

MYE AND THE SANDPEOPLE

By Celeste Bonfanti

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Heuer Publishing LLC, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

ISBN: 978-1-61588-111-6

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PUBLISHED BY

**HEUER PUBLISHING LLC
P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406
TOLL FREE (800) 950-7529 • FAX (319) 368-8011**

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SYNOPSIS: Mye of Tantamee, a young storyteller in search of inspiration, wanders into the whacky land of Yarbankian and the fun begins. In no time, with the help of the Sandpeople, Mungo the Music Maker, and the audience, Mye is caught up in a quest—to help the beautiful deaf Empress Imperia recover her happiness (which was stored in a magic egg and subsequently stolen by the mysterious Bork). From the opening scene to the dance marathon at the end, audience members of all ages are swept along by magic, music and mayhem. This is a fantastical original fairy tale that reaches out to both deaf and hearing children with a tribute to Lewis Carroll.

The intention is three-fold:

- to provide family entertainment
- to help children feel less frightened by nightmares
- to provide some basic deaf awareness.

Music plays an integral part in the proceedings; the selections should be made with care and credited in the program.

There is a good deal of audience participation. It is imperative that these exchanges ring true, without saccharine - no talking down to the audience. Even three year-olds can spot a phony a mile off!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The gender-flexible script has been written for an indeterminate number of characters, 7 - 12 being the most likely cast size. The dialogue for the SANDPEOPLE was purposely written in chunks to enable each company to cast as many or as few SANDPEOPLE as desired. The original production individualized each SANDPERSON and identified them by actual names: L'ours, Minerva, Madria, Lilith, Edie, Tika, Shimmer.

SANDPEOPLE..... Gender-flexible number, ages and types. At least two need to be able to sign; these interpret for the EMPRESS IMPERIA. There is a lot of audience participation, humor and improvisation. (*SANDPEOPLE: 16 lines; SANDPERSON: 44 lines*)

MYE OF TANTAMMYE (F) The heroine. Preferably young - age and type flexible. She does not sign. Some audience participation and humor. (*153 lines*)

MUNGO THE MUSIC MAKER..... Gender-flexible with a big, humorous, expressive character. Some audience participation. S/he does not sign. (*107 lines*)

THE BORK Gender-flexible with easy lines! Big miming and crazy dancing required! Most of the work needs to be physical, as the elaborate costume will obscure most of the player. No signing. (*39 lines*)

EMPRESS IMPERIA (F).....Deaf female character, 100% signing. Can be played by a deaf person or a hearing signer. Very sad for most of the show, needs to switch on happiness in an instant.
(21 lines)

CASTING/CHARACTER NOTES

SANDPEOPLE

The Sandpeople can and should be of different types, ages, sexes, sizes, races, etc. – as diverse a group as possible. They should have an authentic delivery; there should be no talking down to children. I found it helpful to make a monologue part of the audition in which they were told to address us as they would an audience of six-year-olds. Character work with the Sandpeople is a real plus for the production. Sandpeople should be encouraged to establish a name (which can be printed in the program) a character history, and select a talisman to be carried in their sacks. The talisman should be somehow representative of them. In addition to individual character questions (which can be in questionnaire form, filled out by each Sandperson and shared), they should agree as a group on some base concepts: Are the Sandpeople mortal? Do they work for the Sandman by choice or are born to their vocation?, etc. Such preparation enables the Sandpeople to present as a real team and to portray a true character, not merely narrate the story. Two of the Sandpeople should be able to play convincing interpreters for Imperia.

MYE

Mye is not a traveler by choice – she is a storyteller who has been exiled. She should be able to snap into storyteller mode, as in Scene 1 when she is relating the tale of Prince of Tantamee, but we should get a sense of her personality through her homesickness and problem-solving skills. Her physicality is important, both in her storytelling and in her dancing. In mixed-cast productions, the player should be young but not so young that she is not believable as a Royal Storyteller. She should be energetic and

convey determination and ingenuity. Body type is not vitally important, but a slight Mye facing tough obstacles provides a nice dynamic.

