

**A
MIDSUMMER'S
FEAST**



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BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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A MIDSUMMER'S FEAST

FARCE. In this play within a play, a theatre group must perform a horrendous adaptation of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" called "A Midsummer's Feast." The play's plotline focuses on a group of fortune-seekers determined to find a hidden cache of diamonds. In order to locate the diamonds, the explorers must contact a tribe of jungle cannibals. The only problem is that the cannibal chief cannot speak English and his English translator only speaks Shakespearean English, which the explorers can't understand. The explorers must then elicit the help of an English professor who can translate Shakespearean English into modern English. And as if the play wasn't bad enough, the cast must endure a series of mishaps on opening night. The Professor goes unconscious, Tom goes mute from laryngitis, and the Guard is accidentally electrocuted. In the end, no one is left except the Prompter, who must play all the parts in order to save the show!

Performance Time: Approximately 40 minutes.

CHARACTERS

(2 M, 4 F, 7 flexible, opt. extras)

TOM: Actor with a touch of laryngitis and fond childhood memories of reading "Jack and the Beanstalk"; flexible.

HIPPOLYTA: Has to translate language of cannibals into Shakespearean English.

HELENA: Fortune-seeker; female.

QUINCE: Director of play, "A Mid-Summer's Feast"; flexible.

BOTTOM: Flexible.

PROFESSOR PEASEBLOSSOM: Translates Shakespearean English into modern English; female.

CHIEF: Chief of the cannibals; male.

GUARD: Walks and acts like a hip hop star; carries a pole spear; flexible.

ATTENDANT 1, 2: Non-speaking; flexible.

JOE: Pizza delivery guy.

PROMPTER: Knows all the lines to the play; female.

LIGHTING TECHNICIAN: Always a bit off cue; flexible.

EXTRAS (Optional): As tribe members.

NOTE: Tom and Bottom could both be females. They can have other character names from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* such as Cobweb, Moth, or Mustardseed.

SETTING

Theatre stage with one tree representing a jungle setting.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

SCENE 1: Theatre, one day before opening night. On stage there is a tree with a noticeable inscription of a "V" on it.

SCENE 2: Theatre, the next day, minutes before the performance. On stage there is the same tree but it doesn't have the inscription of a "V" on it.

PROPS

Pole spear
Wallet
Rope
Pizza box
Pen and pad

SOUND EFFECTS

Thunder
Farting noise
Soft background music

**"NOW THIS NOTE
IS FOR THE WHOLE CAST...
I DON'T KNOW
IF IT HAS OCCURRED TO YOU,
BUT THIS IS A DRAMA...
NOT A COMEDY."**

-QUINCE

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: A theatre. There is a tree with a noticeable inscription of a "V" on it to represent a jungle.)

QUINCE: (Offstage.) All right, let's finish off this rehearsal once and for all. Let's go with the first scene for the last time, and no stops this time.

(From offstage there is adlib grumbling from the actors such as "I just want to go home," "Let's get it right this time," "It's a tricky scene," "I hope everyone gets their lines this time," etc. Lights go down and back up. Enter Professor, Tom, Bottom, and Helena.)

PROMPTER: (To Helena.) Not yet.

HELENA: Oh, that's right.

(Helena has entered too soon and is taken offstage by the Stage Manager.)

PROFESSOR: (In character.) Boy, this jungle heat is really getting to me. Let's rest here.

PROMPTER: (To Tom, from wing.) Good idea.

TOM: (Tom's voice is slightly strained. He is coming down with laryngitis.) I know my line, thank you. It's just my voice. It's a little strained tonight. (Coughs.) Good idea.

BOTTOM: (Whining.) Sheesh, how much longer now? Where are the diamonds?

TOM: (Mimics Bottom.) "Sheesh, how much longer now? Where are the diamonds?" Where's our guide? (Calls.) Helena. (To others.) Some guide we ended up with. So, are you ready with the Shakespeare lingo, Professor Peaseblossom?

PROFESSOR: That's what I've been hired for. And should I get stuck, I have my trusty dictionary right here.

TOM: That's good too, Professor. Now where in the heck is she? *(Calls.)* Helena.

(Helena enters.)

HELENA: I'm coming. I got stuck in the bog back there. This place looks familiar. We must be close now. Anybody see a "V" inscription on an old Mahogany tree?

BOTTOM: A "V" on an old mahogany tree?

HELENA: I told you at the beginning of this expedition to look for a "V" on an old mahogany tree.

TOM: Do you mean to tell me you didn't know about the "V" on the tree? That's what we've been looking for all day.

BOTTOM: Well, sorry. I'll start looking now. Better late than never. A "V," eh? *(Turns around and stares at the tree with the "V" inscription.)*

TOM: You're nothing but a nuisance, you know that?

BOTTOM: Speak for yourself.

TOM: "Speak for myself." Will you listen to him? By the way, do you know why you're even with us on this quest?

BOTTOM: I'm one of the selected few, that's why.

TOM: Nope. It's because your father's funded this whole expedition. He said he'd foot the entire bill on condition that we take you along with us. What do you think of that?

PROMPTER: *(From wing.)* Ouch, now that really hurts.

BOTTOM: Ouch, now that really hurts.

TOM: Well, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you.

PROMPTER: *(From wing.)* Well, you did.

BOTTOM: Well, you did.

TOM: I hit a tender spot, haven't I?

BOTTOM: Yes, you have.

PROMPTER: *(From wing.)* Ouch, ouch, ouch.

BOTTOM: Ouch, ouch, ouch. *(Note: Bottom pouts until the Chief and Hippolyta enter.)*

TOM: So, now that I've gotten that off my chest, what's next on the agenda, Helena? Are you ready to give us the next piece of the puzzle?

