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FIRST PLACE: ONE-ACT PLAY

The Myth of the Emerald Ship

by J. Daniel Byford and Edward Garner

DRAMATIS PERSONAE IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

Two Plaid Tycoons:
  Green hat
  Moneypockets
Children of the Roses
Giant Spider
Whirring Constant Bug
A Tablefull of Dwarves
Intellectual Santa Claws

SCENE 1

A mountaintop overlooks a furrowed valley. The green valley heavily contrasts with the bare rock and sparse vegetation scattered here and there upon the mountain. A stiff breeze hums and rustles through the sage. Two plaid tycoons enter on the mountaintop and peer down into the valley. They are dressed in plaid trousers and green satin tuxedos with extremely long tails which blow in the wind like kites. One wears a green top hat which matches his tuxedo, and the other tycoon wears a silver top hat. Both are adorned with tremendous plaid bow ties. They are sipping champagne and smoking big cigars.

GREENHAT: Well, Moneypockets, you know that Bullish is the only way to fortune.
MONEYPOCKETS: Any donkey will tell you that.
GREENHAT: So you admit it, do you?
MONEYPOCKETS: Admit what?
GREENHAT: That you're an ass!
MONEYPOCKETS: Why you cardboard tusker! Your mother is a bear who got sprayed by an elephant and you're a big boar!

(Moneypockets puts his fingers in front of his mouth, imitating tusks and snorts violently like a pig.)

GREENHAT: Don't you talk about my mother!

(The tycoons begin shoving each other; teeth clamped on their smoke belching cigars and their glasses slosh champagne on their tuxedos.) (A number of children suddenly appear from behind a boulder and forming a circle they began to dance and sing.)

Ring around the Roses
Pocket full of posies
Upstairs, downstairs,
Squat!

(Continue to repeat verse sotto voce.)

MONEYPOCKETS (stops shoving Greenhat and looks in the direction of the children): Wait...Wait a minute. What's that?
GREENHAT: The wind through your hollow head (shoves Moneypockets)
MONEYPOCKETS: Open up your elephant ears, Greenhat! (He points at the children with his cigar.)
GREENHAT turns and sees the children. He bends–seizes a rock–and hurls it at them. The children vanish in a puff of smoke.)
MONEYPOCKETS: What did you do that for?
GREENHAT: For your mother, Oedipus.
MONEYPOCKETS: Ahhhh... (Moneypockets stiffness-Greenhat to one side, and walks to the spot where the children were dancing. There he discovers a brilliantly luminous disc shining the color of amber. He picks it up and examines it. Greenhat joins him, ferociously puffing on his cigar.)
GREENHAT: What have you got?
MONEYPOCKETS: I don't know, but there's another one. (Moneypockets stabs a pointing finger at a disc not far in front of him. He pounces on the disc and bends admiring it. Greenhat walks up behind him, lifts the champagne bottle from Moneypockets' tuxedo and taps him on the shoulder.)
GREENHAT: Hey! That one is mine! (He holds out his hand and Moneypockets reluctantly gives up the disc. Greenhat stuffs the disc into his tuxedo, pours himself a glass of champagne and hands Moneypockets the bottle. The tycoons follow a trail of discs, collecting them as they go, stuffing the discs into their pockets. Suddenly they come upon the entrance to a cave. Pausing, Moneypockets turns to Greenhat.)
MONEYPOCKETS: Well Greenhat, you know that Bullish is the only way to fortune. (Then they disappear into the cave.)

CURTAIN

SCENE 2

Inside the cave the plaid tycoons stumble down a dimly lit corridor. A glowing disc affords the only light.
MONEYPOCKETS: Sure is dark in here. (They bump into one another.)
GREENHAT: Hey watch where you're going! Hold up that disc. (Moneypockets holds up the glowing disc against the darkness, lighting more of the corridor. A huge Web is suddenly illuminated. Within it a Giant Spider is closing upon a constantly whirring bug trapped by a single thick strand. As
the Web is illuminated the Spider whirls towards the Plaid Tycoons, snarling. The Whirring Constant Bug wrenches free of the Web and escapes.)

SPIDER (In a rasping voice):
I'm sure you must be weary dears
Come rest awhile upon my bed
(rasps louder)
I've pretty sheets to keep you warm
And pillows for your heads.
(Tycoons are oblivious of the Spider)

MONEYPOCKETS (Turning back to Greenhat): Are you sleepy?
GREENHAT: No, but I would like some more champagne.
(Moneypockets pulls out the champagne bottle and fills their glasses)
GREENHAT: Got a light?
MONEYPOCKETS: Surely. (Lights cigar)

SPIDER (Hangs from Web and rasps down at the Plaid Tycoons):
Dear friends within my pantry
I'm sure you'll welcome be
I have a store of all that's nice
Come have a drink with me.

