

Once Upon a Moonlit Wood

A Fairy Tale

By Keith A. Eckert

107 Penn Street
Ridley Park, PA 19078
(717) 609-5410
kaexckert@gmail.com

CAST LIST

Robin, a young adult fairy

Blossom, a young adult fairy and Robin's girlfriend

Bottom, a young adult fairy and Robin's clownish friend

Deb, a tall, attractive, domineering woman in her mid thirties

Clark, a tall, somewhat sheepish-looking man in his mid thirties, and Deb's brother in law

Various fairies (non-speaking parts, but depending on the production they may sing and dance)

TIME

Contemporary

SCENE LOCATIONS

Deb's patio next to the forest

Various parts of the forest behind Deb's patio

(Note: The forest should be made of such stuff that through various lighting techniques, the mood can change from bright and cheerful to dark and threatening.)

NOTES

The Fairies: The play could be performed with just two extra, non-speaking fairies, or many more, depending on the resources available and the director's vision. All the fairies should be smaller (shorter) than the Clark and Deb. Ideally, they are all played by women.

The fairies should be light and airy — almost childlike in their energy, playfulness and expressiveness. Like a hummingbird, they should rarely stand still, especially when speaking (often acting out what they are saying). Additionally, they should give the impression that they are managing the play: changing props, leading the human characters on and off stage, controlling lighting, staging and sound.

The Music and Dance: The play was written in such a way that the director can use as little or as much music and dance as he or she likes. The "songs" can be spoken, chanted, or put to music. Likewise, the fairies' movements should appear light and graceful, but there can be as much or as little choreographed dancing as the director wishes to use.

SYNOPSIS

Robin, a mischievous fairy, steals his girlfriend's favorite ring as a prank, but the ring is picked up by two humans: Deb, a wealthy widow, and her brother-in-law, Clark. In order for the human stain not to appear on the ring – and Robin's prank found out -- the humans must give it back to Robin of their own free will. This, however, proves problematic as Robin chases the humans all night through the woods. Frustrated, Robin resolves to take the ring by deadly force, but his spell backfires, and it ends up that the humans don't even have the ring.

His girlfriend, Blossom, took it from the humans earlier in the night. The play ends with Robin's humiliation and his night wasted in a fruitless search.

EXCERPT

SCENE 1

(Scene: The stage is dark except for a full moon shining above and pools of light on the stage where moon shines down through the forest canopy. As music begins playing, fairies can be seen dancing or lightly running around the pools of light. The fairies then take turns stepping into the various pools of light and reciting/singing one or more lines of the song.)

FAIRIES

(singing)

Where goes the moon, we fairies go,
The sun our compass opposite.
We gambol on the drooping light
And take sole charge of all of it.

Where rise the stars, we wake, we wake,
In evening's altitude.
We flit from linden leaves aloft
That made our sleepy hood.

Come night
Come cool
Come moonlit seed
Alight
On shimm'ring
Bellied leaves
The evening is the hour for games
For pranks and plays and flirting lays.

Where flash the firefly, we soar,
Upon the dulcet airs,
And with the whip-poor-will we traipse
From limb to lock to lair.

Where swirls the dark, we spin, we spin,
And hedgerows leap and limn.
In inky night we entertain,
Beneath the stars we swim.

Come night

Come cool
Come moonlit seed
Alight
 On shimm'ring
 Bellied leaves
The evening is the hour for games
For pranks and plays and flirting lays.

Where flash the firefly, we soar,
Upon the dulcet airs,
 And with the whip-poor-will we traipse
From limb to lock to lair.

BOTTOM

Enough! Enough!
Let's have the human come!
Raise the lights –
Be off! Take flight!

(The fairies laughingly scatter into the shadows and hide. Blossom, Robin and Bottom hide upstage. The lights come up as if a patio light were turned on, revealing a few pieces of high-end patio furniture — two chairs and a table — with a wood in the background looking sleepy and peaceful. Deb enters carrying a drink. She does not see or hear the fairies.)

ROBIN

(to Bottom)

Bottom, Bottom, look:
See how the man-ape plods and scrapes the earth?
See how it scratches, scratches, scratches?
Ha ha! Dumb blinkered beast,
She's alive to nothing but the furrow she dull plows,
Staring down the bitter, ancient dust until,
Unable to defeat it,
She becomes it.