HELENA: Not until we find the "V" on the tree. I think we're pretty close.

TOM: Why don't you clue us in a little? Why do you keep us in suspense?

HELENA: I don't want to overwhelm you with too much at once.

TOM: Well, you can at least tell us why we brought Shakespeare along with us. That's what's been baffling me all along.

HELENA: Okay, since we're close to our destination, I'll fill you in a little more. Professor Peaseblossom has been invited because she is to interpret the Old English language from a one Hippolyta. So here's the way it goes...Hippolyta translates the tribal language from her chief tribesman in Old English and the Professor, here, translates the Old English in plain English for us if an interpretation is needed.

PROFESSOR: So the Chief does not know any English, I suppose?

HELENA: That's right.

PROFESSOR: Now I know what my mission is here. But why can't this one Hippolyta just translate what the Chief says in plain contemporary English?

HELENA: That's because she's never been exposed to the present day English language. They say she was raised by a pack of wolves and later seized by a chief, who, in turn, was later defeated by another chief warrior who is presently betrothed to her.

TOM: So this chief guy is Hippolyta's man, so to speak.

HELENA: That's right.

PROFESSOR: Yes, but where does the Old English come into play?

HELENA: The only language that Hippolyta has ever been taught is Old English by the previous chief who had in his

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possession "The Complete Works of Shakespeare." As it turns out, both she and the previous chief have never been exposed to our Western society and the English language as we know it today.

TOM: Okay, so let me get this straight: We meet this Hippolyta woman and her chief; we correspond with her about how we go about getting these diamonds; she translates what we say to the Chief; the Chief replies; she translates the Chief's lingo for us into Old English, and Shakespeare, here, translates for us if it's necessary. Is that it?

HELENA: Yes, and sometimes Hippolyta knows the Chief's purpose and intent, so she speaks on his behalf without having him say anything.

TOM: Okay, so sometimes she knows what the Chief's thinking, so she speaks his mind; sometimes she translates his lingo for us; and Shakespeare, here, sometimes translates the Old English so we can understand. And if all is clear and understood, we're led to the diamonds by the chief and his better half, we take the lot, and, bingo, mission accomplished.

HELENA: Something like that.

TOM: Something like that? What do you mean?

HELENA: Something is to be traded for the diamonds. You know – tit for tat.

TOM: Oh, the plot thickens here, does it? Well, what's to be traded for the diamonds?

HELENA: You'll see.

TOM: Well, thank you, oh-great-guide-leader, for the additional suspense.

PROFESSOR: Just what are we getting ourselves into here? Have you been acquainted with the Chief and Hippolyta before?

HELENA: No. I only know of them and where they live.

PROFESSOR: What are they like?

HELENA: Well, I know they're quite hospitable.

TOM: And what do they look like?

HELENA: I have photographs of them and some detailed descriptions—

(Thunder.)

PROFESSOR: What was that?

TOM: That was thunder, and not a cloud in the sky.

PROFESSOR: That's really strange.

HELENA: That means we're very close. *(Offstage the Tribe Members chant "Boom-ba, boom-ba," etc. Enter Hippolyta, the Chief, the Guard, who is carrying a pole spear, and Attendants 1, 2 from SR. Guard walks and acts like he is a hip hop star. Chief trembles and looks up to the heavens.)* It's them. This is the place. I knew it.

(Tom, Bottom, and Professor simultaneously adlib "What do we do?" "Shouldn't we say 'hi' or something?" "That chief guy looks pretty intimidating," etc.)

PROFESSOR: Why is he looking up and shaking like that?

HELENA: That's the way he communicates with his god.

(There is more thunder but the thunder cue is noticeably late, and as a result, the Chief is standing looking up and shaking a little more than usual waiting for the late cue. Thunder. Professor, Tom, and Bottom simultaneously adlib "What was that?" "Is that ever loud!" "I think he's ready to say something," etc.)

CHIEF: Cooomba!

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)* "Silence awhile."

(Chief approaches.)

CHIEF: *(To Helena.)* Whoot whoot yum yum yooo. *(Holds his hand to his heart.)* Boom boom loopeee loopeee looooo

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(Puts out his pinkie finger to indicate one.) Pinky pink sloopy
sloop sloooo. *(Puts out five fingers to indicate many.)*

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)*

"This night I hold an accustomed feast
Whereto you have invited many a guest
Such as I love, and you among the store:
One more, most welcome, makes my number more."

HELENA: What's he mean by that?

PROFESSOR: In short, it means he would like to include you
among us as part of his feast.

TOM: Oh, well isn't that a nice gesture.

HELENA: *(To Hippolyta.)* Tell him, "No thanks. I'm a trifle
bloated, so, ah, just giveth me the diamonds and I'll, ah, take
my leave."

HIPPOLYTA: *(To Chief, translates.)*

"Yum yum tooom
Bling bling
Toot toot a loooooo."

CHIEF: Yum Yum chow.

Supeee stooooooooo.

HIPPOLYTA: *(To Helena. Translates.)* "You cannot take your
leave any longer, for thou hast been selected to be his sweets
after sup."

PROFESSOR: *(To Helena.)* In other words, he wants to eat you
as his special dessert.

TOM: And if we follow the logic, that means we'll be his main
dish. We're going to be made into mincemeat.

HELENA: *(To Chief.)* Now wait a minute. I brought your
meal right here. *(Indicates Tom, Bottom, and Professor.)* You
can fatten up these three and eat them to your heart's
content. A deal is a deal. You got your three nice succulent
meals, and, in turn, I get the diamonds.

