Robin Goodfellow

or

The Frolics of Puck

A Ballad Opera in 2 Acts

The Words by John Frederick Smith
The Music by Edward Loder

This libretto is a transcription from the manuscript held in the British Library at Add MS 43015, ff. 286-307b. It was sent by John Maddox, manager of the Princess's Theatre, on November 25, 1846 with the remark that it was for performance on December 2, 1846. The manuscript also has 2/12/46 at the top right corner of the same page, which may possibly be when it was licenced, even though that was the same day as the proposed first performance. In fact, the first performance was December 6. The printed *Songs, Choruses etc* of the opera (London: S.G. Fairbrother, 1846) were made available in a scan from the British Library but, given their ongoing problems, the scan is made available here. In the main, any differences between these and the manuscript are small. Only the more major differences have been noted.

Vocal items are placed in the centre of the page while the dialogue is in two columns with the speaker in the left column. Stage directions are in italics, usually on the right.

The handwriting was usually legible. It was probably written by a copyist rather than Smith. Words are marked with (?) if there is doubt. Spellings are as in the manuscript and include such words as "honor" for "honour". The capitalisation of words is usually as in the manuscript, but some punctuation has been changed for clarity. **{xxa}** denotes the leading side of a page of the manuscript and **{xxb}** the trailing side.

More information on the opera can be found at
https://www.englishromanticopera.org/operas/RobinGoodfellow.htm

Please email any queries to englishromanticopera@gmail.com.

R Burdekin, June, 2024
www.englishromanticopera.org
www.victorianenglishopera.org

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Robin Goodfellow

Act 1, Scene 1

Vale and Lake by Moonlight

Titania and Fairies discovered

Chorus

When the moonbeam rests on the silent earth
And the stars shine bright, is an hour of mirth
In some haunted dell, we hold our court
And we rifle the wild bees' nest for sport

Tit

Ofttimes as ancient legends tell
On beauty's couch I love to dwell
And scatter bright dreams there.
Lone sorrow's pillow oft I seek
To dry the tear on virtue's cheek
And banish dark despair

Chorus

Of acorn cups our light goblets we form
And quaff the tears of the blushing May thorn,
Then dance and sing, for the nectar we sip
Is sweet as the dew on the virgin's lip

Titania retires up(stage)

Maydew Her majesty is sadly capricious, but Oberon would provoke an angel. How absurd in him to make so foolish a vow

Mustard Seed Still more absurd to keep it

May He must, for he has sworn by his sceptre never to **{288b}** take Titania to his arms until she has presented him by her favorite page a cup of honeydew in token of submission.

Mus And will she?

May Never. She hath held out a year and Oberon deserted by all his court, save Puck, repents too late his oath.

Tit (sighing) How long is it since my Lord hath been a stranger to my arms?

May A year this very night

Tit It would be weak to yield

May Lugubrious (?)

Rose Spiritless

All Mean

Mus Magnanimous

Tit Right, Mustard Seed, there is something noble in forgiveness. I am resolved, Oberon shall find that even in yielding I am his superior. Firstly bear thou my cup to Oberon, tell him Titania's lips have kissed the brim in token of her lover. Bid him drink of my fairy goblet. Speak to him thus.

Song

Drink of my cup the amaranth flower
That in its golden bosom lies
Was plucked in that celestial bower
Where love ne'er fades, where hope ne'er dies

Drink of my cup, the balmy draught
Shall steal like music on thy soul,
Each jealous pang, the goblet quaff'd,
Lies buried in the Lethean bowl.

{289a}

Drink of my cup, the gift I bring
Love's constant pledge shall sooth each pain
'Twas filled at that immortal spring
Whose waters time shall never drain.

Exit Gnatfly

May (aside) What weakness!

Mus (aside) Oberon triumphs

Tit Say fairies, have I done right?

Fairies Long live Titania

Tit To the lake. When Oberon arrives we will meet him like the Egyptian Queen of old, in triumph on the waters

Exeunt on lake.
Enter Oberon

Oberon Life without love is a sunless day. Unkind Titania to mock the chains my headstrong passion wove and triumph in my misery. Puck, spirit of mischief, hast thou too deserted me?

Enter Puck

Puck Master I am here

Obe What mischief hath thou been hatching?

Puck None. I am as dull as matrimony. I have been watching Titania and her court, listening to their gibes on Oberon, But were I Oberon, I would change the measure of their mirth.

Obe What wouldst thou?

Puck Art thou not their king? Wakes not thy breath the storm or zephyr as thy pleasure will? I'd change their moonlight revelry to darkness, chill them with blasts and pelt their delicate wings with hail.

Obe Thou art not married, Puck. Where is Titania?

Puck Upon the lake riding in triumph like the queen of old, her car a nautilus from the Indian seas, the breeze **{289b**} that swells its sail, her flatterers' breath

Obe My faithful Puck I have a task for thee

Puck Not sooner shall thy will be said than done

Song

I ride on the storm when my master hath need,
Or saddle the lightning's flash for my steed,
So lightly I pass o'er the mountain's brow
I leave no print on the delicate snow
And dull mortal who mark my swift course from afar,
Take the flash of my wings for the fall of a start!

At his will I sport on the crested wave
The sea boy to snatch from an early grave,
Or dive to the coral caves of the deep
To rifle the pearl while the sea nymphs sleep
And the mariner vows, as I ride through the spray,
That the mermaid has followed his bark on its way.

