

SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

This sample is an excerpt - an appetiser, if you will - from a full Samuel French title.

This sample is just for you to try out, and it can't be used for performance, downloaded, printed or distributed in any way.

Take it for a whirl and see if it tickles your fancy!

For more information about licensing this or other shows, or to browse thousands more plays and theatre books to buy please visit our website.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

The Wonderful Story of Mother Goose

A Pantomime

Norman Robbins

Samuel French - London
New York - Toronto - Hollywood



© 1986 BY NORMAN ROBBINS

Rights of Performance by Amateurs are controlled by Samuel French Ltd, 52 Fitzroy Street, London W1P 6JR, and they, or their authorized agents, issue licences to amateurs on payment of a fee. **It is an infringement of the Copyright to give any performance or public reading of the play before the fee has been paid and the licence issued.**

The Royalty Fee indicated below is subject to contract and subject to variation at the sole discretion of Samuel French Ltd.

Basic fee for each and every
performance by amateurs Code K
in the British Isles

The Professional Rights in this play are controlled by SAMUEL FRENCH LTD.

The publication of this play does not imply that it is necessarily available for performance by amateurs or professionals, either in the British Isles or Overseas. Amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised in their own interests to apply to the appropriate agents for consent before starting rehearsals or booking a theatre or hall.

ISBN 0 573 06476 8

Please see page ix for further copyright information.

CHARACTERS

The Fairy Queen

Harmony, the good fairy

Discord, the wicked fairy

Clarence Creep, the village Squire

Jill Goose, the village belle

Colin, her sweetheart

Billy Goose, Jill's elder brother

Sage } the Squire's bailiffs

Onions }

Mother Goose, a poor widow

Priscilla, the magic goose

Chorus of **Villagers**, **Schoolchildren**, **Fairies**, **Babes**, etc.

PROLOGUE

The Fairy Queen's Bower

ACT I

- SCENE 1 The Village of Merrilea
- SCENE 2 A Quiet Street
- SCENE 3 The Village School
- SCENE 4 A Quiet Street
- SCENE 5 The Ballroom of Goose Grange

ACT II

- SCENE 1 The Grounds of Goose Grange
- SCENE 2 Outside Cheatem Hall
- SCENE 3 Beside the Witch's Pool
- SCENE 4 A Quiet Street
- SCENE 5 The Court of the Fairy Queen
- SCENE 6 Back in Merrilea
- SCENE 7 The Ballroom of Goose Grange and Finale

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Please read the note on page vi and the Author's Note on p. vii.

ACT I

- No. 1 **Villagers**
- No. 2 **Jill, Colin**
- No. 3 **Billy**
- No. 4 **Mother Goose, Jill, Billy, Colin, Sage, Onions, Villagers**
- No. 5 **Jill, Colin, Babes**
- No. 6 **Jill, Colin**
- No. 7 **Villagers**
- No. 8 **Billy, Priscilla**
- No. 9 **Company**
- No. 10 **Ballet. Harmony, Fairies**

ACT II

- No. 11 **Villagers**
- No. 12 **Colin, Jill**
- No. 13 **Colin, Jill**
- No. 14 **Mother Goose, Men**
- No. 15 **Ballet. Fairies**
- No. 16 **Dance. Babes, Juniors**
- No. 17 (optional) **Company**
- No. 18 (optional) **Dance. Babes or Juniors**
- No. 19 **Company**

MUSIC

The choice of songs and dance music is left to the individual director. Please read the notice below most carefully:

A licence issued by Samuel French Ltd to perform this play does NOT include permission to use any copyright music in the performance. The notice printed below on behalf of the Performing Right Society should be carefully read.

The following statement concerning the use of music is printed here on behalf of the Performing Right Society Ltd, by whom it was supplied

The permission of the owner of the performing right in copyright music must be obtained before any public performance may be given, whether in conjunction with a play or sketch or otherwise, and this permission is just as necessary for amateur performances as for professional. The majority of copyright musical works (other than oratorios, musical plays and similar dramatico-musical works) are controlled in the British Commonwealth by the PERFORMING RIGHT SOCIETY LTD, 29-33 BERNERS STREET, LONDON W1P 4AA.

