

# MOTHER GOOSE

A PANTOMIME BY

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## CAST (in order of appearance.)

QUEEN OF GOOSELAND  
 PRISCILLA  
 GRIZELDA GOLD-DIGGER  
 JACK GOOSE  
 JILL (The Squire's Niece)  
 SQUIRE STONEYHEART  
 MOTHER GOOSE  
 BILLY GOOSE  
 MOUNTAIN BEAST  
 PRIME MINISTER OF GOOSELAND

CHORUS OF VILLAGERS, SPIRITS OF THE BLUE GROTTO and PEOPLE OF GOOSELAND

### SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

#### ACT ONE

SCENE 1 GOOSELAND  
 SCENE 2 THE VILLAGE OF GANDERVILLE  
 SCENE 3 OUTSIDE MOTHER GOOSES' NEW HOUSE  
 SCENE 4 MOTHER GOOSES' KITCHEN  
 SCENE 5 OUTSIDE MOTHER GOOSES' NEW HOUSE  
 SCENE 6 THE GOLDEN BALLROOM  
 SCENE 7 OUTSIDE MOTHER GOOSES' NEW HOUSE  
 SCENE 8 ON THE WAY TO THE MAGIC GROTTO  
 SCENE 9 THE MAGIC BLUE GROTTO

#### ACT TWO

SCENE 1 THE VILLAGE OF GANDERVILLE  
 SCENE 2 ON THE WAY TO THE SNOW MOUNTAINS  
 SCENE 3 THE SNOW MOUNTAINS  
 SCENE 4 THE QUEEN OF GOOSELAND'S THRONE ROOM  
 SCENE 5 THE WAY HOME  
 SCENE 6 THE GOLDEN BALLROOM

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## NOTES ON THE PRODUCTION

Scenery for this production can be as elaborate or as simple as your facilities allow. Suggestions for the scene plot are as follows:

### Act 1

- Scene 1        A small inset with black tabs to mask.
- Scene 2        A full set with backcloth or cyc. To one side is Mother Goose's cottage and to the other is a pub.
- Scene 3,5&7    A front cloth – or just use running tabs.
- Scene 4        A scene that need not be too big. Either a half way cloth of flats with just the required furniture and props.
- Scene 6        An elaborate ballroom that can double as the final scene of the show.
- Scene 8        BlackTabs if another front cloth is not available.
- Scene 9        This scene can be either a woodland scene or rock pieces. As it is night time, the scene can be backed by black tabs or, if possible a star cloth. Up stage centre should be a rostrum or platform that Mother Goose can stand on. Water effects are expensive and complicated, so if it is impractical to use one, a lighting effect or a silver slash curtain will work just as well.

### Act 2

- Scene 1        Repeat the second scene of Act 1.
- Scene 2&5     A second front cloth, gauze or tabs can be used for this scene.
- Scene 3        This scene is purely for a dance routine and is very effective in portraying Jack's search for Gooseland. Ideally it should be a half stage set with snow covered rock wings and a cloud cloth. The wings stay in position for the next scene and the cloth flies out to reveal Gooseland and the Queen's throne. Alternatively, with a little alteration to the script, it can be played on the gauze – although this gives a limited amount of space for the dance sequence.
- Scene 4        Snow covered rock wings and a cyc backing. A large impressive throne dominate up stage centre. One of the rock pieces should have an opening for Grizelda to be imprisoned in, or she can just exit behind with possibly a smoke effect.
- Scene 6        Repeat the Golden Ballroom.

If stage and wing space is at a premium then Mother Goose's car can be a cutout, which she can carry on.

The kitchen scene can be as messy as the director (and actors) choose! It is sometimes advisable to have a floor covering around the table area. The radio explosion can be a sound effect or even a large balloon popping off stage.

The hot ash in the dustbin sequence is effective with a squirt from a smoke gun. Again, this is not necessary.