Obe Call up the north wind from its gloomy caverns, pinch the rebellious knaves with cold and let the patter of the snow sleet make music to Titania's scorn of Oberon

Puck Master, thou shalt be well obeyed

Exit

Obe Too long have I been patient. They shall find at length what it is to brave the wrath of Oberon

Enter Gnatfly

Gnat Sovereign of fairy land, Titania sends this sweet draught to Oberon, her ruby lips have kissed the brim and

Storm over lake

Obe Ho! Puck! O death (?) what a storm to grace our reconciliation **{290a}** with Titania. Mischief sprite obey me or I'll congeal thee in an iceberg a century.

Enter Tit and fairies drenched

Sweet Titania I have received thy gift and –

Tit Nobly requited it – Oh gallant Oberon, I'll be revenged. I swear by my sceptre

May My wings are drenched!

Fairies Cruel, revengeful Oberon

Obe Blame not your king, Puck is the culprit. I sought to stay him, but my words were lost amid the storm.

Tit Too long that spirit of mischief has been protected by thy power, but mark me, Oberon, by that power which binds our gifted race, I swear never to see thee more unless the culprit be delivered to my vengeance.

Obe Deal with him as thou wilt. Puck descend

Enter Puck

Puck Titania! Lost!

Tit Traitor, for thy last act of treason I banish thee from fairyland for ever

Obe Alas poor Puck!

May He is a cheerful spirit

Rose And the best minstrel in all fairy land

All Mercy, great queen

Tit Weepst thou, hypocrite

Song (Puck)

{290b}

Not for the sunny strand
Where clear waves kiss the golden shore,
Not for the verdant land
My wings once lov'd to hover o'er,
These tears and useless sighs
Tho' bright the scenes from which I roam
Brighter those sunlit eyes
Than the joys of my fairy home

This second verse was not included in the printed vocal items

[Not for the fragrant flower
Whose breath is the perfume of Ind,
Not for the blooming bower
Whose soft music floats on the wind,
I bend my stubborn knee
Tho' sweet the strains from which I roam
Sweeter thy voice to me
Than the songs of my fairy home.]

Kneels to Titania

Tit Yes, I repeat it, I banish thee from fairyland for ever, unless-

Puck Unless! O gracious queen!

Tit Unless after thy sojourn on earth thou shalt declare before the assembled court, the thing dearest to woman's heart

Puck Soon shall my gentle penance be accomplished. I'll be all things by turn to win the secret that secures my pardon. Not long, dread queen, shall I be banished if wit or stratagem may serve.

Tit Be not too confident. Weigh well ere you pronounce thrice. It is permitted thee to summon me to earth – if the third time thy answer fails, thy doom is sealed, I banish thee from **{291a}** fairy land forever.

Chorus

Away, away from the moonlight shore
The sun is up and our day is o'er,
His golden beams kiss the eastern strand
And sons of the earth will shortly rise
Our sports to mark with curious eyes,
Away, away to our fairy land.

Exeunt Fairies on lake, Puck in wood

[The printed vocal items do not include the above chorus but showed a repeat of the opening chorus " When the moonbeam rests on the silent earth, etc" followed by *Exeunt Oberon, Titania and Fairies*]

Scene 2

Exterior of Morton Hall, Maypole on stage

Enter Alice and Mabel

Song (Mabel)

Come blushing May with thy wreath of flowers,
Come smiling thro' April's sunlit showers,
Young Summer, thy bridegroom's impatient to meet thee -
Stern Winter, thy guardian hath fled to the north,
Balm breathing zephyrs now herald thee forth
Thy handmaids assemble with sweet flowers to greet thee

Come like a bride rob'd in virgin white,
The gems on thy brow, the dewdrops of light,
In thy bright eyes a tear, a sweet smile on thy mouth,
Thy cold tears young Summer quickly shall dry,
Mirth and content sparkle bright in thy eye
For his kisses are warm with the breath of the south.

Alice Heigho!

Mabel Heigho! Why what hast thou to sigh for?

{291b}

Alice Little indeed could I sit down contented with rustic life

Mabel France has spoiled thee, Alice.

Alice No, it hath taught me to know my sex's value, to feel that woman never was designed to waste existence ever in the country

Mabel Rail not against the country. I know you love flowers and then the music of the birds –

Alice Is nothing to a moonlight serenade

Mabel What were the serenade without the lover? And that thou hast – ay, more than one

Alice I! lovers!

Mabel First, there's Sir Hyacinth

Alice A pouncet box[1] , a spaniel lover fit to fetch and carry fans, or stoop to raise a lady's handkerchief.

Mabel Rookton's a man of courage

Alice And uses it for dishonest purposes

Mabel Barton is none of these

Alice Barton! A Puritan! Now indeed you jest

Mabel I do indeed. He hath a peasant's manner

Alice A peasant's manner, where are your eyes? He hath the step of a prince and a smile – but psha what can Walter Barton ever be to me more than a friend.

Mabel Perchance thy husband

Alice My husband! Mate (?) with a country squire, half **{292a}** Purian and half Republican! Never. I'd give my heart to a hawk first.

Enter Sir Dick, Sir Hya and Rookton

Sir R What, my birds up before me. Give me a kiss.

Sir H Blest privilege of age

Alice Which you may one day claim when your hair is as white as his

Sir H For such an ecstasy I'd sacrifice my locks, much as they are admired

[1] A small box with a perforated lid used for holding a substance impregnated with perfume

Mabel What heroism

Sir H Divine Alice, we are positively lost among these hobnailed curiosities in the country. After the pleasures of the court of France how insipid must these rustic pleasures appear to you. I pity you.