The Society's practice is to issue licences authorizing the use of its repertoire to the proprietors of premises at which music is publicly performed, or, alternatively, to the organizers of musical entertainments, but the Society does not require payment of fees by performers as such. Producers or promoters of plays sketches, etc., at which music is to be performed, during or after the play or sketch, should ascertain whether the premises at which their performances are to be given are covered by a licence issued by the Society, and if they are not, should make application to the Society for particulars as to the fee payable.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The presentation of this pantomime should cause little difficulty to experienced or inexperienced groups. Everything has been kept to the confines of the normal Community Hall, and lighting and props kept to a minimum. Every full stage scene is preceded by a lane-cloth scene, thus allowing plenty of time for setting up behind.

Costuming is traditional children's story-book type, with the exception of the character of Mother Goose, who, once she becomes rich, can wear almost anything outrageous, no matter what period or style.

Additional songs and dances may be added at the discretion of the director, or can be omitted from several parts of the script.

It is suggested, in the Prologue, that the attendant Fairies, etc., are played by the Babes, thus leaving the Junior and Senior Chorus members free for the opening of Scene One. In the Schoolroom scene *all* Chorus members are involved. If men are not available to play the two Evil Spirits of the Mirror in the Ballroom scene, two girls may be used, in which case, dress them in leotards and filmy draperies and omit Mother Goose's line, "I like the supporting pieces." The rest of the show should be self-evident.

The traditional "slap-stick" used in the Schoolroom scene is easily made with two thin strips of wood . . . about 18 inches long, and 1 inch in width . . . secured at one end with tape to create a grip, and a sliver of foam rubber or sponge inserted at the bottom of the V that is formed. About two inches down from the other ends, an elastic cord is fixed to hold the two ends from flying too far apart. When the stick is slapped on a solid surface, it should make a loud noise. If you have not the time or inclination to make one of these, an old-fashioned tawse can be simply made by using a 1½-inch wide piece of buckram, covered with dark felt, and the ends fringed to a depth of about three inches. Both look effective when striking someone, and neither do any harm.

Keep the pace brisk, the music bright, and above all, enjoy yourselves.

Norman Robbins

For

Martin Phillips

A small recognition of his invaluable assistance to me over the years with
research and assembly

and

Dathanne (Kerby) E. Kerber

of Illinois, USA, who, to the best of my knowledge, was the first Principal
Boy in America in an all-American production of a British Pantomime

COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

(See also page ii)

This play is fully protected under the Copyright Laws of the British Commonwealth of Nations, the United States of America and all countries of the Berne and Universal Copyright Conventions.

All rights, including Stage, Motion Picture, Radio, Television, Public Reading, and Translation into Foreign Languages, are strictly reserved.

No part of this publication may lawfully be reproduced in ANY form or by any means—photocopying, typescript, recording (including video-recording), manuscript, electronic, mechanical, or otherwise—or be transmitted or stored in a retrieval system, without prior permission.

Licences for amateur performances are issued subject to the understanding that it shall be made clear in all advertising matter that the audience will witness an amateur performance; that the names of the authors of the plays shall be included on all announcements and on all programmes; and that the integrity of the authors' work will be preserved.

The Royalty Fee is subject to contract and subject to variation at the sole discretion of Samuel French Ltd.

In Theatres or Halls seating Six Hundred or more the fee will be subject to negotiation.

In Territories Overseas the fee quoted in this Acting Edition may not apply. A fee will be quoted on application to our local authorized agent, or if there is no such agent, on application to Samuel French Ltd, London.

VIDEO RECORDING OF AMATEUR PRODUCTIONS

Please note that the copyright laws governing video-recording are extremely complex and that it should not be assumed that any play may be video-recorded *for whatever purpose* without first obtaining the permission of the appropriate agents. The fact that a play is published by Samuel French Ltd does not indicate that video rights are available or that Samuel French Ltd controls such rights.