If a smoke gun or dry ice is available this adds tremendously to the Magic Grotto scene

If you have access to good sound equipment then sound effects such as Mother Goose's car, Priscilla's egg laying scene, the radio sequence and the Mountain Beasts roar add greatly to the show. However, these are not essential apart from the radio voice which is better done by two actors on an off stage microphone.

Finally Priscilla. If a full Goose costume is available and the size of stage allows it, this is the best effect. The simpler way is to have an actor with a goose costume top, wings attached to the arms, white tights and yellow feet, and a head piece with a little bonnet on for Act 1 and a small crown for Act 2. If the costume does not allow for 'egg laying', then a strategic positioning by the Chorus covers this and the eggs can be rolled on from off stage.

The placing of the musical numbers and who sings them is suggested in the script, but it is up to the director to decide what to use. A word of advice: Pantomime audiences – particularly the younger members – like the story to keep moving, so don't make the musical sequences too long, especially the ballads.

I hope you enjoy doing this version of 'Mother Goose' and have a great success with your production.

Stephen Duckham

ACT ONESCENE 1 GOOSELAND

*[A light in the centre of the stage picks up PRISCILLA. Above her hangs the Golden Quill. Down stage right the QUEEN OF GOOSELAND enters.]*

QUEEN My dear Priscilla. By the power vested in me as Queen of Gooseland and by the command of the Golden Quill, I am entrusting to you a task of the utmost importance. As the one special Golden Goose your magical powers can help people who have fallen on hard times. *[PRISCILLA nods her head.]* There is one such family in the village of Ganderville. Will you leave here and help them? *[PRISCILLA thinks for a moment and then nods.]* I knew I was right to ask this. You are kind and unselfish. There is no time to lose so prepare to leave at once.

*[GRIZELDA GOLDDIGGER enters down left.]*

GRIZELDA What's this? Sending your precious Golden Goose on a mercy mission?

QUEEN Grizelda Golddigger! You are not welcome here.

GRIZELDA Don't say you would turn your own sister away when she has come for a visit.

QUEEN I can no longer call you sister when you have destroyed all the trust I had in you.

GRIZELDA I can't think what you are talking about.

QUEEN Too many times you have tried to steal Priscilla for your own greedy ends.

GRIZELDA Can you blame me? That goose can create gold – and I love gold! Shining and shimmering all day and night. I would have everything made of gold. My house, my furniture – even the plates I eat off.

QUEEN And what good would it do you?

GRIZELDA When my friends come round they would see the luxury that surrounds me.

QUEEN Friends?

GRIZELDA Yes. I have three thousand five hundred and twenty friends on Facebook. They all adore me.

QUEEN Adore you, or what they could get from you?

GRIZELDA *[Sneering.]* You're just jealous. Just because you are Queen and hold the power of the Golden Quill doesn't mean you can criticise me.

- QUEEN I think deep down you are a very lonely person. *[SHE turns to PRISCILLA.]* Come Priscilla, we must prepare for your journey. Goodbye Grizelda.
- GRIZELDA *[The black tabs close cutting off the QUEEN and PRISCILLA.]* Lonely? I'm not lonely. But I've always wanted that Golden Goose and the power that goes with it. *[SHE produces a golden rope with a noose at one end.]* All I have to do is catch the Goose and then I could usurp my sister and claim the throne and the Golden Quill for myself. Ganderville I think I heard is where the bird is going. Now let me see. One of my minions is the Squire of that village. My power over him is such that I can make him do whatever I want. I'll devise a plan and use him to get the goose; then I shall have everything I ever wanted. *[SHE roars with laughter and exits down left as the QUEEN enters down right.]*
- QUEEN Now Priscilla start your journey and bring some happiness and prosperity to a dear old woman called Mother Goose.
- [PRISCILLA is seen flying across the proscenium arch as the lights fade and the scene changes to.....]*