Sir R Pity her for leaving the frivolities of foreign courts for the English home of her father's. You jest young man. With all its faults I would not give the poorest cottage in England for a palace in a foreign land.

Song (Sir Richard)

Sing me then the songs of old
Legends told in childhood's hour
Of pilgrim knights or barons bold,
Lays of the Hall or lady's bower

I love to hear the fairy tale
That charm'd my childhood's listening ear
When fancy turned my young cheek pale
Or claimed the tribute of a tear

{292b}

Long years since then have passed away
And left their wrinkles on my brow
My raven locks are turning gray
Sprinkled by winter's chilling snow

Yet still I love those songs of old,
They cheat dull time of half his reign,
They warm the heart to pleasure cold,
I hear them and am young again.

Rook Such be ever the feelings of my heart. But what news of his majesty, Sir Richard

Sir R I expect letters daily from the Hague with the acceptance of the king to Monk's demands, the usurpers' health breaks first

Rook (aside) Could I but obtain proofs of this, the game were in my hands

Enter Farmers, Villagers, Guests, etc

Sir R Our Mayday sports commence

Chorus

Come gentle May
Young Spring for thy sweet breath is sighing
Fading away
The cold storms of winter are dying,
And maidens fair
Are now searching their woodland bowers
To deck their hair
With wreaths of thy beautiful flowers

Printed vocal items added [Come gentle May, come gently May]

Sir R Well sung, my merry faces. Despite Old Noll[2] and his puritanical edicts we have sung our Mayday carol

{293a}

Rook to Alice And paid homage to the queen of beauty

Alice turns from him I loathe and fear that man

Sir R Now for the dance

Mayday dance. Puck enters as a gipsy

Puck sings

Maidens who would fain unfold
The secret of your future ~~told~~ [fate][3]
Cross my palm with shining ~~fate~~ [gold]
And all your fortunes I'll relate

For mine is the wondrous gift to tell
If the vow of the lover be true
Or hides 'neath its mask a serpent's spell
Which the heart of the maiden may rue.

Sir H Not badly turned. I'll try thy skill boy (*gives money*). Touch not my hand with thy unperfumed paw

Puck sings

A butterfly's fate is thine
To wander from flower to flower
In spring's gay morning to shine
But fade with the winter shower.

Sir R A hit, Sir Hyacinth. I like his humor well

Sir H I like it not. Were I in the peace, I'd stock the vagabond

Puck That would be nothing new but the gipsy and his songs were not always hunted from the green lanes of merry England

Rook Give me a proof of your skill (*gives money*)

{293b}

Puck Right willingly

Puck sings

The heart on deeds of guilt may rest
Tho' the brow and the speech be fair
Those who have crossed thy path had best
Of thy smile and smooth tongue beware

[2] Oliver Cromwell

[3] The words in [ ] are from the printed vocal items and replaced the ~~words~~ in the manuscript

Rook Insolent! (*raises hand*)

Alice What strike a boy! Shame on thy manhood. Cousin shall we try our fortunes. I almost fear for tis a bitter tongue

Mabel I will venture first (*gives money*). Be discreet

Puck sings[4]

Spring is on thy virgin brow
Yet thy heart to love is cold
Forget not tho' so blooming now
That beauty fades as time grows old

Sir R A merry knave. I have told thee Mabel, thou wilt say "no" too often

Alice He is no vulgar rhymester (*offers money*)

Puck Lady by thee my skill may not be paid in gold. I have a cunning question to propose which thou alone mayst answer.

Alice Name thy request

Puck Tell me the thing dearest to woman's heart

Alice Thou hadst better take the gold

Puck It will buy most things lady, but not the gipsy's knowledge

Alice I cannot barter with thee

{294a}

Sir R Come neighbours to the Hall. Wilt with us boy? I warrant me thou hast tales to wile the long nights of their tediousness and a merry song

Puck Both at your knightly service

Sir R On then neighbours, gentle and simple, to the Hall

Exeunt all but Alice

Alice "Perchance my husband"! Little did Mabel dream how near that arrow glanced! Fool that I was to confess I loved him!

Enter Walter in a cloak

Wal Dear Alice

Alice Well?

Wal Well! And is it thus you greet me? Silent! Have I offended?

Alice Offended? I have no right to feel offended where I take no interest.

[4] The printed vocal items titles this as to Alice but it should be to Mabel

Wal Is it thus you treat my love

Walter sings

When in happier days we wandered
By the clear and murmuring rill
When we lingered in the wild wood
Till evening's voice grew still
I deem'd not that in anguish
The cold heart without a sigh
Could leave me thus to languish
In grief and care to die

{294b}

When in age that cold heart seeketh
For the one it loved in youth
How will memory's voice awaken
Scenes of rapture and of truth?
Go, false one, and seek for pleasure
In the flatterer's empty vow,
In the casket, not the treasure,
Which thy blindness priseth now.

Rookton watches

Alice Love! Profane not, sir, the name. Would he who loved me seek my house's ruin? League with the enemies of all I love? A lover in a scrivener's garb with a traitor's heart – never

Wal His garb is changed, dear Alice, but the heart is still wholly thine (*casts off cloak and appears as a cavalier*)

Alice Dear Walter

Wal For thee, I have cast aside the sober habit of my sect as I would cast the robe(?) of empire for one smile from thee (Enter Sir John Clinton disguised) A stranger! Dost thou know him, Alice?