BOTTOM

Ah, Robin, you are right.
From earth stitch bound
To bound by the earth,
From wealth and wile
To want and dearth.
Swish swish!

(Robin and Bottom laugh.)

BLOSSOM

Puff hard and long, my dandy lions —
Laugh while you can, go on! Go on!
But a smaller sail befits the storm you're in.
Here, tra la, your labors are enjoined, your office pinned,
Until the hours and your deeds atone your sins.

ROBIN

Atone our sins, dear Blossom? As if what's ill written
Could be erased by good. Can it be so?
Better it would be to rip apart the page, forgetting it,
Than crib and crab the writing more.

BLOSSOM

More marred is not more possible, dear Rob.
The fairy council has decreed you'll work
The human swatch tonight.

ROBIN

Ah, work near humans!
Briars and burdocks! I simply will not do it!
Never, no, nil — nay, not, nix!
I can't abide the human stench,
Their squawking reeds and leadened gaits,
Their bumbling impostures and oafish oofs.
Why they're ugly louts
That positively must be done without.

BLOSSOM

What? Why so red faced, Robin?
Whose hand drew out this scene, but yours and Bottom's?
Who was it gulped the riotous nectar to its lees?
Who was it then uncaged confusion on the woods?

ROBIN

It was the hummingbirds, those flutt'ring sots!
These deeds are best ascribed in their book, not ours.

BLOSSOM

Oh, they are? Please tell.

ROBIN

They are! They are! There, by the moonflow'r's bloom,
I and Bottom did our chores in lively cheer —

BLOSSOM

Your tale already strikes false note.

BOTTOM

Oh, it would be too cruel to hit a truer one —

ROBIN

— When the hummingbirds approached.
“Why toil so,” they hummed. “You work too hard.
Sit here with us and share a bracing drink,
And then resume your chores with recharged vigor.”
And in politeness we agreed.

BLOSSOM

Your manners are renowned.

ROBIN

At first the hummings were all light and laughs,
And many elbows we raised in conviviality.
But then their humor took a prickly turn
And fairies wore their barbs. Oh, such lies
And falsehoods spoke, yes, such licentious acts
They tacked on all the fairies — even you, dear Blossom!

BLOSSOM

They did?

BOTTOM

They did?

ROBIN

They did! Such vile things I will not echo.

BLOSSOM

Ah.

ROBIN

So we, of course, set shield to our shared virtue.

BLOSSOM

You did?

BOTTOM

You did?

ROBIN

We did! Then Englebert, that loud-mouthinged lout,
He challenged us to turn our glasses up.
What could we do? “Are you afraid?” he buzzed.
“Can’t hold your drinks?” he hemmed.
What then? Should we have so abased ourselves
And all the fairies?

BLOSSOM

For us all, you should have done much less.

BOTTOM

Yet for the least, much more is always done.

ROBIN

You’d rather that we shriveled our reply and squeaked,
“We cannot do it?” Demurred and stuttered, “N-no,”
Dropped our chins and sulked away?
Why? So these sad cloying sots could say
They were our betters? So we could wear the collar
Of their snickering whispers, their laughing looks,
Their idiotic buzzing in our ears?
You see our quandary. What could we do
But what we did?

BLOSSOM

It’s better asked: What didn’t you do?
Draped in the fraying nectar, you unraveled here
A spiraling string of creased and rude calamities:
You knotted up the vines, and tangled all the weeds,
You dewed the moistened brook,
And you unwound the clinging ivy. All that and more —
The worst of which I blush to say.

ROBIN

Blossom, why should I button the blame
When clearly I was not myself. These stunts
I don't remember nor were they intended.
They were not willed nor wanted, planned nor wished.
Yes, by my flesh they were performed,
But absent my consenting spirit.

BLOSSOM

Good point, my Rob, good point. Since that's the case,
Your spirit's free to fly, discharged of guilt — fa la!
But your flesh is here constrained to expiate its sins.

ROBIN

By Adam's leaf, the punishment is too severe!
These hairless monkeys are insufferable!
They're brained just like a leopard with no legs:
All revs and lines; they are as clean
As rain-swollen streams yet not so dirty
As to be the least bit titillating.
They grate the ears and sting the eyes, they foul
The nose and burn the skin, then dull the brain.
In sum: They are vile and sullied nuisance
And their clumsy footfalls I can't abide.