## SCENE 2 THE VILLAGE OF GANDERVILLE

*[Stage right is Mother Goose's cottage with a practical door. Stage left is a village pub, also with a practical door and up stage left is an entrance big enough to get a panto car on. A dustbin stands upstage of MOTHER GOOSE'S cottage. It has no bottom to it and, if possible, smoke should be able to rise out of it. The CHORUS OF VILLAGERS is on singing.]*

### CHORUS NUMBER

*[During the number JACK GOOSE enters.]*

- JACK Hi everyone.
- ALL Hello Jack.
- 1st. MAN How are you today?
- JACK Well I've fed the chickens, milked the cow, cleaned out the stable and ploughed the lower field. Now I'm ready to enjoy myself for the rest of the day.
- [HE sings the rest of the number with the CHORUS. At the end of the number the 1<sup>st</sup> GIRL speaks to JACK.]*
- 1st. GIRL Jack, have you heard that the Squire is coming here today and that he intends to put up our rents?

JACK           What?

2nd. MAN       It's true. I've heard the same thing. He seems to have changed recently. All he thinks about is money.

2nd. GIRL       If we have to pay higher rents, we'll never have enough to live on.

3rd. MAN       You know his niece Jill, don't you? What has she got to say about it?

JACK           I don't know. She's due to meet me here any minute, so we'll ask her.

3rd. GIRL       Here she comes. *[JILL enters.]*

JILL           Hello everyone.

ALL           Hello Jill.

JACK           *[Getting romantic.]* Hello Jill. How are you today?

JILL           All the better for being here.

4th. MAN       Go on Jack, ask her.

ALL           Yes - go on. etc.

JACK           All right, all right.

JILL           Ask me what?

JACK           Well, we've heard that your uncle, the Squire, is coming here today to put up our rents.

JILL           Oh - I'm afraid it's true.

ALL           What? But he can't. It's not right. etc.

JILL           I've begged and begged him not to do it, but he won't listen to me. I don't know what the matter is with him lately. He had a visit some days ago from a very strange man and since then he seems to have changed. He shouts at everyone and keeps talking about making more money. I just can't understand it.

SQUIRE       *[Off.]* Jill. Is that you?

JACK           Look, here he comes. *[The SQUIRE enters.]*

SQUIRE       *[Gruffly.]* What are you doing mixing with these peasants?

JILL           But uncle, they're my friends.

SQUIRE       *[Sneering.]* Friends? You can't be friends with these rag-a-muffins.

- Remember who you are. *[HE looks at JACK.]* Who's that?
- JILL It's Jack. Mother Goose's son.
- SQUIRE Mother Goose eh? She's on my list for a rent increase. *[HE takes out a scroll. It unrolls and one end lands on his foot.]* Ow!
- JACK But you can't put up our rent. We pay enough now. Anymore and we'll go bankrupt.
- SQUIRE *[Shouting and moving towards JACK.]* Good, then I'll throw you and your family out and get in some tenants who can pay.
- JILL Uncle you can't.
- SQUIRE I can and I will.
- ALL But it's just not fair. etc.
- SQUIRE You might as well get used to the idea. You're all going to have your rent doubled. *[Gasps all round. He smiles sweetly.]* Correction. Sorry I seem to have made a mistake. *[Suddenly bellowing again.]* Trebled!
- JACK You can't do that.
- SQUIRE Just try and stop me. Now is not the winter of discounted rents! *[ALL moan.]* Now clear off all of you. I'll be around later for your money. *[CHORUS start to exit. HE speaks to Jill.]* I'm just off to do a spot of peasant shooting!
- MAN Don't you mean *pheasant?*
- SQUIRE *[Face to face with the MAN.]* I know what I mean!  
*[CHORUS exit.]*
- JILL Uncle, what has come over you? You never used to be like this. Ever since that strange woman came to visit you, you've changed.
- SQUIRE Nonsense. I don't know what you're talking about. I have a position to hold and a job to do. And part of that job is collecting the rents. *[HE starts to sound like GRIZELDA.]* I must have more money. Lots and lots of lovely money.
- JILL *[Weeping.]* Oh uncle.
- SQUIRE Don't start all that weeping. Remember how I took you in and gave you a good home after your parents died? I should have thought you would have been with me in this matter instead of siding with this peasant. *[HE exits.]*

- JILL Oh Jack, why is he like this?
- JACK I don't know. But I do know this, one day I shall make my fortune and be able to give you everything that you want. I'll show that uncle of yours that I am worthy of you.
- JILL Jack, I don't care whether you're a prince or a pauper, I love you just as you are.

