

PANIC IN MOTHER GOOSE LAND

By Geff Moyer

Copyright © 2018 by Geff Moyer, All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-1-64479-025-0

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Brooklyn Publishers LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Brooklyn Publishers LLC. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers LLC. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers LLC.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this Work must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this Work. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the Work. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this Work is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: ***Produced by special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers LLC.***

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Brooklyn Publishers LLC.

BROOKLYN PUBLISHERS LLC
P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406
TOLL FREE (888) 473-8521 • FAX (319) 368-8011

PANIC IN MOTHER GOOSE LAND

A One Act Comedy

by Geff Moyer

SYNOPSIS: Humpty Dumpty has fallen. This has never happened. It's only been a little ditty told to kids. But since it has happened, now there is no one guarding the wall that separates Mother Goose Land from that of the Brothers Grimm, which is filled with evil witches, horrible dwarfs, evil stepmothers, hungry wolves, and hunters with axes. The Grimms have wanted to take over Mother Goose Land for years and with Humpty Dumpty gone, now's their chance to storm the wall. Unless a certain doctor can put Humpty back together again, but since that doctor is the infamous Victor Frankenstein, Mother Goose Land could get plucked.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 females, 4 males, 7 either, 1-20 extras; gender flexible)

- PETER PUMPKIN EATER (m)..... Pragmatic organizer whose patience slowly becomes strained. *(123 lines)*
- MARY CONTRARY (f)..... Very contrary, sometimes caustic and argumentative. *(41 lines)*
- MISS MUFFET (f)..... Protective of her famous tuffet. *(48 lines)*
- JACK (m)..... A man of many personalities that even he has difficulties keeping straight. *(52 lines)*
- JILL (f)..... Drama Queen and nemesis of Bo Peep. *(41 lines)*
- BO PEEP (f)..... Overly protective of her neurotic sheep, and nemesis of Jill. *(45 lines)*
- BOY BLUE (m)..... A prissy dresser concerned more with his apparel and getting a good nap. *(19 lines)*

OLD WOMAN (f)	So many children that she’s willing to “lose” a few to create some breathing space in her shoe. <i>(41 lines)</i>
PIE MAN/WOMAN (m/f)	Fed up with Simon always trying to get free pies, terse with comments to Simon. <i>(35 lines)</i>
SIMPLE SIMON (m)	Simple, that’s it. <i>(40 lines)</i>
DOCTOR VICTOR/VICTORIA	
FRANKENSTEIN (m/f)	A witty, seemingly jovial “doctor” with a deadly ulterior motive. <i>(51 lines)</i>
HUMPTY TOO (m/f)	The “reassembled” Humpty Dumpty but suffering from a “split personality.” <i>(63 lines)</i>
WITCH ONE (m/f)	<i>(3 lines)</i>
WITCH TWO (m/f)	<i>(3 lines)</i>
OGRE (m/f)	<i>(2 lines)</i>
EVIL STEPMOTHER (f)	<i>(1 line)</i>
HUNTER (m/f)	<i>(1 line)</i>
GEORGIE PORGIE (m)	A sneaky kisser with no lines, but always puckering lips. <i>(Non-Speaking)</i>
EXTRAS (m/f)	Evil Grimm characters. <i>(Non-Speaking)</i>

CAST NOTE: Although British accents would accentuate humor, they are at director’s discretion and actor’s abilities.

DURATION: 50 minutes

TIME: Time of fairy tales

SETTING: Mother Goose Land

SET

A four-foot high brick wall stretches at an angle from ULC to DLC. A bell on a post rests at one corner of the wall. A few tree stumps and hay bales for sitting are all that fill the rest of the stage.

PROPS

- Tuffet
- Bell
- Roll
- Mug
- Coins
- Tray of Pies
- Bugle
- Candlestick Holder
- Water Pail
- Scroll
- Sea Shells
- Sheep's Fleece Shoulder Shawl

COSTUMES

All costumes should reflect original 15th Century Mother Goose characters. Look them up online then use your imagination!

MARY – Wears an apron and garden hat.

BOY BLUE – Frilly and lacy attire.

BO PEEP – Has a shepherd's hook.

PIE MAN – Wears a large white baker's hat.

OLD WOMAN – Ragged attire.

DOCTOR VICTOR – Wears a long lab coat over Victorian style attire. His hair resembles that of Albert Einstein.