TOM: You dirty rotten dog. I knew right from the start you
weren't to be trusted.

PROFESSOR: *(To Helena.)* I hope he eats you alive.

CHIEF: Coomba!

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)* "Silence awhile!"

(Silence.)

TOM: *(To Professor.)* What's he up to?

PROFESSOR: I don't know.

CHIEF: Coomba!

(Chief approaches Tom.)

TOM: Easy, there, chieftain. Now, take it easy.

CHIEF: Scoobie doooobie.

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)* "I shall desire you of more acquaintance."

TOM: Oh, well, what an honor!

CHIEF: Fruity loops

(Feels Tom's arms and legs.)

Loopy snoops

Yum yum baaaaaaaaa. *(Licks Tom's arm.)*

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)*

"Thou limbs excel all men past all compare,

You are not the flower of courtesy,

But I'll warrant thee as palatable as a lamb."

TOM: *(To Professor.)* What's he mean by "as palatable as a lamb."

PROFESSOR: He means you'll be as tasty as a lamb.

TOM: Now look here, Chief, let's make a deal. I don't want the diamonds anymore. If you let me go, I'll let my friends know about you. A lot of them would love to be eaten...alive even. And they'll bring their friends, too. Maybe I'll come, too... *(To others.)* I don't think he likes the compromise. Let's get out of here!

(Helena, Professor, Bottom, and Tom exit running SL.)

CHIEF: Sling a deee

A bing bang booooo.

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)* "I'll follow you... *(Chief, Hippolyta, Guard, and Attendants 1, 2 chase after them and exit SL. From offstage.)* "...through bog. Through bush, through brake,
through briar
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire:
And neigh and bark and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like a horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn."

(Chief, Hippolyta, Guard and Attendants 1, 2 enter in that order from SR.)

CHIEF: Zoom zoom zoom
Billy boom.

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)*
"He goes before me, and still he dares me on:
When I come where he calls then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heeled than I:
I follow fast, but faster he did fly."

CHIEF: Aloooo boomba zoooo
Aloooo peek a booooo.

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)*
"Speak again, you run away, thou coward art thou fled
Speak! Where dost thou hide thy head?"

TOM: *(From offstage SL.)* Come on. Let's hide here.

CHIEF: Peep Ohhhhhh
Booobeee sooooo peeeppee deeeeee.

HIPPOLYTA: *(As they begin to exit SL, she translates.)*
"A voice. Oh, ho coward.
Thou mockest me, thou shalt buy this dear.
I'll follow your voice
If ever thy face by daylight see,
By day's approach look to be visited."

(They exit SL. Enter Tom from SR.)

TOM: That's it. I'm a goner. Who would've thought this is the way I'd meet my Waterloo. I need to write a note for those I leave behind. *(Writes.)* "Dear friends and family, pretty soon I'll been eaten by cannibals, so I'd like to take this time to say goodbye to my mother, Martha, my brother, Dorothy, my sister, Jeff, and to Father Abbott, too. Amen. Goodbye, goodbye..."

(Enter Professor, Helena, and Bottom.)

PROFESSOR: Tom, are you okay?

TOM: Maybe for a couple of minutes longer.

HELENA: We thought they started feasting on you.

TOM: Since when did you have a change of heart?

HELENA: Well, I'm sympathetic toward your predicament, which is also mine as of late.

TOM: Funny how things change when it's personal. But let's stop the yapping.

PROFESSOR: Yes. We need to think this through and figure out a plan.

(Enter Chief from SR.)

CHIEF: Zip a dee dooo daaa

Zip a dee daaaai.

HELENA: *(To others.)* Quick! Let's go this way!

(They attempt to exit SL. From SL, Hippolyta enters with Attendants 1, 2, who are carrying rope.)

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)*

"Halt! I will approach thee with this vine.

Halt! I say, as I proceed to bind you to that tree."

TOM: Look, I have a very good friend of mine back home and he's very plump – plumper than all of us put together. You can have him in exchange for me. A 2-for-1 kind of deal.

Please, here, I'll show you a picture... *(Starts to pull out his wallet.)*

HIPPOLYTA: We will be deaf to pleading and excuses.

Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase out abuses.

Therefore, use none.

TOM: Please, I'm begging you, spare me. *(Indicates Helena.)*

Look at Helena over there. She's a little juicier than I am.

Please...

CHIEF: Zippy dooo

Ma ma rooooo.

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)* "Hold your tongue, you whining mammet."

TOM: "Whining mammet"?

PROFESSOR: *(Translates.)* He means, "Stop your whining, you cry baby."

HIPPOLYTA: And now without ado,

Let us dispute with thee of thy estate.

TOM: What's she mean by that?

PROFESSOR: *(Translates.)* She means, "Let us discuss your situation with you."

TOM: Oh well, it can't be any good.

HIPPOLYTA: Bind you we shall to that tree,

And tear thee joint by joint,

And strew thy limbs to these thirsty warriors.

The time and our intent are savage wild,

More fierce and more inexorable far

Than any tigers or the roaring sea.

TOM: *(In denial.)* I get it now. This isn't really happening.

This is all about that fairy tale "Jack in the Beanstalk." You

know... where the giant eats Jack's mom. And the nice

thing about it is it's a fairy tale and it isn't really happening

because, well, because I've gone back in time and my mom

is reading me "Jack and the Beanstalk" as a bedtime story...

CHIEF: *(To Attendants 1, 2.)* To tooooo

Toot sweeeeeeee.

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)* "Seize them expeditiously.

Bind him and spell entrance her.
We shall commence our solemnities,
First, starting with thee."