DUET - JACK & JILL

*[At the end of the song there is a loud noise off stage of a car engine, car backfiring and a car horn. MOTHER GOOSE enters in a car. As always, SHE is wearing and outrageous dress and has a bonnet with a mass of feathers around the brim. SHE also has a shopping bag with her.]*

- M G Help! Help! I can't stop! *[The car rolls across the stage and is stopped by JACK and JILL. If possible the bonnet should pop open with a bang.]*
- JACK Mother, what's happened?
- M G The brakes broke. *[SHE gets out of the car.]* Ooooooh, my bottom gear will never be the same again. Thank you for stopping me my dears. Oh look - *[SHE adjusts her bust.]* I've had a nasty bump in a built up area!
- JACK Isn't it about time you took your driving test?
- M G I did take it, but I failed for running over a rabbit.
- JILL You can't fail for running over a rabbit.
- M G You can if it's hanging in the butchers' window. Now where's that good for nothing brother of yours? *[SHE calls.]* Billy! Billy, where are you? Have you seen him today?
- JACK No mother. He was still in bed when I went down to plough the lower field.
- M G That lazy so and so. I wanted him to help me unload the car.
- JILL We'll do that for you, Mother Goose.
- M G Oh what good children you are. *[JACK and JILL take the parcels from the back of the car into the house stage right. MOTHER GOOSE gets her shopping bag.]* Oh dear, what a day.....*[SHE spots the audience and does a double take.]* Oh hello. You are there. I thought you were just a pigment of my infatuation! Just arrived have you? On a day trip? *[Local coach firm.]* special is it? Well welcome to our little village. As you've probably guessed I'm Mother Goose. I live here with my two sons Back and Jilly - er I mean Jack and Billy! We're very happy but we're very poor. *["Ah!" from audience.]* We're a lot poorer than that! I'm a widow you know. My

dear old husband left me twenty-five years ago. I sent him to the shops for a cabbage and he never came back. *[SHE starts to get tearful.]* It was terrible. *[Then normal voice.]* I had to open a can of peas!! – Mind you I do miss him. He was always full of good advice. It was him who said to me 'never take a laxative and sleeping pill on the same night! *Reaction with audience.]* Anyway I've just been shopping but I do hate it at this time of the year, don't you girls. There are crowds of people everywhere. All that pushing and shoving. I was in 'Toy Boys R Us' when a big burly man picked me up and shouted 'Where do you put the batteries?' I wouldn't have minded, but the assistant told him! Ooooh! But I do like a bargain. I'll buy anything that's marked down. Last week I came home with an escalator! What do you think of the hat? It's made out of real goose feathers. I picked it up for a *poultry* sum! Anyway, while I was shopping I popped into – *[Local store.]* – and picked up a few sweeties, but I think I overdid it. *[SHE takes out a large bag of sweets from her shopping bag.]* I can't eat all these - I have to watch my figure. Well, nobody else will. Would you like some? *[Audience shouts out.]* All right. I'll get my friends to help me. Boys. Could you give me a hand? *[The CHORUS BOYS enter.]* Thank you boys. How are you today?

1st. BOY Fine Mother Goose. How are you?

M G All the better for seeing you. Ah, but you're all so young. I remember when your fathers used to come and call for me and take me to all those exotic places in town. The 'Pig and Whistle', the 'Butchers Arms'. Yes, there's many a happy night I've spent in the butchers' arms. Playing darts or scrumming down with the local rugger team.