MUNGO

I suggest that Mungo the Music Maker is played either by a man or as a man, although a female Mungo isn't out of the question. Mungo has the magical ability to create music out of thin air, and therefore his physical movement is very important, regardless of body type. You have a lot of leeway in how he "conjures" his music, but it is essential that the player have good rhythm and flow and at least rudimentary dancing skill. There is no need to choreograph his dancing but he and Mye will need some rehearsal for the Scene 2 dance, which should start individually and end more or less as a pair. The key ingredients to Mungo's character are his friendliness, his underlying sense of joy (sorely taxed in his sad royal audience in Scene 5) and his generosity of spirit.

THE BORK

The good news: the Bork's lines consist of one word, to be repeated every time the word is heard! The bad news: this is harder than it seems, and children pay close attention. The Bork's utterances must be instantaneous, and physical comedy is vitally important to this role. The Bork tends to be the most memorable character in the piece. It should be an "it" – neither male nor female – and as alien as the player can make it. Remember, even in this fantastic land, the Bork is an oddity. Body type is unimportant, but the costume/makeup may well obscure facial features, so be sure the Bork's movements are BIG. Have fun!

IMPERIA

Imperia is an empress first, a deaf person second. She should be regal and commanding, and for most of the play unrelentingly, desperately sad. The recovery of her happiness in the final scene should produce a physical transformation – everything from a beaming smile to posture to movement should become instantly, utterly, electrically joyful and remain so throughout the rest of the play. This part can be played by a deaf person or by a hearing signer, but don't be afraid to cast a non-signer who is willing to

learn. The audition can consist of a Sandperson reading Imperia's lines while the auditioning player physically demonstrates/mimes the message. Body type is unimportant – energy and presence is everything. Be aware that if you cast a deaf Imperia, an interpreter will be necessary at rehearsal.

COSTUME NOTES

SANDPEOPLE

The Sandpeople must be identically dressed in loose-fitting costumes reminiscent of pajamas or nightgowns/nightshirts. They may wear matching nightcaps. All will have matching sacks slung over their shoulders for carrying their magic sand. These sacks must not get in the way of the signing Sandpeople's movements; therefore, the straps must be long enough for the sacks to hang behind the Sandpeople. If you use interpreters, costume them as Sandpeople, if possible. Identifying makeup can be used but isn't necessary.

MYE

Mye should be dressed androgynously for travel. Her costume could be anything from a medieval jerkin, boots and hose to 19th century country wear. Her shoes or boots must be sturdy but must not impede her dancing. You may want her to look a little travel-worn. She will carry a pack (leather or cloth) and a walking staff.

MUNGO

Mungo's costume need not match Mye's in era – he lives in another land with strange ways. But the costume must be loose-fitting and colorful. Everything about the costume should accentuate movement. It is especially helpful if colorful ribbons can be affixed along his arms so that, as he raises them to conjure up his music, the movement of the costume suggests magical things are happening.

BORK

Ah, how does one costume a Bork? ☺ Any way one wants! But the costume must be decidedly different from anything the audience has ever seen. In the

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Bridge Players production, the Bork was part plant, with vines and vegetation growing over a shapeless, lumpy body. In the Blackfriars production, the Bork was bell-shaped with antennae! The sky's the limit! Have fun!

IMPERIA

Imperia needs a crown or tiara. Her dress should be elegant as befitting an empress, and should be of the same era as Mungo's. Her costume must be loose-fitting enough to allow free movement for her signing. No jewelry should distract (i.e., no big rings or dangle bracelets).

PROPS

The show uses very minimal props; therefore the list is short!

SANDPEOPLE:

Bags/sand/glitter

Quill [Scene 3]

Feather [Scene 8]*

- Consider the bags carried by the Sandpeople to be more of a costume accessory than a prop, but they will need a good supply of magic (colored) sand interspersed with glitter. This can be sprinkled or shown to audience members in the mingling at the end. We encourage directors to work with the Sandpeople to develop their individual characters. For the Bridge Players production there was a special rehearsal for the Sandpeople during which they told their story and shared some talisman that symbolized their character: a ring, a stone, etc. These could (should) be carried in their bags as well.