Alice confused Yes – no – that is (*he holds out a letter and beckons her*)

Wal Not know him and yet he beckons you? Go to him, madam, let not my presence prove the least restraint

Alice Ungenerous Walter! Passion (?) deceives you

{295a}

Goes to Sir John who gives her a letter and exits

Wal Deceived! Yes I know I am and his blood shall answer

Alice What would you?

Wal Lady, let me pass

Alice I read your purpose. You must not harm him

Wal Is he then so dear to you?

Alice His safety is most dear to me but not in the sense thou thinkest. Come, forget this foolish jealousy. Our friends are all assembled, let us join their sports.

Wal Never. Alice farewell, my heart is broken

Song (Walter)

Away with all the foolish toys
That late my heart did fond beguile
Away with love and love's light joys.
From woman's eye or woman's smile
No more I'll droop, nor pine, nor sigh,
To beauty's spell no slave I'll be
But laugh and wear my bonnet high
And roam the world in fancy free.

My steed and sword shall lead me on
In honor's path to do or die;
If glory or the grave be won,
For woman's love then what care I?
Shall beauty frail or pleasure light
Deprive me of sweet liberty?
No, no, I'll laugh in love's despite
And rove the world in fancy free

Exeunt severally

{295b}

Rook advances followed by Puck

Rook They have quarrelled – good. They must not meet again. That letter I am sure contains the correspondence of Charles Stuart. Were it once mine, I should command the love I now sue for – but how?

Puck Shall I tell thee?

Rook A spy!

Puck What are we both? You for Cromwell, I for my own humor. I could point out to thee a grave the priest ne'er blest, the sexton never dug, where rests thy elder brother.

Rook Fool! Thou hast said too much (*rushes on him with sword. Puck disarms him*)

Puck Psha, let's be friends. Tis plain Alice hates you – denounce the girl, her father and his guests. Once in your power the daughter's hand may buy the old man's pardon.

Rook I may not have the power to save him

Puck But you can promise it.

Rook True and the girl once mine, twere well the blustering knight were in his grave. Boy, thou art master of a dangerous secret – should it escape thee, I'll find a way to reach thy heart.

Exit

Puck Earth such beautiful earth, thou wert a paradise did not man's treachery and women's falsehood mar thy loveliest features

Song (Puck)

O were not this a world of bliss
If falsehood lurked not mid its bowers
Leaving its poison on each kiss
The serpent's trail on Eden's flowers..
{296a} No brighter world my wings had sought
If truth had e'er on earth been spoken
If woman's faith had ne'er been bought
Or for the love of gold been broken

But vain are now the fairy spells
Bright eyes around my path are beaming,
Tho' sweet their eyes, experience tells
Their truth is but an idle seeming

[The printed vocal items indicate that the first four lines were repeated here]

Exit

Scene 3

The Great Hall

All discovered dancing

Sir R This is as it should be, rich and poor partaking the same pleasures. May every English landlord's hearth be as cheerful.

Alice Still no occasion to inform my father of the letter

Farmers etc. go to refreshment table

Sir H How the creatures feed – such hospitality must shrink your revenue

Sir R Not a mark. I hold my wealth but as the gift of Providence to assist my less fortunate fellow creatures – all who till the soil have a right to partake its blessings.

Song (Sir R)

My broad lands I but hold them in trust for the poor
And my heart is as open as free as my door.
What is wealth but a blessing by Providence lent,
To be paid to the poor, not idly spent
{296b}
When I reap my rich fields let the gleaner be there,
When my cup is o'erflowing my friend he must share.

With scorn I'd reject the piled wealth of each zone
If forced like a churl to enjoy it alone
When my sand it is run and they lay this gray head
In the grave of my father's to sleep with the dead
Why the poor then confess, as they weep o'er my dust,
That their steward was faithful and true to his trust.

Enter Walter and Puck

Wal You are betrayed, Rookton is a traitor. He has denounced you as in correspondence with Charles Stuart. Save yourselves.

Alice to Sir R Clinton's papers are in my possession – could we but secure them – (*Exeunt several guests*) – see how our friends desert us.

Wal Canst thou forgive my unjust suspicions? Alice, destroy that packet. Your life, your father's depend upon its destruction.

Alice A nation's happiness depend upon its preservation

Wal Then yield it to me. I may pass unsuspected. By our love, Alice

Sir R How! Walter Barton the love of my child!

Sir H A rival by all that's disagreeable

Puck The soldiers are in possession of the Hall

Wal Give me the letter, I will answer for its safety

{297a}

Sir R Who will answer for your honor?

Wal I with my life (*gives it*)

Alice Thanks, dearest Alice

Enter Rookton, Goodboy And Men

Sir R Rookton! traitor!

Rook I should have been had I, like you, consented to betray the commonwealth

Enter Officer

Officer We have searched the Hall in vain

Good Examine well their persons

Rook Secure that traitor (*they sieze Walter*)

Wal Traitor! How am I suspected?