SONG - DAME AND CHORUS BOYS

*[At the end of the song MOTHER GOOSE crosses to her house.]* Take the car to the garage will you boys? Tell them I want my big end sorting out. I'm going to find that lazy son of mine. Billy.

*[The BOYS push the car off UL. MOTHER GOOSE exits into her house. BILLY peeps around the DR entrance.]*

BILLY Hi folks. Has she gone? *[HE crosses C.]* Thank goodness for that. She only wants me to do some chores around the house and I've not stopped since I got up about half an hour ago. First I had to have a wash, then I got dressed, and then I had my breakfast. I'm ready for a nap now. That's my problem. I'm always falling asleep and my mum gets really mad with me. I say, do you think you could help me? If you see me dozing off could you wake me up? Just shout out "wake up, Billy". Could you do that? You know what we're going to do now, don't you? That's right, we're going to practice it. I'll pretend to doze off and you shout. *[HE pretends to sleep. Audience shouts.]* Have you done it yet? That'll never wake me. You've got to be much louder. Let's try again. *[Repeat business.]* That's great. Thank you very much.

M G *[Off.]* Billy! Where are you?

BILLY Oh heck, it's my mum. She's after me to do some chores. I'll have to hide - but where?

*[HE sees a dustbin up stage of the house and jumps in it. MOTHER GOOSE enters from the house carrying a dustpan.]*

M G Where is that boy? You know I felt sure I heard his voice a minute ago. Have you seen him? *[Audience starts to shout. BILLY lifts the lid and "shushes" them. The dustbin has no bottom to enable BILLY to move about. There now follows the "it's behind you" routine.]* He's behind me? Where, over here? *[SHE crosses UR as BILLY in the bin runs UL.]* Oh you mean over here. *[SHE crosses UL as BILLY runs back UR.]* He's not here. *[SHE crosses back DC.]* Oh boys and girls, you're having me on. I must get on. I'm cleaning out the fireplace and I've got to empty these hot ashes in the dustbin. *[SHE crosses to the bin, lifts the lid and tips the contents of the pan in. Smoke starts to rise from the bin.]*

BILLY Help! Help! I'm burning, I'm burning! *[At this moment a CHORUS BOY enters from the pub stage left carrying a tray with a glass and soda siphon on. In one move MOTHER GOOSE takes the siphon and squirts it into the bin, puts the siphon back, picks up the glass and downs the contents in one, replaces the glass and the BOY exits.]* Help! Help! I'm drowning, I'm drowning! *[MOTHER GOOSE takes him by the ear as HE climbs out of the bin.]*

M G I might have guessed it would be you. Where have you been? I've been looking for you all over the place, you lazy good for nothing. I need some help with the housework.

BILLY Don't worry, mum. I'll see to that for you.

M G You mean you'll help your poor old mum?

BILLY No, but I know a man who can.

M G Oh you get worse. Now get in there and start work. I want the windows washed, the garden dug, the floors swept..... *[SHE continues listing household chores. BILLY falls asleep. Audience shouts out. BILLY wakes.]*

BILLY Thanks a lot.

M G .....I want you to defrost the dog and de-flea the fridge and when you've done all that I want you to put all the recycling out. *[To the audience.]* We're very green in Ganderville you know.

BILLY Mum, that's an awful lot of work. Don't you think it would be a good idea to get in some hired help?

M G Hired help? Hired help? Do you know how much that would cost? Where

am I going to get the money to pay for hired help? Haven't you heard that the Squire is coming for his rent today and where do you think I'm going to get that from?