(Attendants 1, 2 tie Tom to the tree. They put Helena in a trance and force Professor and Bottom to sit beside Tom. The following dialogue is simultaneous. Helena is on her back with her feet and arms stiffly in the air.)

HELENA: Help. They've put me in a trance and I can't move, really. Help. I'm dying in a trance. They put a spell on me. I'm fading away, fading away, fading away, fading away...
TOM: Yes, that's what's happening. This is a story about "Jack and the Beanstalk." "Once upon a time there lived..."

(Chief, Hippolyta, and Attendants 1, 2 gather around the tree. The Chief begins to chant and then Hippolyta and Attendants 1, 2 chime in. As they chant and circle around the tree, Tom lifts up the tree from the stage floor, spoiling the illusion.)

CHIEF: *(Chants.)* Kooo-ba, kooo-ba, kooo-ba, kooo-ba, kooo-ba, kooo-ba, kooo-ba... *(The whole tribe chimes in with "Kooo-ba, kooo-ba..."and they continue chanting for awhile. Then suddenly.)* Hooooo, hooooo, hooooo.

(The others stop chanting and circling around the tree. There is dead silence. The Chief starts to shake and looks up to the heavens to cue thunder. Obviously, the thunder is supposed to be heard but isn't. Quince gets up from his seat in the audience.)

QUINCE: Okay, that's enough. Let's stop there. Lighting Tech, where's the thunder? We need the thunder.

LIGHTING TECH: Sorry. Sometimes the CD skips, and it's hard to set it again.

QUINCE: Well, fix it! We can't have the Chief on stage shaking and turning all different shades while he waits for the techs to get it together. We need the thunder.

LIGHTING TECH: I'll get on it right away.

QUINCE: Now, this note is for the whole cast...I don't know if it has occurred to you, but this is a drama...not a comedy. Oh, sure, it has a few light moments here and there. But that's just what they are. This play is based on a true story and the experience needs to be chilling. Don't forget, these people are going to be eaten alive. You make it look like they're on a Sunday picnic. The audience needs to be on the edge of their seats. Their comfort zone needs to be...violated. So play it that way. All right, here are some notes starting from the beginning of the scene...Helena you came in too soon at the opening.

HELENA: I know. I keep forgetting. I see all the others enter and I just follow.

QUINCE: For show time tomorrow night, do not enter prematurely?

HELENA: You bet. No more premature entrances.

QUINCE: Now, we come to you, Bottom. When Tom says... "Do you mean to tell me you didn't know about the 'V' on the tree?" ...you turn around, and you're staring right at the only tree with the "V". You can't do that. Look out into the audience and search for it. Like this. (*He demonstrates.*) Don't forget that that tree represents the whole jungle. You can't look at that "V" and then act like you never noticed it. It looks pretentious.

BOTTOM: You know, I didn't even notice that that tree had a "V" on it.

QUINCE: Well, behold, it does.

BOTTOM: That's clever, you know. It's a great example of dramatic irony. You see, the audience knows about the tree with the "V" and the players don't. The audience knows more about the characters than the characters know about themselves. Dramatic irony.

QUINCE: That's brilliant, Bottom. Thank you for the lesson.

BOTTOM: You know, come to think of it...

QUINCE: Bottom!

BOTTOM: ...that "V" is a very symbolic "V" because it also—

QUINCE: Mr. Bottom!

BOTTOM: Yes, Mr. Quince...?

QUINCE: Save it, okay.

BOTTOM: Yes, sir.

QUINCE: Thank you.

QUINCE: Now, as for the Guard...you enter with the tribe like some kind of hip hop superstar. Come in with more intimidation—be more regimental-like. And then stand on guard with a very stiff posture. You keep shifting your weight from one foot to the other.

GUARD: It's a little tiring, but I should be able to handle it.

QUINCE: Thank you. Now we come to you, Chief. You missed a whole page of dialogue when you first entered.

CHIEF: Yes, I know. I used the dialogue that should've been in the third thunder cue and not in the second. I should've said, "Soooooeeee samba doooooo" instead of "coooomba."

HIPPOLYTA: That's right. Now I know why I missed the lines, "How now spirits, whither wander you?" the lines directed to the Professor. You know the lines, "Either I mistaken your shape and making quite, Or are you the shrewd knavish sprite."

PROFESSOR: That's right, and I say, "Oh, no, you're mistaken. I'm not that kind of knave. I love the maidens," and so on.

QUINCE: Can you make a note of that?

CHIEF: Consider it done.

QUINCE: Thank you. Now on a good note—and we may as well celebrate some strong points in the first scene because there aren't many—Helena when they put you in a trance, you're line "Help. They put me in a trance, and I'm fading away" sounds very convincing. Good on you.

HELENA: That's because they really do put me in a trance.

QUINCE: Oh, well, that might not be such a good thing. Maybe you should close your eyes and keep with the program. We don't really want you in a trance, or you won't be able to deliver your next lines.

HELENA: Shall do.

QUINCE: Thank you. Okay, what's next in my notes...
(*Pages through notes.*) Oh, yes. Tom, when you're tied to the tree, don't lift the tree. Your character is not some kind of he-man, Tom.

TOM: Yes, I realize that, but I had to satisfy an itch somewhere between my back and butt.

QUINCE: Then scratch when the lights go down.

TOM: I think it's those woolly underwear I bought.

QUINCE: You can spare us the details, Tom?

TOM: Sorry.

QUINCE: And, by the way, are you losing your voice? Sounds like you're straining it.

TOM: I think I'm coming down with something. I should be all right. I'll take an extra dose of Vitamin C before I go to bed tonight.