HUMPTY TOO – He has the arms, legs, and head of the classic Frankenstein monster and walks like him, but his entire torso is large pieces of egg shell crudely stitched together.

SOUND EFFECTS

- Patriotic Music
- Crickets

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The juxtaposition of the classic 15th Century “time period” costumes and the contemporary dialogue and flavor of the characters will enhance the humor. If a consistency in English accents can be achieved, use them. Pacing is very important. Remember the word in the title, “Panic.” When you see three periods before and after specific lines, it means that the actors should be “stepping on” each other’s lines. This will help the pacing and timing. Humpty Too should turn its head side-to-side when arguing with itself, not just change voices. Its body should be the classic Frankenstein monster of films. Its pants and jacket should have legs and sleeves too short to make the monster appear larger. Preferably, its face should be created with make-up (*green face, large forehead, etc.*) so it can show expressions. Although I have seen half masks of Frankenstein available that only cover top of a person’s head and forehead, allowing facial expressions to be exposed.

AT RISE: *In darkness we hear much bickering and complaining. Lights come up on MARY, MISS MUFFET, JACK, BO PEEP, BOY BLUE, PIE MAN, and SIMPLE SIMON. PETER is standing by the wall, perhaps on a hay bale, trying to get the attention of the impatient crowd. Impatience and anxiety run rampant.*

PETER: ...People, people, please, please, I know you all have work to do ...

MARY: ...Your darn right we do...!

PETER: ...but we must solve this...

MARY: ...I've got weeds choking my pretty maids ...

MISS MUFFET: ...My tuffet is covered in cobwebs...

JACK: ...*(Grinning.)* And such a nice tuffet it is!

PETER: ...this is a very grave time...

MISS MUFFET: ...*(To JACK.)* Go fetch water, pervert!

BO PEEP: ...My sheep get very anxious when I'm not home...

JACK: ...*(To MISS MUFFET.)* Lean eater, if you please...

PETER: ...if you would just give me a moment...

PIE MAN: ...*(A tray with several small pies is strapped around his neck.)* ...My pies are getting cold...

MARY: *(To JACK.)*...Lean eater, plum puller, water fetcher, make up your mind, schizo!

BOY BLUE: ...*(Yawning.)* I need a nap...

BO PEEP: ...very, very anxious and worried...

PETER: ...I must have your attention...

MISS MUFFET: ...*(Shuddering.)* I hate touching cobwebs...

BOY BLUE: ...*(Reclining.)* Wake me when this meeting's over!

PETER: ...We are in a dangerous situation here...

BO PEEP: ... Some are still missing, the poor dears...

GEORGIE PORGIE enters in a rush, kisses BO PEEP and exits running off.

BO PEEP: Georgie, I've told you to cut that out...!

PIE MAN: ...I can't sell cold pies...

SIMPLE SIMON: ...Are cold ones cheaper...?

MISS MUFFET: *(Itching and rubbing her hands, shivering.)* Nasty, sticky stuff...

OLD WOMAN: (*Enters in a frenzy.*) Any of you seen my youngest four? The sneaky little buggers slipped out through a hole in the sole...

PETER: ...This is vital, people...

OLD WOMAN: ...Those little imps are up to no good, I just know...

PETER: Enough!!!

EVERYONE gasps.

MISS MUFFET: (*Aghast.*) You yelled at us!

BO PEEP: (*Offended.*) You know how Mother feels about yelling!

PETER: I'm sorry, but I must tell you something...something very important!

BO PEEP: Make it quick! I need find my missing sheep!

MARY: We all have lives, you know, Peter!

PETER: Not much longer!

EVERYONE mumble and grumbles.

PETER: I don't mean to frighten you, but...yes, I mean to frighten you!
You all know what happened to Humpty.

MARY: He fell! On that wall forever and suddenly decides to fall!?
What an egghead!

PETER: Jack and I don't think he fell!

EVERYONE'S puzzled whispers and murmurs drift through the crowd.

PETER: We think he was pushed.

EVERYONE gasps.

PETER: Jack, would you come here, please?

JACK crosses to PETER.

PETER: Tell them what you know.

JACK: I am very nimble.

PETER: Wrong Jack, Jack!

JACK: I pulled out a plum.

PETER: Still wrong!

JACK: I can't eat fat.

PETER: Keep trying!

JACK: Jill is missing!

PETER: That Jack!