BILLY Don't you worry about the Squire. He can't keep coming around here and putting the rents up. *[The SQUIRE enters. BILLY doesn't see him.]* When I see him I'm going to give him a piece of my mind. I'll go up to him and I'll show him a karate chop and I'll say..... *[HE turns and sees the SQUIRE.]* Oh hello Squire pleased to meet you! *[HE dashes off.]*

M G Hello Squire pleased to meet you? What good will that do? *[SHE turns and sees the SQUIRE.]* Oh hello Squire pleased to meet you!

SQUIRE Ah, Mother Goose. I've been looking everywhere for you.

M G *[To audience.]* Oh I think I've clicked.

SQUIRE My dear lady, according to my records – *[HE unrolls his scroll, again dropping it on his foot.]* – oooow! - you owe three years back rent which, in case you haven't heard, has been trebled.

M G Trebled? You must be from *[Local council.]*

SQUIRE Where's the rent?

M G What won the 3.30 at Haydock Park?

SQUIRE I'm not interested in what won the 3.30 at Haydock Park.

M G You should be, your rent was on it.

SQUIRE This is your last warning. If you don't pay up by the end of the day, you and your family will be evicted, ousted, removed, *[HE crosses to the exit.]* transplanted, ejected, thrown out onto the street. *[HE exits. MOTHER GOOSE crosses to the exit.]*

M G Why you..... *[The SQUIRE returns.]*

SQUIRE Do I make myself perfectly plain?

M G I'll just pop a few things into a case. *[The SQUIRE exits. SHE crosses dramatically around the stage.]* Oh he's resolute. He'll persecute. We'll be destitute. I'll be pros.....trate with grief! Oh what's to become of us? We'll be ruined – ruined. All together now - RUINED!!! *[SHE exits into the house. The QUEEN enters down right.]*

QUEEN Poor Mother Goose, life has been hard for your, so it's time for some good luck to come your way. That is why I have arranged for Priscilla to come and live here with the Goose family. Come along Priscilla. Come and see your new home. *[PRISCILLA enters upstage and crosses down centre.]* Now pretend to be lost and looking for somewhere to stay. It's

time to meet the Goose family. *[The QUEEN exits. PRISCILLA looks around and then crosses to Mother Goose's door and knocks with her beak.]*

M G *[Off.]* I'm out! *[PRISCILLA knocks again.]* Go away, I'm watching Coronation Street! *[SHE comments on a topical item. PRISCILLA knocks again and stands upstage of the door. MOTHER GOOSE enters.]* There's no one there. I'm sure I heard someone knocking. *[Audience reacts. PRISCILLA crosses down and nudges MOTHER GOOSE.]* Oh, what a big budgie! Whatever are you? *[PRISCILLA whispers.]* A goose? I'll bet you can eat more than three Shredded Wheat! A goose, eh? That's the same as my name. Pleased to meet you. *[BOTH curtsey to each other. Ratchet sound as MOTHER GOOSE rises.]* What's your name? *[PRISCILLA whispers.]* Pollyfilla!! That's a funny name. *PRISCILLA shakes her head.]* Oh, it's not Pollyfilla. Sorry. *[PRISCILLA whispers again.]* Godzilla!! *[PRISCILLA stamps her foot and whispers again.]* Oh, Priscilla. What a pretty name. Tell me, what are you doing here in our village? *[PRISCILLA whispers.]* You're lost? *[PRISCILLA nods.]* Well I must try and find your mummy and daddy. *[PRISCILLA looks down sadly.]* No mummy or daddy? How sad. *[SHE starts to cry.]* And you've got nowhere in the world to stay? *[PRISCILLA shakes her head. MOTHER GOOSE cries even louder. PRISCILLA cries and water shoots from her eyes.]* Oh here, stop crying now and blow your nose. *[SHE takes out a large hanky and puts it to PRISCILLA'S beak. Loud noise. MOTHER GOOSE holds up the hanky – there is a large hole in it.]* What a shame. Nowhere to live. Shall I let her stay with me boys and girls? *[Reaction.]* Well that's settled then. You can stay here and become one of the family. *[PRISCILLA runs around dancing for joy.]* Now I must introduce you to everyone. Jack, Billy. Where are you? *[JACK and BILLY enter followed by JILL and the CHORUS.]* Look boys, I want you to meet my new friend.

