



Clint Snyder

Inspired by Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

Copyright © 2015, Clint Snyder

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

A MID-FALL NIGHT'S DREAM is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and all of the countries covered by the Universal Copyright Convention and countries with which the United States has bilateral copyright relations including Canada, Mexico, Australia, and all nations of the United Kingdom.

Copying or reproducing all or any part of this book in any manner is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this book may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, or videotaping without written permission from the publisher.

A royalty is due for every performance of this play whether admission is charged or not. A "performance" is any presentation in which an audience of any size is admitted.

The name of the author must appear on all programs, printing, and advertising for the play. The program must also contain the following notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Big Dog/Norman Maine Publishing LLC, Rapid City, SD."

All rights including professional, amateur, radio broadcasting, television, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved by Big Dog/Norman Maine Publishing LLC, www.BigDogPlays.com, to whom all inquiries should be addressed.

Big Dog Publishing
P.O. Box 1401
Rapid City, SD 57709

A MID-FALL NIGHT'S DREAM

FARCE. In this wacky, over-the-top version of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Berkley is celebrating her first Halloween and is visited by outlandish trick-or-treaters including a fashion-forward "wear-wolf," a pink turtle, some vampires, a donkey, a rock, the Berlin Wall, and a moon with cheese glued to it. But when the candy runs out and Puck and some fairies show up, the mayhem truly begins with the help of some magic lemonade.

Performance Time: Approximately 30 minutes.



Study for The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania (1849) by Sir Joseph Noel Paton (left) and the title page of *Robin Goodfellow: His Mad Pranks and Merry Jests*, 1629.

ABOUT THE STORY

Thought to be written between 1590 and 1596, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is one of Shakespeare's most popular works and also one of his most unusual works in that it isn't based primarily on one single source. Instead, the story references Greek mythology in the character of Theseus, who is loosely based on the Greek hero of the same name. The Celtic fairies and the character of Puck (aka Robin Goodfellow), a mischievous woodland sprite, were derived from English folklore, and the character of Titania and the story of "Pyramus and Thisbe" come from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Described as romantic, dreamlike, farcical, and fantastic, the play also parodies conventions of English Renaissance theatre such as the tradition of men playing the roles of female characters.

CHARACTERS

(2 M, 9 F, 6 flexible, opt. extras)
(With doubling: 1 M, 8 F, 6 flexible)

- BERKLEY:** It's her first Halloween; wears a pug dog costume; female.
- DOMINIQUE:** Found Berkley living under a rock; dressed as a fashion-forward "Wear-wolf"; wears fashionable clothing made from faux wolf fur; female.
- GRETEL:** Found Berkley living under a rock; wears a Pink Turtle superhero costume; female.
- VAMPIRE 1:** Trick-or-treater; dressed as a beautiful new-age movie-glitter vampire; female.
- VAMPIRE 2:** Trick-or-treater; dressed as a traditional Dracula-style vampire; male.
- VAMPIRE 3:** Trick-or-treater; dressed as a punk-Goth vampire; flexible.
- VAMPIRE 4:** Trick-or-treater; dressed as a wealthy socialite vampire; female.
- VAMPIRE 5:** Trick-or-treater; dressed as a vampire/giraffe; flexible.
- WALL:** Trick-or-treater; wears a Berlin Wall costume; flexible.
- DONKEY:** Trick-or-treater who thinks he's wearing a dog costume but is really wearing a donkey costume; wears a donkey mask; flexible.
- LITTLE GIRL:** Trick-or-treater; dressed as a little girl; female.
- MOON:** Trick-or-treater; wears a moon costume with cheese stuck to it; female.
- FAIRY QUEEN:** Trick-or-treater; wears a fairy costume with glittery wings; female.
- PUCK:** Sassy trick-or-treater; wears a fairy costume with glittery wings; flexible.
- ROCK:** Uncreative trick-or-treater; wears a rock costume; flexible.
- MOTHER:** Berkley's mother; female.