MYE:

(Pack)

Walking staff

Money pouch [Scene 4]

- As for Mye’s pack, it is only opened on stage once, in Scene 4, when Mye withdraws a money pouch (unless the pouch is tied to her belt). The pack could be “stuffed,” unless the player wants the freedom to open it for curious audience members at the end.

BORK:

Magic egg (filled with magic!)

[This is opened in Scene 8]

- It is imperative that the magic egg be elegant-looking. It’s fine to use a plastic egg base, but it should appear jewel-encrusted, beribboned—special! It should be filled with similarly special confetti of some kind—a multi-colored mixture of textures is best. Be sure to have a spare handy and filled!

**The quill could double as this feather, but you may want a softer, more elaborate feather—or one on a stick and string—for tickling Imperia.*

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

SCENE 1

The audience meets the Sandpeople, assistants to the Sandman whose job it is to deliver dreams. They interact with the audience, asking them questions and explaining the nature of sleep, dreams and nightmares. Enter storyteller Mye of Tantamee, exiled from her land for failing to please the prince with a good story and searching for inspiration. The Sandpeople believe Mye has come to the right place – Yarbankian, a land with a strange problem (no one can communicate with one another). The Sandpeople hurry off about their business, but no sooner have they gone—

SCENE 2

—when Mye meets Mungo the Music Maker, whose freshly made music makes her so happy they share a dance. Mungo then tells her of Yarbankian’s national tragedy – Imperia, Yarbankian’s beautiful deaf empress, has been sad for three long years because her happiness (stored in a magic egg so she would not laugh at the Inter-Universal Court of Empresses, Fairies and Big Cheeses’ Tribunal) was stolen by the Bork, a mysterious creature who has been sitting on the egg ever since, apparently trying to hatch it. Of course, no one is able to communicate with the Bork and it has refused to leave the egg for even a moment. Mungo is summoned by Imperia and Mye sets off in search of the Bork.

SCENE 3

The Sandpeople ask the audience for their input on the problem of Imperia’s magic egg dilemma, soliciting ideas and introducing, the Bork.

SCENE 4

Mye searches for the Bork and tries unsuccessfully to lure it off the egg. The odd creature’s only word is “Bork,” which it repeats maddeningly and loudly, eventually driving poor Mye off empty-handed.

SCENE 5

At the palace, Mungo sadly tries to comfort Imperia as the Sandpeople interpret. Although he is nearly always able to cheer people out of their misery by making music for them, Imperia is of course unable to hear it and Mungo is therefore helpless. Imperia seems resigned to live without her happiness and Mungo leaves unhappily without a solution.

SCENE 6

Mye and Mungo meet and relate their twin failures, Mye unable to rescue the egg, and Mungo unable to help Imperia. But Mye is suddenly struck with a bolt of inspiration: although Imperia can’t hear the music, the Bork can. It doesn’t have to communicate to be susceptible to Mungo’s musical power. Perhaps between them they could lure the beast off the egg by making fresh music and dancing with it! They dash off to try.

SCENE 7

During this high-energy scene, Mye and Mungo engage the Bork in a dance fest against its will, with fresh, jolly music pouring out as Mungo creates a marvelous musical spell under which the Bork falls. As it dances its bizarre dance, Mye and Mungo rescue the egg at last! But as they leave, the Bork, still dancing, follows!

SCENE 8

The friends race to the palace and, with the help of the Sandpeople, explain to Imperia what has happened. They present her with the long-lost egg, which Mungo opens over Imperia's head, showering her with sparkling happiness and causing mass celebration, with empress, music maker, storyteller and Sandpeople wildly dancing with joy. In dances the Bork, still searching for the egg. Imperia is happy to spread the joy by relinquishing the egg, and the Bork cuddles it merrily as the audience is invited into the dance. Mye has found the inspiration for her story and can at last return to Tantamee, and Imperia is happy at last!