Good And denounced. Search the apostate

Wal There is no way save this (tears the letter)

Alice aside Bravely done. He hath a noble spirit

Wal None here knew of my communication with the king. I alone am culpable (aside). I have preserved her

Rook Baffled (?)! hence with him

Alice No for me he dies, he is

Wal Content to die for the cause that Alice loves. Farewell. I have kept my faith

Exit guarded

Alice I knew he would. I need not blush that I have loved him. Father disguise were useless now that he is lost to me for ever! Lost while you bearded men whom he has saved stand coldly by! Have ye nor hands nor swords. Shame on your crests if **{297b}** ye desert him. He shall not die alone

Rushes out followed by all but Puck

Puck I have the secret now. Tis love! I'll save her lover and reward his faith. Humanity, fallen as thou art, some trace of Eden hangs about thee still.

Song (Puck)

By the sun that hath kissed the green waves that I love,
By the bright stars that dance in the heavens above,
By the revel at night on the moonlit strand,
And the mirth and song of our fairyland,
By all that can bind or the heart hold most dear,
Tho' worlds roll between us I summon you here

Chorus of Fairies invisible

We come at thy word and our courses(?) bright
Are the silver beams of the moon's sweet light.
Like meteors we gleam
O'er the mountain's crest
And the wild birds scream
As we rush by their nest.
Ere an eyelid can blink or a sound strike thine ear
Not less swift than the lightning thy judges are here.
[Yes, we are here] added in the printed vocal items

Oberon, Titania and Fairies

Song (Titania)

Rash culprit, from my fairy home
Borne on the wings of air I come,
And I swear by the wreath,
Which beams on my brow,
{298a} The sweet spell of whose breath
Encircle me now.
If thrice thou shalt fail to declare
What most to a woman is dear

[That the land of thy birth
Shall welcome thee never]
But an exile from earth
I doom thee forever.

This couplet not included in the printed vocal items

[Chorus of Fairies
If thrice thou shalt fail etc (as above)]

Not included in printed vocal items

Song (Puck)

Each feeling that governs the will
Woman, by turns, may prove,
But the thing most dear to her still
Is love, the false tyrant, love.

Song (Tit and female fairies)

No, no, no – tho' woman's breast
The tyrant's power hath oft confest;
Tho' love may cause the burning tear
There's one thing yet she holds more dear

Chorus

Oh, saddle we then our steeds of light,
To follow the wildfire chase by night,
O'er bog and fen we merrily ride
Or track our prey by the mountain's side.
{298b} Our great steeds ne'er tire till our wild sport is done
And we leave them to rest at the rise of the sun.

Included in printed vocal items [Away o'er bog and fen we ride,
Our prey is by the mountains side.
Away we ride, away, away,
O'er bog and fen we ride away,
To the mountains side away
Away we ride, away, away.]

End of Act 1

{299a}

Act 2, Scene 1

Fairy Land

Titania discovered on a bank –
Maydew, Rosebud, Mustard Seed, Gnatfly and fairies in attendance

Chorus
Night is our day, we sport on the wind
And leave the meteors track behind
In frolic play
Oft we chase afar
The silver ray
Of some falling star
To entwine a wreath the brightest seen
To deck the brow of our fairy queen

In the printed vocal items, the chorus below replaced the above

[We lave[5] our limbs in the cool green sea,
And sport in our coral bowers,
While the mermaid's song so wild and free,
Make glad the Sea Nymph's hours.
O'er glittering gems we gaily trip,
To watch the barks that ride,
From crystal fountains there we sip,
And frolic beneath the sil'vry tide
And limbs we lave in the cool green sea,
To the mermaids song so free.
While the mermaids song
Our joys prolong;
Caverns around
Echo each sound.
Blythely live we,
And sing merrily,
Merrily, merrily, merrily;
We sing merrily]

Tit Who hath seen Oberon?

Mus Dread queen, twice hath the musing monarch crossed my path in seeming anger

May He mourns his exiled favorite

Tit Let him mourn, never more shall the rebellious Puck disturb the fairy court. Be it my task to banish from the presence of Oberon all who would divide his empire with me

Mus Great queen, thine is a genius to direct a world (*aside*) of husbands

[5] Wash

May You hate this Puck?

Tit With all my sex's hatred

{299b}

Rose Why, sweet mistress?

Tit But for his counsels, Oberon had been a most obedient husband, but Puck's sarcastic tongue stung him to slight my frown.

Gnat Why then revoke the sentence you pronounced?

Tit The grossness of thy earthborn wit cannot conceive the subtlety of mine. The chance of pardon I held out was mockery not mercy.

Mus Already he hath failed

Tit And will again

Gnat Is it so difficult to read a woman's heart?

Tit Tis a mystery even to herself, judge then if Puck can solve it

Mus But Oberon may read the riddle for him

Tit I will pardon him when Oberon's wit can jump conclusion with me

Thunder

Oberon appearing But his power may

Tit Oberon!

Obe Ay, Oberon, whose love hath been Titania's scorn, whose weakness her strength. I'll be avenged. I swear it by my sceptre.

Tit I am beyond its power

Obe But not your court, your cringing flatterers. I banish them to earth. There let them wander the slaves of Puck, condemned to do his bidding

Fairies Mercy, great king

{300a}

Tit You will revoke your sentence

Obe Never, till Puck returns. Down rebel spirits, down to earth, let those who raised the tempest brave its fury

[The following song was not included in the printed vocal items]

<u>Song</u> (Oberon)
Dark spirit of the northern clime

Where thou sitst enthroned sublime
On the whirlwind's rapid wings,
Swift as the flash the lightning brings
Let the dark terrors of thy zone(?)
Around my fairy realm be thrown

Thunder. Stage dark. Spirits sink.
Titania ascends. Oberon enters trunk of tree

Scene 2

Landscape with gipsy tents

Enter Puck

Puck Thanks, gentle master, thou hast well avenged me. My enemies are now my slaves – disguised as a troop of gipseys (sic). I have left them to the base shelter of yon ragged tents.