PROLOGUE*

The Fairy Queen's Bower

The CURTAIN rises on a lane cloth depicting the floral bower of the Fairy Queen. This should be lit softly in delicate pastel shades

The Fairy Queen herself is C, resplendent in glittering gown and silver crown. In front of her, and to the R two small pixies kneel supporting a large golden book. This is open. R of the Fairy Queen is the Fairy Harmony. To each side of the two proud principals, fairies, pixies and elves are in tableaux

Fairy Queen (graciously) Once more the yearly task we face
Of choosing from the human race
Deserving persons to reward
With fairy gifts. Do all accord?

All agree with nods and smiles

(With satisfaction) So be it. Now, as well we know,
Full details of all deeds below
On Earth are entered in this book.
(She indicates it)
Both Good and Bad. (To Harmony) Come. Take a look.
Call out those worthy of our blessing.
(A trifle impatiently) Quickly now, for time is pressing.

Harmony quickly steps to the book and reads

Harmony There's Widow Twankey and her son, Aladdin. Richard Whittington. Bo-Peep . . . Boy Blue . . . Red Riding Hood. Two tiny Babes lost in a wood. (She looks appealingly at the Fairy Queen) All sorely needing fairy aid.

Fairy Queen (nodding) I quite agree. Let plans be made
To change their fortunes. Thank you, dear.
Now close the book until next year.
(She turns away as though to exit)

Harmony (giving a gasp as she is about to close the book) Your Majesty. One moment, pray. Oh, dear . . . I scarce know what to say.

All look at her in surprise

Some careless writer long ago has mixed two entries up, and
so
For years, alas, we've failed to see our help's been needed
desperately

All react with dismay

Fairy Queen (*frowning*) It has? By whom? Read out their name.

Harmony Poor Mother Goose. A widowed dame
Of Nursery Land. Her awful plight demands our skills
this very night.
A poor, hard-working, loving mother . . .

Discord enters L with a sneer on her face

Discord And a grasping fool. Like ev'ry other.

Everyone reacts

Fairy Queen (*with annoyance*) How dare you intrude within my bower?
Begone, foolish Discord, or lose your power.

I've no need in my Court for creatures like you.
Discord Your pardon, my Queen . . . but I think that you *do*.
Each year you give blessings to mortals below,
But no one *deserves* them, as well you must know.
All mortals are greedy. They're selfish and vain.
Yet you grant them wishes again and again.
If I were in your shoes, I'd care not a jot
For all their entreaties. I'd poison the lot.
(*She glares at the audience*)

Everyone reacts with dismay

Harmony (*indignantly*) Your Majesty . . .

Fairy Queen (*holding up her hand*) Silence. Enough I have heard. (*To Discord*) For those words you're banished.

Discord tries to speak

(*Sharply*) No. Don't say a word.
Your vile accusations we've suffered too long.
We're tired of your lying.
Discord They're *not* lies. You're wrong.
(*She stamps her foot*)
Just give me a chance and I'll prove what I claim.
You'll rue your harsh judgement.
Fairies Why, shame on you. Shame.
Fairy Queen (*coldly*) Very well, then. This matter we'll settle for good.
We'll see if I'm wrong and you're "misunderstood".
To Earth you shall go, where your task shall be this . . .
To persuade . . . (*she thinks*) Mother Goose that self-int'rest
is bliss.

There is a surprised reaction from the others

Succeed and my crown will be placed on *your* head.
But fail . . . and I promise . . . you'll wish you were dead.

Discord (*delightedly*) There's no fear of failure. I'll do it, you'll see.
Your crown shall be mine and you'll bow down to *me*.
You may as well face it and throw in the tow'l.
I'll tempt Mother Goose . . . by fair means *or foul*.