QUINCE: Okay, those are all my notes. The show from the second scene on is very good, but I feel we need to do this first scene once again before show time tomorrow. We'll have rehearsal at five tomorrow. (*Actors grumble about the additional rehearsal.*) Oh, one more note. Good job, Prompter. It seems like you know the lines better than some of the others here.

PROMPTER: That's because I've memorized the whole script.

QUINCE: Really?

PROMPTER: Oh, yes, memorizing dialogue comes easy to me, and I would have corrected the "soooodeeee samba doooooo" with the "coooomba," if I didn't have to step out and go buy the pizza for tonight.

QUINCE: Well, we'll order a pizza in for tomorrow after the show. We need you here during the performance of course.

PROMPTER: Mr. Quince, may I make a correction in the Chief's dialogue?

QUINCE: Yes, of course.

PROMPTER: *(To Chief.)* Your chanting lines at the end of the scene are not "Kooo-ba, kooo-ba, kooo-ba." They're "Tooo-ba, tooo-ba, tooo-ba, tooo-ba..."

CHIEF: So it's "Kooo-ba, kooo-ba" then "Tooo-ba, Tooo-ba."

PROMPTER: No. It's "Tooo-ba, tooo-ba," and then "Kooo-ba, kooo-ba."

QUINCE: Okay, I think we're done, so let's have some pizza.

(Actors adlib "Hey, good idea," "Bring it on," "Nothing like pizza," "I'm starving..." etc.)

CHIEF: Hang on! Before we eat, I would like to thank everyone... *(He starts to get up from his sitting position.)* I would just like to say... *(He farts very loudly.)* Oh, excuse me.

(Hippolyta who has been beside him starts to gag and gasps for air.)

HIPPOLYTA: That's gross. One can die from being the recipient of that.

(Hippolyta continues to gag. The others react to the smell and adlib "That's a really bad smell," "That's horrible," etc.)

PROFESSOR: Let's find another place to eat on the stage here.

BOTTOM: Bring the pizza here.

HELENA: What did you want to say anyway?

CHIEF: I forget now.

(Lights down. Thunder.)

BOTTOM: There's the thunder.

SCENE 2

(The theatre, the next day, minutes before the performance. Stage curtain is down. Soft background music is being played for the audience as the actors assemble behind the curtain. The following conversation from behind the curtain can be heard over the background music.)

PROFESSOR: How many do you think are out there tonight?

(Bottom pokes his head out through the curtains to peak at the audience. He then pulls his head behind the curtain again.)

BOTTOM: It's a full house.

HELENA: Mr. Quince, Tom's voice has gotten worse since yesterday.

QUINCE: Give him a couple of Hall's, and he'll be fine. He sounded okay a few minutes ago.

PROMPTER: Should I get some pizzas delivered for after the show?

QUINCE: Sure, and order the 2-for-1 pizza. They deliver for free.

PROMPTER: Should I order two extra large pizzas?

QUINCE: Sounds good to me. Okay, everybody gather around. That was a very good rehearsal we had today. You now have the makings of a good show, so break a leg. I'm going out there to introduce the show, so keep the noise level down. *(Quince comes out from behind the curtain. Music fades. Lights up. To audience.)* Good evening, folks, and welcome. I've been asked by the theatre society here to introduce the show, so tonight you will see for the first time ever, "A Midsummer's Feast." I am the director of— *(Suddenly a loud commotion backstage is heard and then a scream.)* Excuse me for a moment. *(Exits behind the curtain. From behind the curtain.)* What's going on here!?

PROMPTER: It's the Guard. He's been electrocuted by that dangling live wire over there.

QUINCE: Is he okay?

PROMPTER: He's dead!

QUINCE: Dead?

PROMPTER: Yes, dead!

QUINCE: *(Relieved.)* Well, that's okay. He didn't have any lines anyway. It's a good thing it wasn't one of the indispensable actors. *(Emerges from behind the curtain. To audience.)* Sorry for the disruption. Just a minor setback. And so without further ado, "A Midsummer's Feast."

(Quince exits. Lights fade. Curtain goes up to reveal the same tree on stage, only this time it is missing the "V". Enter Professor, Tom, and Bottom.)

PROFESSOR: Boy, this jungle heat is really getting to me. Let's rest here.

TOM: *(Coughs.)* Good idea. *(Note: Tom's voice is strained and continues to get worse until he completely loses it.)*

BOTTOM: *(Whines.)* Sheesh, how much longer now? Where are the diamonds?

TOM: *(Mimics.)* "Sheesh, how much longer now? Where are the diamonds?" Where's our guide? *(Calls.)* Helena. *(To others.)* Some guide we ended up with. So, are you ready with the Shakespeare lingo, Professor Peaseblossom?

PROFESSOR: That's what I've been hired for. And should I get stuck, I have my trusty dictionary right here.

TOM: That's good to know, Professor. Now where in the heck is she? *(Calls.)* Helena.

(Helena enters.)

HELENA: I'm coming. I got stuck in the bog back there. This place looks familiar. We must be close now. Anybody see a "V" inscription on an old mahogany tree?

BOTTOM: A "V" on an old mahogany tree?

HELENA: I told you at the beginning of this expedition to look for a "V" on an old mahogany tree.

TOM: Do you mean to tell me you didn't know about the "V" on the tree? That's what we've been looking for all day.

BOTTOM: Well, sorry. I'll start looking now. Better late than never. A "V," eh?

TOM: You're nothing but a nuisance, you know that?

BOTTOM: Speak for yourself.

TOM: "Speak for myself." Will you listen to him? By the way, do you know why you're even with us on this quest?