CROWD responds.

JACK: She went up the hill by the north part of the wall to get water and hasn't come down, or even fallen down, like she always does.

PETER: We think she was taken by the same person who pushed Humpty off the wall.

PIE MAN: Do you have any suspects? Maybe someone who likes free pies?

SIMPLE SIMON: Oh, I like free...hey, wait a minute!

MISS MUFFET: Who would take her?

BO PEEP: (*Aside to MISS MUFFET, catty.*) Who'd want her?

BO PEEP and MISS MUFFET giggle.

PETER: We have no idea, but she could be in danger and we're very worried about her safety. Aren't we, Jack?

JACK: Aren't we what?

PETER: Worried about her safety.

JACK: Who's safety?

PETER: Jill's!

JACK: Why? Did she try to jump over my candlestick? It's very dangerous, you know!? Only a professional can attempt...

PETER: Water fetcher, Jack! Give me back the Water Fetcher!

JACK: (*Closes his eyes and shakes head while making a motorboat sound. Stops, blinks.*) Oh, yes, I'm worried to death about her. If we only knew who took her.

SIMPLE SIMON: Someone who was thirsty, I bet...if she had her pail, that is. Did she have her pail?

JACK: Yes. Her favorite one...with the least dents.

PETER: We do have a theory, though.

SIMPLE SIMON: (*Looking around.*) Where is it?

PETER: Where's what, Simon?

SIMPLE SIMON: (*Still looking.*) That "theory" thing. Got it hidden, have ya?

PETER: A theory is an idea, Simon, not a thing.

SIMPLE SIMON: I knew that!

MARY: I've seen better heads in cabbage patches.

SIMPLE SIMON: (*Aside to PIE MAN.*) Does she mean me?

PIE MAN: Haven't the foggiest.

PETER: We think it was a...Grimm.

CROWD reacts with fear.

OLD WOMAN: Oh my, oh my! Do you think they also took my four children? Not that I can't spare them, but still...

BO PEEP: I'll bet those awful Grimms have my missing sheep! The poor dears are probably so scared their wool is falling right off them.

JACK: And my missing plum, uh, candlestick, uh, lean meat, I mean, Jill! (*Aside to PETER.*) Jill, right?

PETER: Right now, anything is possible! You all know how despicable the Grimms are: evil witches, nasty dwarfs, mean stepmothers, hungry wolves, hunters with axes, greedy little girls dressed in red...and they have wanted to take over Mother Goose land for years. Without Humpty guarding the wall, this is their chance. Only Humpty knew the correct bell rings to summon all the King's horses and all the King's men to fight them off. They know that! Now that Humpty isn't there, well, I hope you all see the danger...

CROWD reacts with fear.

PETER: ...But, but...please, listen...Jack and I have may have a solution. Tell them, Jack.

JACK: We're going to spread the fat that I can't eat all over the wall to make it slippery, so they'll fall on their big, evil bu...

PETER: No, Jack! That's not the plan.

GEORGIE PORGIE enters in a rush, kisses MISS MUFFET and exits running off.

MISS MUFFET: (*Wiping her cheek.*) Ooooooh, I hate that! He slobbers. (*Sniffing her hand.*) Yuk! Beware, girls, he's been in the onion patch again.

JACK: Oh, oh, I remember – we're putting lit candlesticks at the base of the wall, so they'll burn their fat, evil bu...

PETER: The Doctor, Jack! Remember the Doctor?

BOY BLUE: What Doctor? Could he cure my narcolepsy?

SIMPLE SIMON: What's that? Is it catching?

MARY: You don't have narcolepsy, you dolt! You're just a lazy lummox.

BOY BLUE: I beg to differ!

MARY: Where are your cows?

BOY BLUE: Uh, well, I'm not sure...maybe in...

MARY: In my garden, dunderhead! Why? Because you're always asleep behind some hay bale.

BOY BLUE: (*Snooty.*) Yes, because I have narcolepsy.

MARY: You do not have...

PETER: Stop it! Stop the bickering!! This is a desperate time! Jack, I'm talking about the Doctor who rented Ol' King Cole's old castle.

SIMPLE SIMON: Ol' King Cole moved?

PETER: Yes.

SIMPLE SIMON: Where's his new castle?

PETER: Newcastle.

SIMPLE SIMON: Yes. Where?

PETER: Newcastle.