FATHER: Berkley's father; male.
EXTRAS (Opt.): As Fairies.

OPTIONS FOR DOUBLING

MOTHER/VAMPIRE 4 (female)
FATHER/VAMPIRE 2 (male)

SETTING

A house that has been overly decorated with cheap Halloween decorations, Halloween night.

SET

Interior of house. The home is overly decorated with cheap Halloween decorations. There is a door and a window.

Berkley's bedroom. There is not much there except a small stream of light and a bucket with a shake in it.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: House that has been overly decorated with cheap Halloween decorations, Halloween night.

Scene 2: Berkley's bedroom.

PROPS

Pillow
Small tubes of toothpaste
Assorted candy
Halloween candy bowl
5 Cups of lemonade
Bucket
Shake with silly straw

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Doorbell
Small stream of light

"EVERYONE NEEDS
A LITTLE CHILDHOOD TRAUMA
TO BE WELL ADJUSTED
LATER IN LIFE..."

—MOON

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: Halloween night. A house that has been overly decorated with cheap Halloween decorations. Berkley, who is wearing a Pug dog costume, sits staring out the window in amazement. Gretel, who is dressed as a superhero, is tidying up. Dominique, who is dressed as a fashion-forward "wear-wolf," slams the door.)

DOMINIQUE: Good riddance! Who dresses up like a lamp, anyway?! What a dumb costume!

GRETEL: I liked it. She had a light bulb on top of her head, so it looked like she had a bright idea.

DOMINIQUE: You know what would have been a much better idea? Not dressing up like a dumb light bulb. That's almost as bad as the couple who went as ketchup and mustard.

GRETEL: I think it was supposed to be a metaphor.

DOMINIQUE: I'm sorry, but ketchup and mustard will never be a metaphor for anything, ever.

GRETEL: I was talking about the lamp.

DOMINIQUE: Don't even talk about the lamp. I'm upset enough about the lamp without you talking about the lamp. The least the lamp could have done is wear a very couture-looking shade.

BERKLEY: I'm still confused.

DOMINIQUE: Well, you should be. You've been living under a rock your entire life.

BERKLEY: Hey! Don't talk about me like that!

DOMINIQUE: Oh, what are you going to do about it? You have very limited mobility in that pug costume.

BERKLEY: *(Thinking.)* Well...I'll... *(Gets idea.)* Oh! I'll sit on your arm until it falls asleep! You'll be slightly uncomfortable for at least ten minutes. That will teach you!

DOMINIQUE: That will teach me not to give you any of this Halloween candy!

BERKLEY: (*Shouts.*) Hey! Watch your mouth! (*Pause. Shouts.*) Then wash your mouth! And then wash your mouth while watching yourself wash it!

DOMINIQUE: Whoa, slow down. And I wasn't speaking in metaphors. Unless you somehow forgot, I just wanted to remind you that we literally found you living under a large rock.

GRETEL: (*Nostalgic.*) Ah, I remember it like it was yesterday.

DOMINIQUE: It *was* yesterday.

GRETEL: Well, then, maybe that's why I remember it like that! Don't get fresh with me! I remember seeing little Berkley's face poking out from underneath that rock, and I remember saying to myself, "Oh, boy, I've never seen someone living under a rock before. I want to take you home and give you nice clothes and deodorant and access to a toothbrush so you don't smell like a dead, stinky trout." And that's exactly what I did... (*To Berkley.*) ...right after we spent several hours moving that boulder off of you.

DOMINIQUE: That was the worst part. This body is just not intended for manual labor.

BERKLEY: I'm just not sure how my family will take it when they go back to the rock that they put me under and see that I'm not there. I spent my whole life under that rock. It is going to be a definite adjustment.

DOMINIQUE: What did you eat down there?

BERKLEY: Mother would give make liquefied meals that I would drink through my crazy straw. My favorite was a shake made of mash potatoes and steak, medium-rare.