BOTTOM: I'm one of the selected few. That's why.

TOM: Nope. It's because your father's funded this whole expedition. He said he'd foot the entire bill on condition that we take you along with us. What do you think of that?

(Bottom turns around and notices that there is no "V" on the tree.)

BOTTOM: *(Breaks character.)* Hey, where's the "V" on the tree? It was on the tree during the rehearsal, and now it's gone.

TOM: What do you think of that?

BOTTOM: Well, I'll tell you what I think of that...that "V" was a great piece of dramaturgy.

TOM: What do you think of *that*? *(Tom stomps on Bottom's foot very hard.)*

BOTTOM: Ouch, now that really hurts.

TOM: Well, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you.

BOTTOM: Well, you did.

TOM: I hit a tender spot, haven't I?

BOTTOM: Yes, you have. Ouch, ouch, ouch.

TOM: *(Tom's voice is very strained.)* So now that I've gotten that off my chest...

(Tom loses his voice completely but remains on stage. The Prompter is quick to notice, and from here on, the Prompter delivers Tom's

lines from the wing in a fake-sounding masculine voice. NOTE: The Prompter must be louder and slower than usual so that the actor playing Tom can look convincing when lip syncing.)

PROMPTER: What's next on the agenda, Helena? Are you ready to give us the next piece of the puzzle?

HELENA: Not until we find the "V" on the old oak tree. I think we're pretty close.

BOTTOM: *(Referring to his foot.)* Look at it! It's turning purple and green!

PROMPTER: *(To Helena.)* Why don't you clue us in a little? Why do you keep us in suspense?

BOTTOM: Ouch, ouch, ouch.

HELENA: I don't want to overwhelm you with too much at once.

QUINCE: *(From wing, whispers to Bottom.)* Will you get off the stage?

PROMPTER: Well, why don't you at least tell us why we brought Shakespeare along with us? That's what's been baffling me all along.

(During Helena's next piece of dialogue, Quince, from a wing, throws a rope close to Bottom – the same rope used by Hippolyta in the previous scene – and it catches the Professor's attention. The Professor clues in as to what he should do with it. The Professor takes the rope and ties it to Bottom's ankle – the one that Bottom's not favouring. From offstage, Quince pulls the rope, conveniently dragging Bottom off the stage.)

HELENA: Well, since we're close to our destination, I'll fill you in a little more. Professor Peaseblossom has been invited because she is to interpret the Old English language from a one Hippolyta. So, here's the way it goes...Hippolyta translates the tribal language from her chief tribesman in Old English, and the Professor, here,

translates the Old English into plain English for us if an interpretation is needed.

PROFESSOR: *(In character.)* So the Chief does not know any English, I suppose?

HELENA: That's right.

PROFESSOR: Now I know what my mission is here. But why can't this one Hippolyta just translate what the Chief says in plain contemporary English? *(Thunder.)* What was that?

PROMPTER: That was thunder.

HELENA: Premature thunder.

PROFESSOR: That's really strange.

(Offstage the Tribe is heard chanting "Boom-ba, boom-ba," etc. Enter Hippolyta, Chief, and Attendants 1, 2 from SR. The Guard, now dead, is brought in by Quince to the side of SL close to the wing but visible to the audience. The Guard's hair is now stiffly standing on end since being recently electrocuted. Quince plants each of the Guard's feet forward for him and puts a pole spear in his hand – the same pole spear he had in the previous scene. Quince delicately balances the spear in the Guard's hand to prevent him from falling down.)

HELENA: It's them. This is the place. I knew it.

(Prompter and Professor simultaneously adlib "Well, what do we do?" "Shouldn't we say 'hi' or something?" "That chief guy looks pretty intimidating," etc.)

PROFESSOR: Why is he looking up and shaking like that?

HELENA: That's the way he communicates with his god.

(Chief trembles and looks up to the heavens. There is more thunder, but the thunder cue is noticeably late as usual, and as a result, the Chief is standing looking up and shaking as he awaits the late cue. Thunder. Professor and Prompter simultaneously adlib "What was

that?" "Man, is that ever loud!" "I think he's ready to say something," etc.)

CHIEF: Soodeeee samba dooooooooooooo.

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)* "How now spirits, whither wander you?"

PROFESSOR: Well, we've come to see you about –

(Hippolyta approaches Professor.)

HIPPOLYTA: Either I mistaken your shape and making quite,
Or are you the shrewd knavish sprite
That frights the maidens of the villagery,
Stopped the brew from turning into beer,
Misled night-travellers, laughing at their fear?
Are you not he?

PROFESSOR: Oh, no, you're mistaken. I'm not that kind of knave. I love the maidens and drink beer, and even brew before it turns to beer.

HIPPOLYTA: If not he, then who art thou who cometh from the farthest step?

HELENA: I think I can answer that for you. I was told that I could bring some fine plump specimens and barter them for diamonds.

HIPPOLYTA: Ah, yes, indeed, I rightly apprehend thee, and of these terms I shall parley with my chief. *(She talks to the Chief until the next thunder cue. Their conversation will take place simultaneously while Professor, Helena, and Prompter speak below. To Chief.)* Dingy dooo bling bling sappy stoooo.

CHIEF: *(To Helena.)* Ahhhh

Debe deeee

Bling bling

Snoopeee zeeeeeeeeeee.

PROFESSOR: *(To Helena.)* What fine specimen are we bartering for the diamonds?

HELENA: That will be unveiled very soon.

PROFESSOR: I think we've been hoodwinked.

PROMPTER: *(To Helena.)* Why, you deceitful rat, you. You set us up.