SIMPLE SIMON: That's what I asked! Where is his new castle?

PETER: Newcastle!

SIMPLE SIMON: Yes! Where?

PETER: Newcastle!

SIMPLE SIMON: I know! But where?

MARY: This could go on all night. (*In SIMPLE SIMON'S face.*) In – the – town – of – Newcastle!

SIMPLE SIMON: (*To PETER.*) Why didn't you say that to begin with!?

PIE MAN: Can I still sell my pies there...at the old castle? And the new castle?

SIMPLE SIMON: (*Glaring at PETER.*) Which is in Newcastle. I'll even help you carry those delicious looking...

SIMPLE SIMON goes to stick his finger in a pie, but PIE MAN slaps it away.

BO PEEP: *(To PETER.)* What Doctor?

MISS MUFFET: Yeah, who is this Doctor? Does he have anything for spider bites? *(Rubs her rump.)*

OLD WOMAN: How about a medicine for jock itch? My oldest eight boys get this terrible rash...

PETER: He's not that kind of doctor. He's more of a scientist than a doctor. He makes things.

SIMPLE SIMON: Pies?

PETER: No, not pies...

MARY: Weed killer?

PETER: No!

MISS MUFFET: Bug repellent?

PETER: No...!

OLD WOMAN: Valium? I could use...

PETER: No! He's going to make us a new Humpty.

CROWD is astonished.

OLD WOMAN: How is he going to do that?

PIE MAN: Humpty is in pieces.

MARY: Lots of pieces!

PETER: He says he can do it and he's done it before.

BO PEEP: "Before!?" But Humpty has never fallen before.

MISS MUFFET: That was just a little rhyme for children.

PETER: No, not Humpty! Well, yes Humpty. I mean, he's put together something else, I'm not sure what, but not Humpty. Yet. I mean, he's putting Humpty together right now.

JACK: Doctor Victor says he can reassemble Humpty and I believe he can.

MARY: That's his name? Victor?

PIE MAN: What kind of name is that?

MISS MUFFET: Sounds...German.

OLD WOMAN: The Grimms are German.

BO PEEP: I smell a rat.

SIMPLE SIMON: *(Sniffing.)* I don't.

JACK: No, no, no, you're all wrong about Doctor Victor. I saw his resume! He studied at Bob Hoskins.

PETER: He is not a Grimm, probably not even German...maybe Austrian or something. But that's not the only reason we called you all here today. Jack and I have been guarding the wall since Humpty...well, until we have proof, right now we'll still say fell. But we're tired, folks. We've gotten very little sleep. We've been guarding the wall day and night for almost a week. We're bushed. Half the time Jack doesn't even know who he is. We need some help. We need some sleep.

BOY BLUE: Well, I can sing you some nice lullabies that'll knock you out in minutes. That is, if I don't fall asleep before I finish singing them. *(To MARY, snooty.)* My narcolepsy, you know!

MISS MUFFET: If you need to sit down, I'll loan you my tuffet, but only for a short time. A very short time!

JACK: *(Grinning.)* And what a nice tuffet it...

PETER: No, we need you! Personally, physically! Jack and I have put together a schedule. *(Opens a scroll.)* This will tell you when and how long your guard time will be on the wall. The first shift...

MARY: Wait!? Wait right there, Pete!

PETER: What?

MARY: You want us to guard the wall?

PETER: Yes.

BO PEEP: *(Gestures to herself and MISS MUFFET.)* But...but we're...we're girls.

MISS MUFFET: And with Jill gone, Bo Peep and I are the only two girls here.

MARY and OLD WOMAN give BO PEEP and MISS MUFFET a look.

OLD WOMAN: What are we, curds and whey?

PIE MAN: If I stand guard, my pies will certainly get cold and stale and...

SIMPLE SIMON: *(To PIE MAN.)* I would be more than happy to watch them for you.

OLD WOMAN: Do you actually think I can leave thirty-seven children unattended?

PETER: It will only be for two days. Doctor Victor says he'll have Humpty back together and on the wall by then.

OLD WOMAN: And in two days those urchins could turn my shoe into a flip-flop.

MARY: This is a greedy weedy season! There is no way I...

MISS MUFFET: ...In two days my tuffet would be covered in cobwebs.

JACK: (*Grinning.*) And what a...

BO PEEP: ...If my sheep should come home and I'm not there, the anxiety would cause them to lose their wool. Then what? Huh, Peter? Then what? Bald sheep! That's what!