Discord gives a truly terrible laugh and exits quickly

The assembly look most concerned

Harmony (*half afraid*) Your Majesty . . . surely you meant but to jest?
Poor, kind, Mother Goose, has been *too long* oppressed.
What chance will she stand against Discord's great power?
I doubt she'll hold out for the space of one hour.
And pardon my asking . . . but was it quite wise
To make Discord the offer of such a great prize?

Fairy Queen (*smiling*) Though it may seem in anger I spoke without
thought,
My aim is that Discord a lesson be taught.
Don't worry, dear Harmony. She'll meet her match.
For to aid Mother Goose, now a rare scheme we'll hatch.
To her cottage on Earth, take Priscilla our Goose.
Give her "certain instructions" . . . and then turn her loose.
We'll show Fairy Discord that good *will* prevail.
Now off on your mission . . . and on with the tale.

The assembled group smile with relief and exit in a flurry as

The Lights quickly fade to a Black-out

ACT I

SCENE 1

The Village of Merrilea

A typical pantomime village setting of quaint houses, cottages and shops, set against a backdrop of distant hills and thick forest. UR is a tiny, ramshackle cottage with a badly thatched roof and a practical door. This is the home of Mother Goose and her family. Partial views of other buildings can be seen DR, UL and DR

When the scene begins, it is a bright, sunny morning and the Villagers are singing and dancing happily

Song 1

At the end of the song, one of the boys looks off UL and calls out a warning

Boy Look out, everyone. Here comes Clarence Creep, the wicked Squire.

Everyone moves aside as Clarence Creep enters with a swagger. He is dressed in Hunting Pink and carries a riding crop. He moves DS

Clarence Three cheers for me. Hip, hip . . .

Villagers (loudly) Boo.

Clarence (with annoyance) Silence, you pathetic pack of polymorphic peasantry. (He glares at them) So that's the way you greet your new Lord and Master, is it? Just for that, I've a good mind not to tell you the good news. (He adopts an aloof posture)

Everyone looks interested

Girl Good news?

Clarence Yes. As from today, I'm putting your rents up by a pound a week.

All react in dismay

Boy That's not good news.

Clarence It is to *me*. (He chortles) That'll teach you to respect your betters. Now clear off, the lot of you . . . before I lose my temper.

The Villagers exit with much booing

(Smirking) And now to do something *really* nasty. According to the record books, that feeble-minded old faggot, Mother Goose, owes more rent money than the rest of the villagers put together. If it hadn't been for that pretty little daughter of hers, she'd have been tossed into the street

years ago. But I'm not so soft-hearted as my late brother. Unless I get the money today, out she goes. Lock, stock and barrel. (*He marches up to the cottage door and knocks loudly*) Come out, you pugnacious, pea-brained parochial parasite. (*He turns away, rubbing his hands in anticipation*)

The cottage door opens and Jill appears. She is a very pretty girl in clean but shabby clothing

Jill (*sweetly*) Good-morning. (*She recognizes his back*) Oh . . .

Clarence (*turning quickly to face her*) Mistress Jill. (*He leers*) How delightful to see you.

Jill (*quickly*) If you're looking for mother, Squire Creep, I'm afraid you're out of luck. (*She moves past him*) My brother Billy has just taken her down to the Church jumble sale.

Clarence (*aside*) Yes . . . and it's the best place for the old crackpot. (*He gives a false laugh*) Your mother, my dear? Why on earth should I be looking for *her*? (*He follows her*) No, no. As a matter of fact . . . *you* are the reason for my surprise visit.

Jill Me?

Clarence (*leering*) This very evening, in my stately home, Cheatem Hall, I'm holding a little *soirée*. (*Condescendingly*) That's French for party, in case you don't know . . . and I wondered if you'd care to attend? (*Airily*) All the *best* people will be there. The Duke and his Duchess . . . the Baron and his Baroness . . . the Vicar and his . . . er . . . *Vixen*. (*Smugly*) Oh, yes. It's going to be a very posh "do", I can assure you.

Jill (*puzzled*) Then why ask me? I'm only a poor village girl.