PROFESSOR: Wait till we get back to civilization. I'll catch up with you and, and when I do—

HELENA: I don't think you'll be coming back.

(Chief trembles and looks up to the heavens. Thunder. Professor and Prompter simultaneously adlib "What was that?" "Man, is that ever loud," "I think he's ready to say something," etc.)

CHIEF: Coomba!

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)* "Silence awhile."

(Chief approaches Helena.)

CHIEF: *(To Helena.)* Whoot whoot yum yum yooo *(Holds his hand to his heart.)* boom boom loopeeee loopeeee looooo *(Puts out his baby finger to indicate one.)* pinky pink sloopy sloop sloooo. *(Puts out five fingers to indicate many.)*

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)*

"This night I hold an accustomed feast
Where to you have invited many a guest
Such as I love, and you among the store:
One more, most welcome, makes my number more."

HELENA: *(To Professor.)* What's he mean by that?

PROFESSOR: In short, it means he would like to include you among us as part of his feast.

PROMPTER: Oh, well, isn't that a nice gesture.

HELENA: *(To Hippolyta.)* Tell him, "No thanks. I'm a trifle bloated, so, ah, just giveth me the diamonds, and I'll, ah, take my leave."

HIPPOLYTA: *(To Chief, translates.)*

"Yum yum tooom
Bling bling
Toot toot a loooooo."

CHIEF: Yum yum chow.

Supeee stoooo.

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)* "You cannot take your leave any longer, for thou hast been selected to be his sweets after sup."

PROFESSOR: *(To Helena.)* In other words, he wants to eat you as his special dessert.

PROMPTER: And, if we follow the logic, that means we'll be his main dish. We're going to be made into mincemeat.

HELENA: *(To Chief.)* Now wait a minute! I brought your meal right here. *(Indicates Tom and Professor.)* You can fatten them up and eat them to your heart's content. A deal is a deal. I've gotten you your nice succulent meals, and in turn, I get the diamonds.

PROMPTER: *(To Helena.)* You dirty rotten dog. I knew right from the start you weren't to be trusted.

PROFESSOR: *(To Helena.)* I hope he eats you alive. *(Stage door to side opens and loudly shuts. Offstage, Joe whistles.)* What was that?

HIPPOLYTA: That, ah, that is the stage door that draweth open and, ah, shuteth once again.

(Joe, a pizza delivery guy, enters carrying a pizza.)

JOE: Knock, knock, knock.

(The actors adlib about Joe's unexpected entrance, "Who's he?" "What's he doing here?" "What's going on?" etc.)

CHIEF: Ah, coomba?!

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)* "Silence awhile."

(Silence.)

JOE: Well, coomba to you too, and here's your pizza. Hey, just what exactly is this... *(Indicates Chief)* ...the Grand Puba or something?

(Tom goes off to SL wing, and because he has lost his voice, he tries to mime the sudden change to Quince.)

QUINCE: *(To Tom, from offstage.)* I don't know what the pizza boy is doing here early and on the stage, but he's just taken your part.

(Barely visible to the audience, Tom and Quince stand at the wing and look on in horror.)

CHIEF: *(To Joe.)* Scoobie doooobie.

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)* "I shall desire you of more acquaintance."

(Joe thinks Hippolyta is flirting with him.)

JOE: *(Flirtatious. To Hippolyta.)* Well, I'd like to get to know you a little better, too. Maybe after work, you and me, you know what I mean...

CHIEF: Fruity loops *(Feels Joe's arms and legs.)*

Loopy snoops

Yum yum baaaaaaaaaaa. *(Licks Joe's arm.)*

JOE: Hey, hey, keep your hands off there, Coomba.

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)*

"Thou limbs excel all men past all compare.

You are not the flower of courtesy,

But I'll warrant thee as palatable as a lamb."

JOE: I don't think I gather the entire meaning of that.

PROFESSOR: He means, you'll be as tasty as a lamb.

JOE: Hey, is this some kind of cult? Are you cannibals? *(Looks out into the audience and notices the audience for the first time.)* Oh, and an audience, too. *(To audience.)* You guys are

sick. Shame on you! You're gonna watch while they eat me.
(*To Hippolyta.*) And you! First you want to go out with me,
and now you want to devour me. Well, no thanks. I'm out
of here!

(*Helena, Professor, and Joe exit running SL.*)

CHIEF: Sling a deee

A bing bang booooo.

HIPPOLYTA: (*Translates.*) "I'll follow you... (*Chief, Hippolyta,*
Attendants 1, 2 chase after Helena, Professor, and Joe. They exit
SL. The Guard remains on stage in the same position. From
offstage.) ...through bog. Through bush, through brake,
through briar

Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,

A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire:

And neigh and bark and grunt, and roar, and burn,

Like a horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn."

(*Chief, Hippolyta, and Attendants 1, 2 enter from SR in that order.*)

CHIEF: (*As he enters.*) Zoom zoom, zoom billy boom.

HIPPOLYTA: (*Translates.*)

"He goes before me, and still he dares me on:

When I come where he calls then he is gone.

The villain is much lighter-heeled than I:

I follow fast, but faster he did fly."

CHIEF: Aloooo boomba zoooo

Aloooo peek a booooo.

HIPPOLYTA: (*Translates.*)

"Speak again you run away.

Thou coward art thou fled.

Speak! Where dost thou hide thy head?"

(*Joe sticks his head out through the back curtains at CS.*)

JOE: Peek a boooo.

(Instead of looking CS, the actors look SL – as they have rehearsed.)

CHIEF: Peep ohhhhhh
boobeee sooooo
jeepeeee deeeeee.