BILLY Mother! We'll never get her in the oven!

M G You stupid boy. This is Priscilla. We're not going to eat her. She's going to be one of the family.

JACK Oh mother, whoever heard of a goose for a sister?

M G Well you've got a monkey for a brother.

JILL She is lovely Mother Goose. Where is she from?

M G I don't know, but I bet she's starving. Billy, get that bucket of golden corn and give her something to eat.

BILLY OK. *[HE gets a bucket from UR and feeds PRISCILLA. SHE eats very quickly. ALL move in to watch her. BILLY turns the bucket upside down.]* My word. She must have been hungry. *[HE puts the bucket away. Suddenly PRISCILLA starts quacking and running around the stage.]*

M G What's happening? *[PRISCILLA ends DL and lays a golden egg. JILL*

*picks it up.]*

- JILL Look everyone, she's laid an egg.
- M G What a clever girl. I'm a granny.
- BILLY It looks a bit off to me. It's yellow.
- JACK That's not yellow. It's gold.
- ALL Gold! *[PRISCILLA quacks and runs around the stage again ending up DR. SHE lays a larger egg. JACK picks it up.]*
- JACK She's done it again!
- M G Twins!
- JACK This one's even larger. *[PRISCILLA quacks and runs around again, this time ending UL. SHE strains and strains. ALL go with the motion. There is a loud bang (or maroon) and SHE moves away to reveal the biggest egg.]*
- BILLY *[Picking it up and staggering.]* Look at the size of it!  
*[PRISCILLA walks slightly knock kneed down stage.]*
- JACK Mum, you do realise that with these golden eggs our money troubles are over.
- JILL Jack's right. You're rich beyond your wildest dreams.
- BILLY Does that mean we can live happily ever after?
- JACK Yes.
- BILLY Well, that's the end of the story then. *[To the audience.]* We hope you enjoyed yourselves. Ta ta all!
- M G No no, we must celebrate and have a big party. Thanks to Priscilla we shall never want for anything again! Three cheers for Priscilla.
- BILLY May she never be egg bound!
- M G Hip hip –
- ALL Hooray. Etc.

COMPANY NUMBER

*[At the end of the number the lights fade and the scene changes to.....*

SCENE 3 OUTSIDE MOTHER GOOSE'S NEW HOUSE

*[A front cloth scene. GRIZELDA enters DL carrying the rope.]*

GRIZELDA So, the magic bird has arrived and is now living with Mother Goose. That will work well with my plan. Now I will get my servant, the Squire to carry out the next part. Come here my willing one and do my bidding. *[SHE makes a pass and the SQUIRE enters R. in a trance.]* Listen to what I say and carry out my every wish.

SQUIRE I hear and obey, oh mistress. *[QUEEN enters DR. GRIZELDA hides the rope.]*

QUEEN Hold on there. Nothing this pathetic creature can do will help you get to Mother Goose. She is in my protection so long as Priscilla is with her. *[SHE starts to get carried away.]* No matter how much you try, how much you scheme, Mother Goose will never part with Priscilla. Haven't you realised yet that the powers of goodness will always triumph and evil will always be thwarted?

GRIZELDA Have you quite finished, Dame Judy Dench? With over acting like that you ought to be at the *[Name of a rival theatre or company.]* Now why don't you run along and play with the pixies and elves.

QUEEN Oh you can sneer all you like, but I've only one thing more to say to you: "hands off the goose!" *[SHE exits.]*

GRIZELDA Thank goodness for that. Now, where were we? *[Turning back to the SQUIRE.]* Ah yes, I was just telling you to carry out my every wish. You must acquire Mother Goose's confidence. Get in her good books; get her to trust you. Only then can I start to put the rest of my plan into action. But look, here she comes. Remember that you answer only to me and must obey my every command. *[SHE makes a pass and exits. The SQUIRE comes out of his trance as MOTHER GOOSE enters R.]*

SQUIRE Ah, dear lady. How are you today?