Unseen by others, BOY BLUE finds a comfortable place and falls to sleep.

PETER: I know it's a burden, but Jack and I really need to...

MARY: (*Skeptical.*) What about your wife, Peter? Is she in your schedule? Will she be sharing this "burden?"

PETER: Oh...well...I...

BO PEEP: (*Insistent.*) Well? Will she?

PETER: She's...uh...she's indisposed.

MISS MUFFET: You put her in a pumpkin shell again, didn't you, Peter?

OLD WOMAN: (*Aside to MARY.*) Why does that woman keep running off?

MARY: (*Aside to OLD WOMAN.*) After five-hundred years of knowing Peter you still ask that question?

BO PEEP: Who is it this time, Peter?

MISS MUFFET: (*Very insistent.*) Who, Peter?

BO PEEP and MISS MUFFET: Who???

PETER: Okay, all right! It was Tom the Piper's son. He had stolen a pig and they were going to run off to the woods to cook and eat it. Nobody eats with my wife except me!!!

MISS MUFFET: But all you cook are pumpkin pies, pumpkin cookies, pumpkin stew, pumpkin roast...

OLD WOMAN: The way my kids eat me outta house and home, for a few slices of thick, juicy bacon I'd sneak off to the woods with that little thief, too.

PETER: *(To BO PEEP, sharply.)* Would you rather have your neurotic sheep eaten by a Grimm wolf? Long, yellow fangs ripping off their wool?

BO PEEP cowers.

PETER: *(To OLD WOMAN.)* Maybe your children were taken by an evil Grimm witch and, right now, they're eating their way through her candy house and getting as fat and tasty as a Christmas goose – forgive me, Mother. *(To MISS MUFFET.)* How would you like a huge, ugly ogre plopping his nasty fat rump down on your precious tuffet, squishing down the down, staining and stinking up the upholstery!

MISS MUFFET is mortified.

PETER: And I'm sure you'd appreciate some bossy stepmother telling you what you can and can't grow in your garden, right? Right? Don't you understand!?? This is a crucial time, people! We must keep the Grimms out of Mother Goose Land!

JILL: *(Enters tattered and battered, stumbling and gasping.)* Help me, please, help me.

JILL collapses. ALL, but MARY and BO PEEP run to her responding with concerns.

MISS MUFFET: Jill!!!

OLD WOMAN: Did my kids beat you up again?

JILL: *(Gasping.)* Water...please...water...

PETER: Jack, get her some water!

JACK: *(Looking around.)* I can't find my candlestick.

PETER: Pail, Jack, pail!

JACK: Right! *(Runs off, exiting.)*

MISS MUFFET places JILL'S head in her lap.

MISS MUFFET: Jill, speak to me. It's Muffet, Jill.

PIE MAN: Does she need a pie?

SIMPLE SIMON: I'd gladly take it to her.

PETER: What happened, Jill? Where have you been?

JILL: (*Gasping and panting.*) The Grimms...in...over there...beyond the wall...the Grimms had me. Some terrible old lady in a dirty little cabin kept dressing me in all red and telling me to bring her a lunch basket. (*Sobbing.*) It was horrible! I hate red!

BO PEEP: (*Aside to MARY.*) Always has to be the center of attention!

MARY: (*Aside to BO PEEP.*) Got that right!

OLD WOMAN: How did you escape?

JILL: By the hair of my chinny chin chin.

SIMPLE SIMON: (*Aside to PIE MAN.*) What does that mean?

PIE MAN: Haven't the foggiest.

JACK enters, running in with a small pail of water and dumps it on JILL.

JILL: (*Sputtering angrily and leaping up.*) You idiot! What are you doing!?

BO PEEP: (*Aside to MARY.*) Humph! I knew she wasn't hurt...

JILL: ...Did you break your crown again?

JACK: I was just trying to help...

JILL: Well, don't! (*Places the back of her hand to her forehead and swooning, the melodrama returns.*) This day...oh...this day...the worst of my life...I've seen things...horrible things...

MISS MUFFET: It's okay, Jill! You're home now.

BO PEEP: (*Aside to MARY.*) What a drama queen!

MARY: (*Aside to BO PEEP.*) She should be in one of those theater troupes that talk funny.

BO PEEP and MARY giggle.