(They begin to exit SL.)

HIPPOLYTA: *(As she exits, translates.)*

“A voice. Oh, ho coward.
Thou mockest me, thou shalt buy this dear.
I’ll follow your voice
If ever thy face by daylight see,
By day’s approach look to be visited.”

(Joe emerges from behind the curtain.)

JOE: *(To audience.)* All right, I want some answers here. Can someone tell me what’s going on? Oh, nobody wants to fess up, hey? *(Takes out a pen and a pad.)* Okay, I’ll report you then. Well, well, well... *(Points to female audience member in the second row.)* Now, is that you, Lucy? I see you there, Lucy. Yes, you in the second row. *(Writes.)* “Lucy Johnstone.” Oh, and look who else is here... *(Points to another audience member.)* Why, if it isn’t Sheriff Jake Pringle? Yes, I see you. Don’t try to slip under your seat. You got a lot of questions to answer. What a bunch of sick puppies...for shame...is this your idea of live theatre! You guys are worse than the Romans...

(Enter Professor and Helena.)

PROFESSOR: Tom, are you okay?

JOE: The name’s Joe, and, yeah, I’m okay.

HELENA: We thought they started feasting on you.

JOE: Let me tell you, there's no way I'm going to be dinner — not if I can help it.

HELENA: Well, I'm sympathetic toward your predicament, which is also mine as of late.

JOE: I feel the same way. There's no doubt about that, but what are we going to do? How are we going to get out of this? I'm thinking we're outnumbered here with Coomba, his clan, and... *(Indicates audience.)* ...the bloodthirsty crowd out there.

PROFESSOR: Yeah. We need to think this through and figure out a plan.

JOE: Yeah, that's what I mean exactly.

(Enter Chief and Attendants 1, 2 from SR.)

CHIEF: Zip a dee dooo daaa
Zip a dee daaaai.

HELENA: *(To Joe and Professor.)* Quick! Let's go this way.

(Helena, Joe, and Professor attempt to exit SL. From SL Hippolyta enters with a rope in hand.)

HIPPOLYTA: *(Translates.)*

"Halt! and I will approach thee with this vine.

Halt! I say as I proceed to bind you to that tree."

JOE: Now lookit here...I've got two extra large pizzas back there, and one's even got a finger in it. The prep cook was cutting some salami and accidentally cut it off. I'll show you... *(Starts to exit SL.)*

HIPPOLYTA: "We will be deaf to pleading and excuses
Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase out abuses
Therefore use none."

JOE: Look my dear, and Mr. Coomba there too, if you want a piece of me, well, you'll have to come and get it. I'm ready.

So come on! Wang dang doooo and a booo whooooo
whoooo to you too!

CHIEF: Zippy dooo

Ma ma rooooo.

HIPPOLYTA: (*Translates.*) "Hold your tongue you whining
mammet."

JOE: I don't think I gather the entire meaning of that.

PROFESSOR: He means, "Stop your whining, you cry baby."

HIPPOLYTA: "And now without ado
let us dispute with thee of thy estate."

JOE: I've got no estate. I'm only a pizza boy. Do thee
comprendo?

PROFESSOR: She means, "Let us discuss your situation with
you."

JOE: Oh, well, go ahead, and then I'll tell you where you
stand.

HIPPOLYTA: "Bind you we shall to that tree,
And tear thee joint by joint,
And strew thy limbs to these thirsty warriors.
The time and our intent are savage wild,
More fierce and more inexorable far
Than any tigers or the roaring sea."

JOE: Now, you listen to me, Mrs. and Mr. Fee Fi Fo Fum. You
ain't gonna get no blood from this Englishman. And you
can tell Coomba that, too. (*To audience.*) And what are you
staring at? Go home. All of you.

CHIEF: (*To Attendants 1, 2.*) To tooooo
Toot sweeeeeeee.

HIPPOLYTA: (*Translates.*) "Seize them expeditiously.
Bind him and spell entrance her.
We shall commence our solemnities
First starting with thee."

*(Attendants 1, 2 tie Joe to the tree. They put Helena in a trance and
force the Professor to sit beside Joe. The following dialogue is*

simultaneous. Helena is on her back with her feet and arms stiffly in the air.)

HELENA: Help. They've put me in a trance, and I can't move. Really. Help. I'm dying in a trance. They put a spell on me. I'm fading away, fading away, fading away. Fading away...

JOE: Look. How about a lifetime supply of pizza? I can tell my boss how great you guys really are, and how about some T-bone steaks? My uncle's a butcher. He'll butcher a cow, or a pig, or a bear, or a lion, an elephant, my wicked stepmother, a horse...

(Chief, Hippolyta, and Attendants 1, 2 gather around the tree.)

CHIEF: *(Trying to remember the words to the chant.)* Ah, Kooo-ba, kooo-ba? No, that's not it. Kitty, kitty? Toobi booby? Tooo-ba, tooo-ba? Tooba, Tooba. Tooo-ba tooo-ba... *(The tribe chimes in with "Tooo-ba, tooo-ba" and circles around the tree for a bit until Chief shouts.)* Hooooo, hooooo, hooooo.

(Suddenly the Tribe stops chanting and circling around the tree. There is dead silence. The Chief starts to shake and looks up to the heavens. Obviously the thunder is supposed to come in but never does. To everyone's surprise and including the Chief himself, he lets out a thunderous fart, whereupon Hippolyta gags. The Chief is knocked out from the foul smell, with his chest to the floor and his buttock slightly up from the floor.)

JOE: What was that?

PROFESSOR: That was thunder.

[END OF FREEVIEW]