MONEYPOCKETS: Did you say something?
GREENHAT: No, but I think that spider up there did.
(They face each other incredulously, then turn together and face the Spider. Spider leaps down towards them, snarling. Moneypockets throws the glowing disc at Spider which explodes into a screen of smoke. Lights fade.)

CURTAINS

SCENE 3

In a huge chamber lit by forge fires, dwarves feast and make merry at a great table. An old man wearing a bright red sweatshirt bearing the words Intellectual Santa Claws sits at the head of the table with the dwarves. They are singing and toasting and beat time to the tune with their mugs on the table top.

Speculation
Rap your jaws
Intellectual Santa Claws
What's the answer
Don't you know
Spin your top
And off you go.
(The Plaid Tycoons enter, staring about themselves, as they approach the great table. Intellectual Santa Claws stands up and begins to laugh. The dwarves disappear into darkness.)

MONEYPOCKETS: Look! It's Intellectual Santa Claws.
(The old man rolls with uncontrollable laughter. Greenhat grabs his arm and pulls him to his feet.)
GREENHAT: See here, Claws, tell us where we are.
(The old man only laughs harder)
GREENHAT: I think he's laughing at us.
CLAWS (Stops laughing and jerks his arm away. He walks to a large bag and reaches inside bringing forth a tiny ship bearing upon its mast an emerald of near blinding light): I won't tell you where you are, but I do have something for your voyage.
(Claw knits his brow and speaks more seriously)

Take this Emerald Ship (hands it to Moneypockets) and put it into a stream of Eye-Embracing Amber. It will instantly grow large enough to carry you Plaid Tycoons (pauses)...to where you are.
(Claws exits roaring with laughter. The Plaid Tycoons stand holding the Ship. As the Plaid Tycoons examine the Ship the background fades to darkness and they are engulfed in brilliant green light.)

CURTAINS

SCENE 4

Again at the Spider's Web.
The Plaid Tycoons walk through a dark corridor. Moneypockets holds the Emerald Ship lighting their way. The Spider's Web is illuminated but the Spider is nowhere to be seen. Instead, a white bundle is trapped in the Web. It is a lump about the size of the Whirring Constant Bug. A muffled, whirring sound can be heard from within.

MONEYPOCKETS (Puts hand to ear and turns toward the bundle): What's that noise?
GREENHAT: What noise?
MONEYPOCKETS: That whirring noise.
MONEYPOCKETS and GREENHAT (Suddenly frightened): The Spider!!
(They drop what they are carrying and leap into one another's arms for protection.)
GREENHAT (Releasing himself from embrace): That's no spider, you fool, I can see it. It's something trapped in the Spider's Web.
MONEYPOCKETS (Pulls out champagne bottle and pours): Oh, yeah.
(Unexpectedly a brilliant golden egg rolls out of the bundle, dropping into the arms of Greenhat. It is an immense egg.)
GREENHAT: I think I've just become a mother.
MONEYPOCKETS: Here, have a cigar. (Sticks one in his mouth)

SPIDER (Rasping): Come back, my friends, come back.
(Lights fade on swinging Spider)

CURTAINS

SCENE 5

Outside the cave entrance at the foot of the mountain the Plaid Tycoons are sitting on a rock. Moneypockets is sailing the Emerald Ship in the air, and Greenhat is hugging the golden egg tightly to his body. (Flash: Children of the Roses appear holding hands turning in a circle)

CHILDREN:
Ring around the Roses
Pocket full of Posies
Upstairs, downstairs
Squat!

(The Plaid Tycoons see the Children, look at one another, and look back at the Children. Children vanish. Scrambling to where they had seen the Children, the Tycoons find only
scattered roses.)
GREENHAT (Bends to pick up a rose. Holds it up to inspect it):
Huh, just roses. (Shakes head) Just a bunch of roses.
MONEYPOCKETS (Pours himself a glass of champagne. Bends
down to pick up a rose and fits it into his lapel)
(Greenhat flings away his rose into a nearby stream and
watches it float momentarily. Suddenly he realizes he has
thrown it into a stream of Eye-Embracing Amber)
GREENHAT: Give me the ship!
MONEYPOCKETS (Worriedly): Why do you want it?
GREENHAT: You want to find out where we are don't you?
Well, there's the stream.
MONEYPOCKETS: Now just a minute. There's a fine emerald
on this ship and you've got the golden egg. How do I know that
you won't take the ship and the golden egg and leave me here
with nothing?
GREENHAT: Well, take the emerald off then. It's yours.
(Money pockets takes emerald off mast and sticks it in a bag. He
gives the Ship to Greenhat, who puts it into the stream of
Eye-Embracing Amber. A great bubbling is heard and the Ship
sinks. They puff cigars, watching it go down. They walk back to
the rock. Greenhat sits down and looks at the golden egg.)
GREENHAT: I'm getting hungry.
MONEYPOCKETS (Caressing his emerald): Me too. (He pulls
out champagne bottle)
(Greenhat begins to peel a thick golden tinsel from the egg)
MONEYPOCKETS: Care for a drink?

FADE