JILL: (*Extremely melodramatic.*) They're coming...all of them...they're coming...

BO PEEP: (*Aside to and nudging MARY.*) Oh, here we go, here we go...

MARY: This should be good.

JILL: I've seen them all. It was a nightmare, I tell you...a nightmare. And they're coming for us, I tell you. (*Slowly slips into a desperate Southern Belle's accent.*) I shudder to think of what will happen. Our

homes burned, our land barren and ruined, darkness everywhere. It's a tragedy, a tragedy! Ugly wart-nosed witches who want to turn us into geckos, snot-drooling ogres with huge clubs to smash us into piles of yuk, wicked stepmothers carrying brooms and mops to make us clean and scrub the very ground we walk on, hunters with axes dripping with the blood of their poor, innocent victims, snarling and hungry wolves with fangs as big as Bo Peep's feet.

BO PEEP: My feet are not big!

JILL: Please! You could walk on water.

BO PEEP: And when are you going to start wearing undies when you tumble? We already have one moon.

PETER: How long do we have, Jill...?

JACK: ...When will they get here...?

OLD WOMAN: ...Did they have my children? You know them, my four youngest: Billy, Milly, Tilly, and...and...never can remember that fourth one!

JILL: Silly?

OLD WOMAN: Silly! Thank you.

JILL: They were in a big iron cage being carried by the ogres.

OLD WOMAN: A cage!?

JILL: An iron cage! The witches kept tossing candy into it and those kids were gobbling it up like pigs in a poke.

OLD WOMAN: Great! More dentist bills!

MARY: She's fattening them up for her oven.

OLD WOMAN: At least they can't cause any mischief locked in an iron cage. That is a weight off my shoulders!

BO PEEP: They're going to eat them!

OLD WOMAN: Oh my, oh my...but...that would create room for my sewing machine. I have to sit outside to make their clothes, and they always seem to need new clothes in the winter. November to March, all I do is wheeze, cough, sneeze, snot dripping all over the only winter coat I own...

PETER: (*Shouting.*) When, Jill!

MISS MUFFET: You shouted again.

BO PEEP: You know how Mother feels about shouting.

BOY BLUE: Yeah, you woke me. Jill!? You're back! You look terrible.

JILL: They're already gathering at the bottom of the wall and plan to storm it tomorrow.

ALL: *(Except BOY BLUE.)* Tomorrow!!!

ALL start to rush to the wall, but PETER holds up his hand to stop them. Shushing the CROWD, he cautiously crosses to wall and looks over it and down.

PETER: *(Whispering.)* She's right. They're down there!

OTHERS carefully and quietly go to wall and peer over it and down.

BO PEEP: There's so many of them.

SIMPLE SIMON: Too many!

MISS MUFFET: We're going to need all the King's horses and all the King's men!

MARY: *(Shouting.)* Get away from our wall, you slimy...

OTHERS grab, shush, and stifle MARY and drag her away from wall.

WITCH ONE: *(Offstage, at a distance)* Come on down and join us, sweetie pie. *(Cackles a laugh.)*

WITCH TWO: *(Offstage, at a distance.)* We'll fire up the cauldron for you. *(Cackles a laugh.)*

OGRE: *(Offstage, grunting at a distance.)* Fresh meat, fresh meat...

WITCHES laugh.

JACK: *(Still at the wall.)* Maybe we could drop something down on their heads.

OLD WOMAN: Like what, hay bales? Nasty words? Pies?

PIE MAN: *(Protecting his tray.)* No, no, no...

BO PEEP: Why do the Grimms want to take us over anyway? They have their own place, even though it is a dank dark forest.

PETER: Because they hate rhymes and they want our stories to be as dismal as theirs, and we only have until tomorrow to get ready for them.

BOY BLUE: Tomorrow, huh? Then I have some time to catch a few more zees.

PETER: No, you don't! You have the first guard duty...with Mary.

MARY: Oh no, no, no, I will not be a partner with that snoring peacock!

BOY BLUE: I do not snore....

MARY: You could wake the dead. Let Muffet do it.

MISS MUFFET: Me!? Why me!?

MARY: How many times have we found you behind the haystack with Blue?

MISS MUFFET: I caught his narcolepsy.

SIMPLE SIMON: (*Moves away from BOY BLUE.*) It is catching.

PETER: (*Forceful, holding up the scroll.*) Jack and I spent half the night making this schedule and we are going to follow it!! That is that!! We even put a male with each female, so you ladies would feel safer.