SCENERY

Mye and the Sandpeople was originally written to be performed with little to no set, and can be staged as simply or as elaborately as your company's style and budget permit. There are three general settings/playing spaces:

- A NEUTRAL OUTDOOR AREA, which can be staged in front of a closed curtain, in front of an appropriate backdrop and/or indicated with a few moveable pieces, i.e. tree, bush, rocks, etc. [SCENES 1, 2, 3 AND 6]
- IMPERIA'S PALACE, which can be staged with a simple one or two-flat set or backdrop, and/or indicated with a few moveable pieces such as a throne, braziers, etc. [SCENES 5 AND 8]
- THE SITE OF THE BORK'S NEST, a barren outdoor space. The nest is all that is really needed for this scene and can be made in a

variety of ways, i.e. a burlap-covered wading pool, a pile of brown and green cushions, etc. [SCENES 4 AND 7]

The stage needs to be largely uncluttered for two reasons:

- 1) There needs to be plenty of room for movement and dancing
- 2) Particular attention needs to be paid to sightlines because of the use of signing within the show. IMPERIA needs a clear view of the signing SANDPEOPLE, and the audience needs a clear view of IMPERIA as well as the signing SANDPEOPLE at all times.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE USE OF SIGN LANGUAGE IN THIS PLAY

The use of sign in *Mye and the Sandpeople* will enable you to bring the magic of theatre to an under-served audience AND to experience something very interesting. Many plays are interpreted, but the incorporation of sign into the show, and the inclusion of a deaf character, is something altogether different. This style of theatre will prove challenging, exciting and extremely rewarding.

The interpreters will serve not only as interpreters but also as teachers for those cast members whose roles require the use of this beautiful and fascinating language.

Sign is not universal. Many sign systems exist worldwide. Even here in America there are a number of systems in use, though only one, American Sign Language (ASL) is a true language, with its own syntax. The others are systems to make spoken English visible, and thereby follow English word order. The sign in *Mye and the Sandpeople* is not true ASL, nor is it Signed English. It is a hybrid, known in the field as Pidgin Sign. In those portions of the script where words are signed as well as spoken, I wrote both the English words and a “gloss” of signs. Signing characters convey the “gloss” while speaking characters say the words.

An interpreter “voicing” for a deaf person watches the deaf person’s signs and interprets them into spoken words. For our actors, this process is simulated on stage. In fact, the actors had to learn their signed and spoken lines and practice timing them; this simultaneous communication appears to the audience like interpreted sign. It required a lot of hard work and practice, as you can imagine!

When a deaf person watches an interpreter, there is a delay while the interpreter listens to the spoken message, selects the best signs to convey the message, and signs the message. Therefore, deaf audience members may react to dialogue a bit later than hearing audience members so prepare your cast for delayed reactions. You may get a laugh from the crowd, then four seconds later get another laugh. Two interpreters sign all the dialogue, and deaf audience members watch them as well as the action. As you can see, *Mye and the Sandpeople* is a highly visual play in more ways than one!

Deaf people make by far the best sign teachers, and your local school/program for deaf/hard of hearing children, or office for deaf services, is a good first step in finding someone willing to participate in your production. Many community colleges and adult education programs offer sign classes now and could be valuable resources. Be prepared to offer some compensation for sign tuition. Don’t hesitate to let a sign instructor alter the gloss – the spoken words can be interpreted accurately in a number of ways. I suggest that the instructor provide hearing signers in the cast with videos of their signed lines to facilitate rehearsal, but there should also be regularly scheduled sign rehearsals for the signing Sandpeople and Imperia. Deaf players may not need video support. It is vital that all signing must look natural by the time the production opens. Of course, it is recommended that the production also be entirely interpreted by separate interpreters so that a deaf audience may be invited. Interpretation should stop and the interpreters should face the action on stage in Scenes 5 and 8, while onstage signing is occurring. Two interpreters are recommended and may be willing to double as sign instructors for the cast. It is a nice touch to costume interpreters as Sandpeople as long as the costume is a dark enough color to clearly see the interpreters’ hands.

