is that thing about coming into your house in the night and knowing when you're sleeping or awake? That's creepy. I will kill the fat man in the red suit if he ever steps foot in my house. (she stalks out)

COBWEB: Now, we've met other characters from *The Scottish Play*: our favourite witches!

PUCK: You remember what *The Scottish Play* is, right? Repeat after me. I am a smart audience! (they all encourage the audience to repeat.)

COBWEB: We're going to get to Lady M in a moment.

PUCK: But it's no spoiler to find out that Lord M conspires with Lady M to kill their king in order to take his place.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Ambition and murder would make a great presentation...

PUCK: What letter would Lord M write?

LORD M: Dear Santa. (sighing) I'd really like a train set. It's something I was never allowed as a kid. I could spend hours watching the engine go round and round and... OH! I could set up a little village!! (he makes the noise of a train whistle) Toot toot! Toot Toot! (getting an idea) Oh, oh! And a hat? Can I have a conductor's hat? That would be so cool. A train set and a hat that's all I really... (realizing what he's really supposed to ask for) Oh yeah. My wife says I should ask for the death of everyone who stands in my way. So, you know, that too. (he sighs)

MACBETH exits with his head hanging low. The hosts come forward.

COBWEB: Oh Shakespeare. So much death.

PEASEBLOSSOM: So much material for a great presentation...

PUCK: Stop that! We just mentioned getting to know Lady M.

COBWEB: And we have one more tradition to explore: the corporate holiday party!

TEASAG and TEARLAG enter. They scurry to centre stage and stand looking out.

PUCK: Ok, ok. It's not a "tradition." But it does happen in the holiday season.

COBWEB: And I think this audience wants to know, how would a bloodthirsty queen-wanna-be host a party to foreshadow the death of her enemies?

PUCK: To Scotland!

A quick music sting plays. The hosts exit.

SCENE SEVEN: It's scented

TEASAG looks determined, TEARLAG looks less so.

TEASAG: What do you think? Is it perfect?

TEARLAG: It... looks... perfect?

TEASAG: (*throwing hands up*) That doesn't sound confident enough! She'll know you don't think it's perfect. She'll smell you out.

TEARLAG: I know.

TEASAG: And that was the number one instruction on the brief. "Make it perfect."

TEARLAG: I know, I know.

TEASAG: This is my ticket to promotion city. This is my ride to lead planner of feasts and banquets.

TEARLAG: (*sighing, to self*) I don't want to go to promotion city.

TEASAG: Try again.

TEARLAG: Looks perfect.

TEASAG: Again!

TEARLAG: (*really overdoing it*) Looks perfect!

TEASAG: Now you're overdoing it! She'll smell you out.

TEARLAG: (*fanning armpits*) Now I'm sweating.

TEASAG: Stop it!

TEARLAG: I can't! You make me nervous. You know I sweat when I get nervous.

TEASAG: (*joining in to fan TEARLAG's armpits*) She's going to smell you out!

TEARLAG: Fan faster!

TOMAG enters to see the two of them fanning TEASLAG's armpits. TOMAG does not look downstage or out.

TOMAG: What are you doing?

TEARLAG and TEASAG freeze. They stand at attention.

TEASAG: Good morning, Tomag.

TEARLAG: We're just...

TEASAG: Finishing up the party decorations.

TEARLAG: The perfect party decorations.

TEASAG: We've completed our instructions and are ready for review.

TOMAG: Finished all ready? Excellent work Teasag! You'll go far.

TEASAG: (*proud*) Thank you.

TOMAG: Let's see what you – (*Turns to the front and sees the room for the first time. Their mouth drops with horror.*) What – what – what is this?

TEARLAG: (*proudly*) THIS is perfect.

TEASAG: That's better.

TEARLAG: You think?

TOMAG: What are you talking about? This is a disaster!



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