Enter Rookton

Rook How goes our scheme, boy?

Puck As well as hope can promise. Your rival is in prison, her father's life will soon be in your power, and if with such helps you can win her not, blame your dull wit and curse your stars no more.

Rook Alice and her father are resolved, aided by your gipsy tribe, to liberate this Walter

Puck Such is their purpose

{300b}

Rook Let me catch Sir Richard on the hip, his daughter's hand shall be his ransom. There is gold, be faithful.

Exit

Puck Gold! Strange that it should be earth's idol, that men should seek the yellow demon and trample under foot the treasures of the heart.

Exit

Enter Sir Richard, Sir Hyacinth, Alice and Falconers

Sir R So, we are near the fens. Twere a stain upon our craft to rouse the quarry and the hawks not here.

Alice aside There are the tents – how shall I break from them?

Sir H You seem fatigued, fair Alice. By my faith 'twere a good deed to bear her from this rude soil to a more genial clime.

Sir R What! Transport my English rose to fade within a foreign land! No, tis the sole flower upon a rugged stem – divide them, the root would wither and the blossom fade.

Sir H Why then transport them both.

Sir R What! Tear up the gnarled oak from its native earth! I'd not exchange the poorest cottage on this soil for a foreign land.

Sir H I shall make a convert of thee

Sir R Never, all your courtly shafts would miss their aim. But come, to our sports – where be those lazy varlets, the hawks?

Alice They are here. By your leave I will retire. The day is sultry and I have lost all relish for the sport

{301a}

Sir H I will be your escort (*aside*) . 'Tis plain she seeks to be alone with me.

Alice (aside) Provoking fool! How to avoid his company!

Sir R As you please, I force the sport on no one. Come my friends to our gallant prey

Exeunt all but Alice and Sir H

Sir H Thank heaven we are alone! Shall I bewilder her by my eloquence or take her by storm?

Alice How to get rid of him? Sir Hyacinth, this lovely prospect seems thrown away upon you

Sir H bows Pardon me, I am enchanted by the prospect before me

Alice aside Impertinent

Sir H Is it possible you like the country?

Alice Is it possible to dislike it?

Sir H I know but one thing that can render it endurable, a lover

Alice A lover! Heaven keep me from that. Men love nothing but themselves

Song (Alice)[6]

Say, what is a lover worth?
A plume from the wing of time,
For love in caprice hath birth,
A sigh or an idle rhyme.

Say what is the lovers thrall
Sweet words and music's power,
As fleet as the shades that fall
On earth at the twilight hour.

[6] The printed vocal items wrongly label this as for Mabel

{301b} Lovers will change when they wed
In vain their deceit we deplore.
Caught in the snare they have spread
The spell that enticed us is o'er

Sir H This is the affectation of insensibility. My attentions cannot be mistaken. You must admire me. My figure is considered perfect

Alice Not quite. One thing is wanting – a tail

Sir H What advantage would that be

Alice Decide your species

Sir H I will forgive your malice. Only confess you love me.

Alice Love you! I could as soon love a cinnamon tree

Sir H Pray (?) why a cinnamon tree?

Alice Because like you, its bark is more costly than its trunk

Sir H The pride of refusing me outweighs your inclination

Enter Puck and the Fairies as Gipsies

Puck Welcome, sweet lady, to our greenwood home

Alice aside to Puck Are your people faithful? Will they assist us?

Puck To the death, lady – will you speak with them?

Alice First rid me of yon may fly

Puck At your bidding, lady

Gipsy Chorus
Sadly, the gipsy's lot is cast
When spring's sweet flowers are dying
When summer's gone and winter's blast
Thro' the leafless wood is sighing

This is not included In the printed vocal items [

May and Rose to Sir H
O come and roam with me
Beneath the forest tree
List to the gipsy's spell
The heart thy love would seek
The name thy tongue would speak
The gipsy's skill can tell.]

Chorus repeated

Rosebud and Mayfly draw Sir H off stage. Alice enters tents with gipsies

Scene changes to 3rd

A magnificent tent

Enter Alice

Alice What mystery is this?

Chorus of fairies invisible
Spirit appear in all the pride
Of thy young beauty cast aside.
Thy regal crown and diamond zone
A richer gem awaits thee here,
For woman's smile is far more dear
Than the joys of thy fairy throne

Curtains divide, discovering Puck and Fairies

Alice Do I dream?

Puck Daughter of earth, it is love's true reality. For thee have I left my fairy world veiled beneath a base disguise, nor thought the sacrifice too great to win one smile

Alice I am bewildered

{302b}

Puck Speak but the word, this dull earth shall fade beneath thy view and a star be thy future home

Alice And thou

Puck Thy slave, thy lover, at thy feet I cast my fairy crown

Song (Puck)
My heart with love is glowing
Wilt thou roam with me
From this dull earth free
And our home shall be
Where the amaranth flower is blowing

Time my faith ne'er shall sever
But my heart shall be
As unchang'd to thee
As old constancy
And its pulse beat for thee, love, for ever.