Clarence True. And of course, you haven't a scrap of breeding in you . . . but when it comes to *beauty*, why, there's not a girl in the county to equal you (*He drops to one knee in front of her*)

Curly-locks, curly-locks, wilt thou be mine?

Thou shalt not clean dishes, nor yet feed the swine.

But sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam,

And feed upon strawberries, sugar and cream.

Jill (*trying not to laugh*) Aren't you forgetting something, Squire Creep? I'm already engaged to your nephew, Colin. As soon as he arrives back from London we're going to name the day.

Clarence (*jumping up in a temper*) So . . . you spurn my advances, do you? Very well, then. As soon as I've summoned my bailiffs, it's into the streets with you. We'll see how long it takes for you to come to your senses. (*He calls loudly*) Bailiffs. Bailiffs. (*Fuming*) Never around when I need them. (*He calls again*) Bailiffs.

He exits angrily DR still shouting

Jill (*worried*) Oh, dear. I'd better find mother and warn her.

Colin enters UL a broad smile on his face. He wears tunic and tights, and carries a stick over his shoulder from which hangs a knotted bag

Colin Jill.

Jill (*turning and seeing him*) Colin.

They hurry to each other and embrace

Oh, thank goodness you're back.

Colin (*teasing her*) Don't say you actually missed me these past few weeks? (*He tosses his stick and bag to the ground*)

Jill Of course I've missed you . . . but that's not the only reason I'm glad to see you. It's that wicked uncle of yours again.

Colin (*groaning*) Oh, no. What's he been up to *this* time? He's been nothing but trouble since he arrived in the village.

Jill He came round here a few minutes ago and asked me to marry him. Then when I refused, he threatened to have us thrown out of the cottage. What are we going to do?

Colin Don't worry, Jill. As long as you keep paying the rent, he can't do a thing.

Jill That's just the trouble. We *haven't* been paying it. (*Sadly*) What little money we have is spent on food, and there's hardly enough of *that* for us to live on. (*She turns away*) Oh, Colin. I'm so miserable.

Colin (*smiling*) Cheer up. You've got nothing to worry about. You won't be turned out of your cottage, I promise.

Jill How can you say that? We're all penniless.

Colin Not any more. During my stay in London, I got a job in Fitzwarren's Store. Looking after the place whilst the Alderman and his daughter were abroad. When they came back he paid me a *hundred pounds*. Now I can pay all the rent money your mother owes and there'll still be enough left for us to get married with.

Jill (*with delight*) Oh, Colin. That's the best news I've heard in my entire life. I can't wait to tell mother. She'll be so relieved.

Colin I can't imagine Uncle Clarence being very pleased about it, though. (*He grins*) *He'll* be furious.

Jill What a pity *he's* the Squire of Merrilea. I don't understand why your father didn't make a Will leaving everything to you.

Colin No more do I. But Uncle Clarence turned up and claimed everything was his, and I'm still under age . . . (*He shrugs*) Still . . . I'm not going to worry myself about it. I may not have wealth and rank, but I do have *you* and that's enough to keep me happy for the rest of my life.

Jill and Colin sing

Song 2

At the end of the song they exit into the cottage

As they do so, Billy Goose enters DL. He is dressed in very "loud" clothing, patched and ragged, and carries a large teddy bear

Billy (*singing*) Me and my teddy bear . . . he's got no eyes and he's got no hair . . . (*He sees the audience*) Ooooooh. Hallo, boys and girls. (*Assumed half-hearted reaction*) Is anybody there? (*Loudly*) Hallo, boys and girls. (*Warmer reaction*) Oh, *dear*. Shall I go off and come back on again? (*Disgustedly*) You can do better than *that*, can't you? I mean . . . you've not all got sore throats? You *have*? Well . . . I can soon fix that. (*He gets*

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Please visit our website to buy the full script, apply for a license to perform this show (if it's available), or to explore hundreds of similar titles.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

To be the first to know about new books, licensing releases, and enjoy other theatre-related larks, do follow us on our spangley social media channels.



Samuel French London



SamuelFrenchLtd