

Wessex Mummers Play

Enter BOLD SOLDIER.

BOLD SOLDIER: Ah ha! The doors are open and we're now in.
We beg your favour for to win.
For whether we rise or whether we fall,
We'll do our best endeavour to please you all.
We're none of the ragged tribe, ladies and gentlemen.
We've come here to show you a little fight and pastime.
And if you don't believe the words I say,
Walk in Father Christmas, and clear the way.

Retires. Enter FATHER CHRISTMAS.

FATHER CHRISTMAS: In comes I, Father Christmas.
Christmas or Christmas not,
I hope old Father Christmas will never be forgot.
And now I pray you, ladies and gentlemen,
To give us room to render.
For we've come here to show you fight,
To pass away the winter.
A fight you've never seen before.
I'm the man that leads King George in the door.
Walk in, King George, act thy way, and show thy part,
And show the beloved company of thy wondrous art.

KING GEORGE enters

KING GEORGE: In comes I, King George, lately come from town to town,
To show the greatness of my strength,
To show the feat of valour.
Dun cow and dun,
Likewise men's chastity.
To see two dragons fight,
And kill an ugly creature
Is all my delight.
Ask for Bold Soldier. Oft of him I've been told.
I wish his ugly face I could now behold.

FATHER CHRISTMAS: Walk in, Bold Soldier, cut thy way, and act thy part,
And show the beloved company of thy wondrous art.

Enter BOLD SOLDIER.

BOLD SOLDIER: In comes I, Bold Soldier, Bold Slasher is my name.
'Tis I that fought the fiery dragon
And brought him to his slaughter,
And by that means I won the King of Egypt's daughter.
My head is bound with iron, and my body bound with steel,
And with my arms up to my knuckle bones
I'll fight King George to win his throne.

Pull out thy purse and pay;
Pull out thy sword and slay.
Satisfaction will I have of thee before I go away.

KING GEORGE: No purse will I pull out,
No money will I pay.
Neither shall thee give me satisfaction
Before thee'st go away.

They fight. BOLD SOLDIER drops wounded.

FATHER CHRISTMAS: O King, O King, what hast thou done?
See one of my soldiers lies bleeding on the ground.

KING GEORGE: You gave me the first offer, Daddy, how could I refuse it?
Have you got another of your soldiers for me to conquer or to kill?

FATHER CHRISTMAS: Yes; I've another of my soldiers for thee to conquer or to kill.
Walk in, the Turkish Knight,
Go thy way and act thy part,
And show the beloved company of thy wondrous art.

Enter the TURKISH KNIGHT.

TURKISH KNIGHT: I comes in, the Turkish Knight,
Come from a foreign land to fight.
I'll fight this English champion bold,
If his blood runs hot, I'll quickly draw it cold.

KING GEORGE: O Turk! O Turk! Thou talkest bold.
Thou talkest as other Turks as I've been told.
Pull out thy purse and pay,
Pull out thy sword and slay.
Satisfaction will I have of thee before thee'st go away.

TURKISH KNIGHT: No purse will I pull out,
No money will I pay.
Neither shall I give thee satisfaction
Before I go away.

They fight. TURKISH KNIGHT drops wounded.

FATHER CHRISTMAS: O King, O King, what hast thou done?
See, one of my soldiers lies bleeding on the ground.

KING GEORGE: You gave me the first offer, Daddy, how could I refuse it?
Have you got another of your soldiers for me to conquer or to kill?

FATHER CHRISTMAS: Yes; I've another of my soldiers for thee to conquer or to kill.
Walk in, the Cut-the-Dash,

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Go thy way and act thy part,
And show the beloved company of thy wondrous art.

Enter CUT-THE-DASH.

CUT-THE-DASH: In comes I, Cut-the-Dash.
With my broad sword and my fine sash.
Although my King is not here to take his part,
I'll take it with all my heart.
Now I've almost end my ditty,
I hope on me you'll all have pity.
Now I've almost end my story,
I hope the battle will end in glory.

They fight. He goes on his knees, not altogether beaten.

CUT-THE-DASH: I'll have no more of thy high words, nor none of thy diddy dumps.
For now that thee'st cut my legs off, I'll fight thee on my stumps!

*They fight again. KING GEORGE wins.
The three lie on the floor. KING GEORGE walks round them*

KING GEORGE: Behold and see the wonders I have done!
I've cut down my enemies like the evening sun.
(*To Father Christmas*): Call for a doctor as quick as you please!
Perhaps one of his pills may give a little ease.

FATHER CHRISTMAS: Is there a doctor to be found
To cure my three sons which lie bleeding on the ground?

Enter DOCTOR

THE DOCTOR: Yes there is a doctor to be found
To cure thy three sons which lie bleeding on the ground.

FATHER CHRISTMAS: Are you he?

DOCTOR: I am that.

FATHER CHRISTMAS: What's thy fee, doctor?

DOCTOR: Ten pound is my fee.
But fifty will I have of thee
Before I set thy three sons free.

FATHER CHRISTMAS: Tut, tut, doctor; none of thee foreign off talk.

DOCTOR: Yes, Father Christmas; I am a foreign off man.
I've travelled India, South India, and Bendigo,
And now I've returned to England again.

FATHER CHRISTMAS: Well; give us a sample of thee work.

DOCTOR: I carry a little bottle by my side
Which is called the Opliss Popliss Drops,
Which I touch one to the heart and one to the head. (*He does so*).
I heal thee of thy wounds once more,
So please get up I pray.

(*They all get up and mingle together fighting again, their swords mingled in a bunch. FATHER CHRISTMAS, with his holly bough, forces himself in among them.*)

FATHER CHRISTMAS: I'll have no more of that fighting here.

Enter JOHNNY JACK.

JOHNNY JACK: Here comes I, little Johnny Jack
With my wife and family at my back.
Out of eleven I have but seven,
And three of them are gone to Heaven
One to the workhouse he is gone,
And the rest will go when I get home.
Although I am but short, and small,
I think I am the best man among you all.
What say you, Daddy?

FATHER CHRISTMAS: Yes, yes, my son.

JOHNNY JACK: Christmas comes but once a year,
And when it comes it brings good cheer.
Roast beef, plum pudding and mince pie.
Who likes that more than Father Christmas and I?
Each one of them is a very good thing,
And a pot of your Christmas ale will make our voices ring.
Right wheel! Quick march!

(They march in a circle with tambourine and concertina)
All sing:
Christmas is the time for merriment,
Time for merriment,
Time for merriment,
Christmas time is the time for merriment,
Christmas is the time!

They stand in a circle and sing:
Britannia long expected news from the fleet,
Commanded by Lord Nelson the French to defeat.
But when the news came over, to England it was layed,
The French were defeated, but Lord Nelson he was slayed.
They sing other songs, ending with "God save the King".