The printed vocal items substituted the following verses for the above

[With love my heart is glowing
Say wilt thou roam with me?
Where the am'ranth flow'r is blowing
Say wilt thou roam with me?
From this dull earth free shalt thou be free,
Ah! Say wilt thou roam with me?
And our blissful home shall be
Where love shall never flee

Time ne'er my faith shall sever,
Say wilt thou roam with me?
And this pulse for thee beat ever
Say wilt thou roam with me?
So true my love shall prove to thee,
Ah! Say wilt thou roam with me?
Changeless as old constancy
My heart will ever be.]

Alice Love! And for a mortal?

Puck Hast thou not heard that spirits oft from their fair abode come down to woo earth's daughters?

Alice Yes and their fate who loves them.

Puck You fear me then?

Alice There is a lurking mischief in thine eye – yet thou art a spirit and thy glorious nature cannot descend to falsehood. Thou lovest me and I am safe.

Puck Safe!

Alice Love injures not e'en when that love is vain

Puck Can avarice or ambition tempt thee? At thy feet I'll **{303a}** lay the world's wrecked (?) treasure, place in thy hand a sceptre grater than e'er the Caesar's swayed, or he, the victor boy of Greece once won.

Alice The wealth I covet are his smiles. I love, my only empire be his generous heart

Puck Rejected for a mortal! Beware

Alice Be generous and set me free. I have no words to plead, tears are my words

Puck Woman's resistless weapon – tis past and you are free. Never more shall my wild passion cause that heart one sigh. Without the tent your gipsy guide awaits you – farewell for ever.

Exit Alice

May Well, hast thou won the secret?

Rose The spell which pays our ransom?

Puck Tis mine at last. Titania hear me

Chorus
By the feelings wide and deep
By the woes that never sleep
E'en in night's still horn
By the ruby cup of wine
By fair woman's love divine
I call thee from thy bower

The printed vocal [Puck
Items substituted the By the feelings wide and deep
following for the above By the woes that never sleep
We call thee from thy bower

Chorus
We call thee from thy bower

Puck
By the feelings wide and deep
By the woes that never sleep
Titania quit thy bower

Chorus
Titania quit thy bower
We call thee from thy bower]

A star opens discovering Titania and Oberon

Puck
Tho' love may dwell in woman's heart
A bird in beauty's bower
And oft awake the burning tear
Her plighted faith she holds more dear

{303b}

Titania - Oberon
No, no, no, no tho' beauty's breast
May be the young god's balmy nest
And plighted faith
One master passion still remains
Stronger than truth or love's soft chains
To woman's heart more ear.

Chorus
Away, away from this dull earth
Where sorrows, tears and sighs have birth
And beauty wakes to mourn

Away, away to our fairy home
Where all the laughing graces roam
And wreathed smiles are born

They ascend

The printed vocal items have the following chorus instead of the Titania-Oberon duet and chorus above

[Chorus
Away, away, away, o'er bog and fen we ride;
Away, our prey is by the mountain's side
Away, away, away
Away we ride by the mountain's side
Away, away, away]

Scene 4

A prison

Capt. Mayland and guards drinking

Chorus[7]
Brother soldiers, we've met for delight
So the ruby wine cup we will fill
For tho' absent woman be tonight
Yet her beauty's spell is o'er us still.
Then press the grape
And drain the bowl
Yes, fill it to the brim with ruby wine
In mirth and song
The pilgrim soul
Shall taste while on the earth of joy divine.
304a But deem not in Bacchus alone we delight
Or seek but the cup of the young god to fill.
For tho' woman, dear woman, be absent tonight,
The spell of her beauty is over us still.

Enter Goodboy

Good What heathenish sounds are these?

Capt Heathenish! They are the rejoicings of the heart for the blessings of nature. Master Goodboy, you used to like a merry song

Good In my days of vanity

Capt Ay, and a pretty girl

[7] The printed vocal items call this a Bacchanalian Chorus. It has some minor rearrangement of some lines

Good groans I have stumbled in my youth, but how may thy orgies suit the prisoner who is to die at sunrise

Capt Poor fellow!

Good Besides, should the general come thy mirth might displease him and bring a scandal on the discipline

Capt Come, lads, to the hall below. There we'll indulge in a carouse till morning

Exit with soldiers

Good Now that they are gone, I will parley with the son of Belial. Barton, come forth.

Enter Walter Barton

Wal What wouldst thou

Good I would have speech with thee

Wal Be brief, your purpose

Good To save thee if thou art reasonable. Sir Richard Morton is in the plot I am sure. You are but his scapegoat

Wal Well?

Good Denounce him. He hath lands that might redeem his head. Thou hast none. Wilt be advised?

{304b}

Wal And barter honor for the privilege to breath – be gone. If to the gift of life thou couldst add rank and gold, it would not tempt me to sacrifice my honor.

Good Thou meet thy fate, fool, to perish for a word

Exit

Wal But that word is honor. World, I am sick of thee. Death will be a welcome refuge from thy mockeries

Enter Alice and Puck

Alice Walter

Wal Alice here! I shall die happy if in death the assurance of my Alice's love go with me to the grave

Puck Short time for words when minutes only wait twixt you and death (*goes to window and throws out a cord*)

Wal How gained you entrance?

Alice By gold, that key to human actions

Sir Richard enters by window

Wal Sir Richard here!

Sir R Ay, think you I will leave you to die like a felon for service done to me or mine? Not a moment is to be lost. Our gipsy friends keep watch below

Alice Fly ere it be too late

Wal One farewell – Alice, heaven bless thee

Puck to Walt Fly to Mansfield Wood. There thou wilt learn intelligence of –

Sir R What?