SCENE 1

MUSIC BEGINS; THE STAGE IS EMPTY. ONE BY ONE THE SANDPEOPLE DANCE THROUGH THE AUDIENCE AND ONTO THE STAGE, PERHAPS WITH BASIC PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS WHICH CAN BE STORED IN THEIR COLORFUL BAGS. THEY BEGIN DANCING AS INDIVIDUALS, BUT BY THE END OF THE SELECTION THEY ARE DANCING AS A GROUP. AS THE MUSIC ENDS, THEY BOW.

SANDPEOPLE: Oh, that was nice, wasn't it? Well, wasn't it? Yes, music is a wonderful thing. And music plays a very important part in this story.

Now, who can tell us what this show is called? *(RESPONSE)* That's right. MYE AND THE SANDPEOPLE. And can anyone guess who we might be?

That's right. We're the Sandpeople. *(ALL BOW)* Now, can anyone guess what we do? *(PAUSE)* Let me give you a hint: our sand is magical. *(PAUSE)*

Well, remember the Sandman? The fellow who visits people at night and sprinkles them with magic sand to make them fall asleep? *(RESPONSE)* Well, we're his helpers.

That's right. He can't be everywhere at once, so he gives some of his magic sand to us and we help out. Sort of like Santa and his elves - - except that WE have to go around every single NIGHT! You humans sure are a sleepy bunch!

Now, the neat thing about our job is that we see every one of you humans every night - - only you don't remember it! We sprinkle the good old magic sand, and you forget we've ever been there!

And you humans never remember falling asleep, either! You only remember what you were thinking about before you WENT to sleep! It's great! (LAUGHS)

Then, of course, there are the dreams. They're mixed in with the magic sand. (LOOKS IN BAG) - - two parts magic sand to one part dreams.

You humans get a liberal sprinkling of dreams every night. Sometimes you remember them; sometimes you don't. It all depends on how fresh they are.

Let us explain. When a dream is brand new - - nice and fresh - - it's very bright and clear. Those dreams are easy to remember.

But there are millions of dreams in these bags, folks. We can't always get rid of them right away. And when a dream hangs around for a while, it starts to go stale, like bread. It fades.

Well, when bread goes stale, you can feed it to the ducks. But ducks don't like to eat stale dreams.

(PATS CHEST WITH FIST) They get heartburn. And we end up getting stuck with them. The dreams, not the ducks.

Unfortunately, we give out these stale dreams along with the fresh ones. And these are the dreams you don't remember you've had, or the dreams you only remember parts of.

Sorry. We do our best. But it's a heck of a job, you know. It isn't easy being responsible for everybody's sleep AND all their dreams, too. If we're late, you get so testy. "I can't get to sleep, I'll be up all night, where's the warm milk?" Sheesh!

And it isn't just you humans. Dogs have dreams, too. And cats.

Yeah. (*COUNTS ON FINGERS*) Dogs. And cats. And hamsters. And whales. And butterflies. And termites.

Termites do NOT deserve dreams.

Oh, yes they do! Why, just last week, I gave not one but TWO termites dreams! Nice fresh ones, too! So there! Nyaah! (*STICKS OUT TONGUE, OTHERS ROLL EYES*)

Oh, brother. What a waste of a good dream. Anyway, what we're trying to say here is that we Sandpeople have a lot of responsibility, and so sometimes, even though we try to stay on top of things and sift through our magic sand every morning for leftover dreams, one or two hide in the bottom of our bags.

And if dreams hang around and hang around and get TOO stale, they start to go moldy, just like bread. These old, moldy dreams are what you humans call nightmares.

Now, we know nightmares can be pretty awful. We try hard to keep them out of your doses of magic sand. But it isn't always possible.

Ooo, we really hate it when dreams go bad like that. Not only because you don't like nightmares, but because every time we sprinkle a nightmare on you by mistake, we have to give three nice, fresh dreams back to the Sandman.

AND we have to have one nightmare ourselves. (*SHIVERS*)

Nobody likes nightmares. But you know, we do our best, and you don't have too many of them, thank goodness.

It may not be much of a help, but try to remember if you do have a nightmare that it's nothing more than a moldy old dream that's been sitting too long in the bottom of our bags.