ALL the WOMEN laugh.

JILL: You actually think these males will make us feel safer?

The MEN respond with great indignation.

JILL: (*Gesturing to PIE MAN.*) If the Grimms attacked on his watch, he'll try to sell them pies...

PIE MAN: A fellow has to make a living...

JILL: (*Gesturing to BOY BLUE.*) He won't fight because he might get his prissy clothes dirty...

BOY BLUE: Have you seen the prices at Chow Ling's laundry?

JILL: (*Gesturing to JACK.*) He'd probably panic and become all four Jacks at once and his head would explode...

JACK: (*To PETER.*) Does that doctor have a concussion protocol...?

JILL: (*Gesturing to SIMPLE SIMON.*) And him...he wouldn't know a witch if it bit his butt! And you... (*Pokes PETER'S chest.*)...you would rather stuff all of us women in a pumpkin shell anyway. Think about it...all of you...we don't stand a blind mouse's chance against the Grimms. (*Plops down on a hay bale.*) The ride is over! We're toast! Kaput! Curtains! Say sayonara to Mother Goose Land!

Disappointment and depression spreads among the ALL except PETER. People moan and groan in despair. GEORGIE PORGIE enters in a rush, kisses JILL and exits running off. JILL jumps up.

JILL: And him, he'd probably kiss an ogre! (*Plops back down, wipes her cheek then sniffs her hand.*) Yuk! Onions!!

MISS MUFFET: Warned you.

PETER: (*Scanning the moping crowd.*) I can't believe this! I can't believe you all! Giving up? Just willing to roll over and play dead while the Grimms turn this place into a living nightmare? Mother Goose Land has been around for hundreds of years. We're history! All of you, you are all part of history.

MARY: With no future!

PETER: "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary,"...Do you even have a clue of what that's about?

MARY: Who cares!?

PETER: You should! It's the Church of the Virgin Mary, and your so-called "pretty maids all in a row" are the nuns.

MARY: No wonder their stems look like rulers.

PETER: (*To JACK.*) "Little Jack Horner!" You were not a good boy! Jack Horner stole a "plum" of a land deed and you still live their today.

JACK: Wish they would've put in a bigger septic tank.

PETER: (*Pointing offstage.*) Georgie Porgie? George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham famous for his love affairs. Miss Muffet...Mary the Catholic Queen of Scots who was "frightened away" by three Presbyterian ministers.

MISS MUFFET: Three? That's why the spider has six legs!

PETER: Peep was the name of a pub where sheep smugglers hung out.

BO PEEP: No wonder my sheep always smell like ale and constantly wag their tails!

PETER: The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe? Your children are all the members of Parliament.

OLD WOMAN: Good heavens, our country is doomed.

PETER: Boy Blue was a Cardinal who couldn't help Henry VIII with a divorce.

JACK and JILL: the failure to wed Queen Mary to the King of France. Jack Sprat: your fat wife was the greedy and bloody Queen Henrietta. And you, Simon – King James The First who sold titles to fatten up his personal treasury.

SIMPLE SIMON: Oh, the pies I could've bought with that.

PETER: The point is, you are all history! All of you! Mother Goose Land is history! The Grimms? Just a gang of nasty, filthy, evil creatures not worthy of setting even their big toes on our land.

The moping CROWD is stirring as PETER'S speech builds.

PETER: We can't let them win! We must stand our ground! Show them we will not go quietly into the night! Because this time we are not fighting for our freedom, but for our very existence. Tomorrow is our Independence Day!

MISS MUFFET: (*Aside.*) I've heard that somewhere before.

SFX: Patriotic music slowly fills background, possibly instrumental version of Battle Hymn of the Republic.

PETER: Whatever the cost might be, we must defend Mother Goose Land. We shall fight them on the beaches...

JILL: What beaches...?

PETER: ...We shall fight them in the fields...we shall fight them in the streets...

MISS MUFFET: That's familiar, too...

OLD WOMAN: (*Aside to MISS MUFFET.*) Sssshhh, he's on a roll...

PETER: We shall fight them on the seas. We shall never, never surrender! We are... Mother Goose Land!

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from PANIC IN MOTHER GOOSE LAND by Geff Moyer. For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:

Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 1-888-473-8521 • Fax (319) 368-8011

www.brookpub.com