{305a}

Puck The king's return. Monk hath done his duty and Charles Stuart ascends his father's throne.

Wal If this be true and hope whispers that it is, my gratitude shall load thee with its bounty. Alice farewell

Exit thro' window

Puck aside Rookton is on the watch

Sir R He hath reached the ground – he is safe

Alice Thank heaven

Puck Now to give the signal (*whistles*)

Enter Captain, Rookton, Goodboy and soldiers

Alice Betrayed

Sir R Traitor, is this thy service?

Rook Secure them – let a court martial be instantly summoned

Alice A court martial! On my father! My aged noble father. You dare not. You have a heart not quite dead to shame, you will have mercy

Rook Lady, I will be just

Puck aside As a tiger to his victim

Alice Mercy, mercy, (kneels)

Sir R Alice, rise – disgrace not thy lineage by asking favor of a traitor. I am your prisoner, sir, and prepared to meet my doom. I have too often braved the soldier's death to fear the assassin's aim.

{305b}

Rook March with your prisoners

Chorus

Prepare the traitor's doom, prepare
Nor beauty's tears nor mercy's prayer
May turn aside his doom
At iron justice stern command
Bared is the avenging hand
That sends him to the tomb

Exeunt

[The printed vocal items do not include the above chorus]

Scene 5

Gothic Hall

Gen. Wilmot and Officers seated

Gen The time my friends is past for weak compassion – the malignants since the Lord Protector's death are more than making head. They must be crushed at once.

Enter Rookton, Sir R, Alice and Soldiers

Rook The prisoner

Gen Sir Richard, you have aided the escape of a convicted rebel, condemned to die for treason against the state. This council have decided that you shall take his place. You have heard our resolution?

Sir R I have

Alice Did you not blush to utter it?

Sir R Blush! A rebel blush! The sense of honor, the blush of shame bade him farewell when he became a traitor.

{306a}

Gen You have heard the sentence – within an hour see it performed. Break up the court.

Exeunt all but Sir R, Alice and guards

Alice To die! This is some horrid dream – speak to me or I shall go mad

Sir R Be calm my child. It matters little when the old tree falls so that the trunk is spared. Lay me to rest beneath the shade of our old village church.

Song (Sir Richard)

My village church where first I heard
The pledge of life, truth's holy word.
Where first I breathed the trembling prayer
Taught by a mother's watchful care.
Tho' statelier shrines I've seen since then,
Fondly the heart remembers when

Beneath thy roof I bent the knee
In guileless happy infancy.

My village church beneath whose shade
My childhood's earliest friends are laid.
Affection ponders on each stone
That tells me I am left alone.
That, by a hand as wise as kind,
Broken are one by one life's ties
Till the worn heart at evening's close
Welcomes at last long, glad repose.

Exeunt

{306b}

Scene Last

A wood

Enter Puck and Rookton

Puck You will not save him then?

Rook Tis better policy to let him die. Alice, an orphan, without friends or home cannot long resist me.

Puck You are a true philosopher

Enter Sir R and soldiers

Rook Take your ground

Sir R Ay, with a step as firm as tho' twere to victory and not death.

Enter Alice

Alice Mercy! Mercy!

Rook This is my triumph

Alice Cold blooded villain

Rook What wouldst thou give to avoid this bitter hour

Sir R Not the triumph of a sigh or e'en a tear. I have faced death upon the battlefield, shall I fear him now. My last prayer shall be for a blessing on my king, my last wish peace to my distracted country.

Puck They come

Enter Walter, Royalists and Gipseys

Wal God save King Charles

Rook Traitors!

Wal Thou art the traitor. In the name of Charles the king restored, I call upon you to lay down your arms. Behold the proclamation of the parliament

{307a}

Rook It is a forgery – arrest him

Wal Soldiers, obey the orders of your king

Rook Baffled! Confusion!

Exit

Wal I claim thee, Alice. Thou are mine at last, the laurels are on my brow, the honor-giving hand of Charles hath made me noble

Puck Thou art happy now as love and truth can make thee

Alice Happier than either – is he not a royalist? Have I not my will?

Puck Ha! The secret's mine at last. Earth farewell, my fairy home is won. Dearer to woman's heart than love or faith to woman's heart is woman's will.

Enter Fairies

Puck and Fairies

By thy blue eyes sparkling bright
By the rays of living light
Reflected on each shower
By the Simoon's vivid glance
By yon orbs in mystic dance
Titania quit thy bower

Oberon and Titania appear

Puck

Tho' woman's heart by turns may prove
The throne of truth, the seat of love,
Dearer than truth or love is still
To woman's heart, her wayward will

{307b}

Tit and Oberon

Rejoice, rejoice, thy task is done
Thy fairy home once more is won,

Chorus

Rejoice, rejoice, thy task is done
Our fairy land once more is won,
Again shall we wander o'er perfum'd flowers
And sink to rest on our amaranth bowers
Again at night our sports be seen
By the fountain's brink or woodland green.
And the toils and the care of our task of earth
Be told at our feasts in our horns of mirth.

The printed vocal items listed a *Rondeau Finale* by Puck following his song above and no verses by Titania and Oberon or chorus. Although not specified, at least some of the final lines would probably have been been sung by or with the chorus.

[Puck

Rejoice, the task is done
My fairy home is won.
At night our sports shall still be seen
Our sports shall still be seen
Rejoice the task is done
By fountain's brook of woodland green.
Our sports shall still be seen
Our fairy home is won]

Curtain