M G None the better for seeing you – and don't think you're getting any more rent out of me. I'm fully paid up and no more in arrears of my arrears.

SQUIRE Quite so, quite so.

M G And besides I now own my own 'des res'! What do you think of the place?

SQUIRE Magnificent. Quite magnificent. I was just admiring it when you came along. It must have cost a fortune.

M G It did. Mind you I can afford it now. I've got a little nest egg so to speak.

- SQUIRE Oh it must be wonderful to have money. [*MOTHER GOOSE stares at him as he pleads poverty.*] I mean everyone thinks I'm well off because I'm the Squire. But things are so expensive these days. And the taxes! There's land tax, property tax, and capital gains tax, not to mention VAT and PAYE! And I'm still paying off my student loan! Oh it's a hard life.
- M G Well if you're down on your uppers, how would you like to make some easy money?
- SQUIRE Easy money? I should say so.
- M G Are you a betting man?
- SQUIRE I've been known to have a little flutter.
- M G There's no answer to that! Anyway, I'll bet you a fiver that I can prove that you're not here.
- SQUIRE [*Aside.*] The woman's mad. All those eggs must have addled her brain. [*To her.*] Of course I'm here. I just saw myself getting off the number nine bus.
- M G Is it a bet then?
- SQUIRE Certainly. [*THEY both hold money out.*] All right, prove I'm not here.
- M G Well you're not in London, are you?
- SQUIRE No, of course I'm not in London!
- M G And you're not in Paris?
- SQUIRE How observant. No, I'm not in Paris.
- M G And you're not in Vienna?
- SQUIRE I'm definitely not in Vienna.
- M G Well, if you're in none of those places I surmise you must be somewhere else.
- SQUIRE The woman's so brilliant! Yes, I must be somewhere else.
- M G And if you're somewhere else, you can't be here. [*SHE takes his money and exits R.*]
- SQUIRE What? The nerve of it. I'll have to try that on some unsuspecting idiot and get my money back.
- [*BILLY enters L.*]
- BILLY Hello Squire. What are you up to?

- SQUIRE *[Looking Heavenward.]* Thank you! Ah Billy, I've just been working out an absolutely marvellous way to make money. Do you want to have a go?
- [BILLY has fallen asleep. Audience reacts.]*
- BILLY Thank you. *[To SQUIRE.]* Sorry Squire, what were you saying?
- SQUIRE I said I've just been working out an absolutely marvellous way to make money. Do you want to have a go?
- BILLY Oh yes please. I never get enough pocket money off my mother. What do I do?
- SQUIRE Well, I will bet you ten pounds that I can prove you're not here.
- [BILLY stares at him. Then looks at himself and all around where he is standing. He then looks at the audience and taps his forehead as though miming "nutcase".]*
- BILLY All right Squire, here's my money. Now prove to me that I'm not here. *[THEY both hold money out.]*
- SQUIRE Well you're not in Oddington?
- BILLY No, I'm not in Oddington.
- SQUIRE And you're not in Dymchurch?
- BILLY No, I'm not in Dymchurch.
- SQUIRE And you're not in Little Hampton?
- BILLY No, and I've no intentions of going to Little Hampton!
- SQUIRE Well, if you're in none of those places you must be somewhere else.
- BILLY Of course I must.
- SQUIRE And if you're somewhere else, you're not here. *[Takes money.]* Thank you very much. *[HE exits L.]*
- BILLY What a swindle. I've been diddled out of my dosh! I've got to get it back somehow. Ah, look who's coming. *[MOTHER GOOSE enters R.]*
- M G Billy, what are you doing stood standing there? Waiting for a cup of tea?
- BILLY No, I'm waiting for a mug.
- M G Well, you won't find any around here.

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