

PROFESSOR *Side 1*

PROFESSOR. There was a knight born in Cappadocia. (*Pause.*) On a time he came in to the province of Libya, to a city named Silene. And by this city was a stagnant pond wherein dwelled a dragon which envenomed all the country. And when he came nigh the city he scorched the people with his breath. There was an ordinance made in the town that there should be taken the children and young people of the town by lot, and every each one as it fell, were he gentle or poor, should be delivered unto the beast. Now, in time a noble knight passed, and when he beheld the mighty creature, said unto the citizens: 'Now doubt ye no thing, without more, believe ye in God, Jesu Christ, and do ye to be baptised and I shall slay the dragon!'

PROFESSOR *Side 2*

Enter the PROFESSOR, garlanded with flowers. Daisy chains. Flowers for buttons. A crown of blossom. He stops and observes.

PROFESSOR. Is that you, Mr Byron?

JOHNNY. I'll be just a moment. Looks like you've had a good day?

PROFESSOR. What? Oh. Yes. Yes indeed. I've had an extraordinary day, Mr Byron. I went to a village fair. I had a pint of beer. Then the next thing I remember is waking alone, in this wood, on a bed of bracken. All around me were outstretched green hands, supporting me, surrounding me, swaying in time with the sunlight. A million tiny green fingers, the tips scorched by the sun. And amid the bracken, an army of spiders were building a webbed citadel, with many bridges and rooms and grand windows and staircases. All I could hear was birdsong. Crystal clear. It was Mary. I heard Mary. Calling me. 'Mary! It's you. You've come back to me. Mary, my dear.' But then I remembered. That's not Mary. That can't be Mary... She's gone.
Pause.

JOHNNY. Yes, she is.

PROFESSOR. And she'll never come back.

JOHNNY. No, Professor. I don't believe she will.
Beat.

PROFESSOR. I feel suddenly light. Like I'm in the middle of light. Like a flame. Or a dancer. I feel light. Like pure light. (*Beat.*) Well, I better toddle off. The gardener's off on holiday to Greece. I mustn't forget to pay him before he flies.

JOHNNY. You better.

The PROFESSOR smiles. He suddenly stops and sniffs the air.

PROFESSOR. What is that? What is that scent? I've been breathing that all day. What can it be?

JOHNNY. That's wild garlic. Wild garlic and the May blossom.

PROFESSOR. Of course. That's what it is. It's been there all day, and I've only just noticed. Then it's really true. The winter is over.

(Singing.)

With the merry ring, adieu the merry spring,
With the merry ring, adieu the merry spring,
For summer is a-come unto day,
How happy is the little bird that merrily doth sing,
In the merry morning of May.