GRETEL: What does it matter how your steak was cooked if it got put in a blender?

BERKLEY: It matters! Medium-rare!

GRETEL: Okay, okay. I was just curious.

BERKLEY: I'm curious as to what my family will do with all that room that they will have down there now. Maybe they will install that hot tub they always wanted. Or maybe they

will get a dog to keep them company. (*Looks at herself.*) I suppose that would be somewhat ironic...

GRETEL: I don't think that is the definition of irony.

DOMINIQUE: Well...it's something.

BERKLEY: I'm just curious as to what all these children are doing running around dressed as ghosts and vampires and hotdog toppings. It's delicious and confusing!

DOMINIQUE: I told you, it's Halloween. Children go door to door and say, "Trick or treat!" Then you give them candy.

(*Pause.*)

BERKLEY: Why?

DOMINIQUE: Because that's just what you do.

BERKLEY: (*Ranting.*) That's not what I do. They didn't do anything to deserve any candies, so they will not get a single mashed-potato steak shake from me!

DOMINIQUE: Oh, you're so adorable when you get riled up. Yes, you are. Yes, you are.

BERKLEY: Don't patronize me. It's demeaning, and it still doesn't explain why I'm dressed as a dog.

GRETEL: To ward off the evil spirits. (*Like an evil spirit.*)
Oooooohhhh! Oooooohhhh!

BERKLEY: Why are you doing that?

GRETEL: I'm not entirely sure.

DOMINIQUE: We also dressed you up, Berkley, because you are pale...like, really pale. It was really starting to freak me out, and I don't want to be actually scared on Halloween. I'll leave that to those poor costume-store workers who have customers mob them with bad attitudes and five-percent-off coupons this time of year.

BERKLEY: I can't believe it.

DOMINIQUE: You better believe it. Holiday shoppers are out for blood—blood and savings. And on Halloween...bloody savings.

GRETEL: (*Like an evil spirit.*) Oooooohhhh! Oooooohhhh!

BERKLEY: Stop that!

GRETEL: *(Defeated.)* Okay.

BERKLEY: No, not that. There are some more children at the door! *(Panicking.)* What do we do?! What do we do?! I'll get the mace!

GRETEL: Uh...why do you have mace?

BERKLEY: Well, it's not actually mace. It's just a spray bottle that I filled with pepper and water. I assume it works the same...generally. I used to have a lot of fears living under a rock, but I'm working through them with grace and plenty of delicious food you keep giving me. What did you call that again?

GRETEL: Pork chops.

(Doorbell.)

BERKLEY: *(Panicking.)* Ahhh!

(Berkley dives under a pillow. Dominique opens the door, revealing Vampires 1-5.)

VAMPIRES 1-5: Trick or treat!

DOMINIQUE: *(To Vampires.)* Oh, how scary! And what are you supposed to be?

VAMPIRE 1: Duh! We're vampires.

VAMPIRE 2: *(To Dominique.)* I'm the classic Dracula-style vampire.

VAMPIRE 3: *(To Dominique.)* I'm a punk-Goth vampire.

VAMPIRE 4: *(To Dominique.)* I'm a wealthy socialite vampire.

VAMPIRE 5: *(To Dominique.)* I'm not exactly a vampire. I came as a giraffe and everyone else was dressed as a vampire and laughed at me, so I changed my costume, and now I'm a vampire giraffe. Roar!

VAMPIRE 1: *(To Dominique.)* And I'm obviously a beautiful new-age movie-glitter vampire.

DOMINIQUE: Ha! If you're beautiful, then I'm Joan Crawford! You get toothpaste. (*Hands Vampire 1 a tube of toothpaste.*) Everyone else, here is some candy. (*Hands Vampires 2-5 some candy.*) Now get out of my house, and you... (*Glares at Vampire 1.*) ...I want you to reevaluate your life. (*Pushes Vampires out and slams the door. Opens door. Shouts.*) By the way, I'm not really Joan Crawford.

[END OF FREEVIEW]