Now. Back to business. Dreams can be exciting - - scary - - silly -
- sad - - long - - or short. Dreams can seem very real sometimes,
can't they? *(RESPONSE)*

And sometimes they can be so kooky that you know you're
dreaming right away. Like yesterday, when Mr. McGillicuddy
dreamed that his car was filled with baby armadillos! He knew
THAT was a dream!

But I'll bet none of you realize that THIS is a dream! You probably
think you're awake! You think you remember waking up and
getting dressed and going about your business all day
(OPTIONAL FOR EVENING PERFORMANCES) and coming
here to see this show. But you're still in bed! You're dreaming!
Doesn't it seem real? *(RESPONSE)* Oh, this job is so much fun!
(CLAPS AND JUMPS UP AND DOWN)

It's good to think about the dreams you have. Sometimes dreams
can give you good ideas. *(ENTER MYE, SHE DOES NOT SEE
THE SANDPEOPLE)* Take her, for example.

She is a traveler, by the look of her, a traveler in search of a good
idea. We obviously haven't given her the right sort of dreams.
She's looking for excitement. But why? Let's find out.

Ho, there! Traveler!

MYE: *(STARTLED, THEN CAUTIOUS)* Want – you – do - what?
(SANDPEOPLE LOOK AT EACH OTHER) Me - call - you - did -
why?

SANDPEOPLE: Eh? Why are you talking backwards?

MYE: *(SURPRISED AND RELIEVED)* Oh! Thank goodness! I've
just come from Drawkcab, the land where everyone speaks back
to front. It's a great relief not to have to change everything I say to
backwards nonsense!

SANDPEOPLE: (*FONDLY*) Drawkcab. I haven't been there for years.

No, Drawkcab's my territory now.

What were you doing in Drawkcab?

MYE: Hmph! What, indeed? I was trying to find inspiration. I didn't.

SANDPERSON: Inspiration? Inspiration to do what?

MYE: It's a long story.

SANDPERSON: Tell us.

MYE: Why? Who are you?

SANDPERSON: (*TO AUDIENCE*) Tell her. (*RESPONSE*) That's right. We're the Sandpeople. (*SANDPEOPLE BOW*)

MYE: SANDpeople?

SANDPERSON: In the living flesh.

MYE: What are Sandpeople?

SANDPERSON: Us.

MYE: But what are you?

SANDPERSON: We're Sandpeople.

MYE: (*FRUSTRATED*) Frogs and jello! We could be here all day! What is a Sandperson?

SANDPEOPLE: Who can tell her? (*RESPONSE*) There! An excellent description!

Now it's our turn. Who, pray tell, are you?

MYE: My name is Mye.

SANDPEOPLE: My what?

MYE: Mye.

SANDPEOPLE: My heavens.

My goodness.

My word.

(ALL SANDPEOPLE) My Bon-nie lies o-ver the o-cean - -

MYE: No! Just plain Mye.

SANDPEOPLE: What do you do, Just Plain Mye?

MYE: I'm a storyteller. Or, rather, I WAS a storyteller. I was the royal storyteller to His Grace the Prince of Tantamee. But I've been cast out of my valley because my stories weren't interesting enough.

SANDPERSON: No!

MYE: Yes. They were good stories, mind you. Fairy tales, mostly. But the Prince of Tantamee was not satisfied. He gave me three days to make up a story interesting enough to please him. The first day, I told him of a magical kingdom ruled by beautiful unicorns who sang and baked sweet potatoes over open fires and slept balancing on their horns.

SANDPERSON: Now THAT's interesting!

MYE: Not interesting enough for the Prince of Tantamee.

SANDPERSON: Wow! He drives a hard bargain!

MYE: Indeed. So I tried again. And on the second day, I told him of a war between giant candy canes and purple roosters, a war that was fought in a pot of glue on a shoemaker's workbench a thousand years ago.

SANDPERSON: THAT's certainly interesting!

MYE: Not interesting enough for the Prince of Tantamee.

SANDPERSON: Good heavens! He's awfully hard to please!

MYE: He is. And so I tried once again. And on the third day, I told him of an igloo made of mushrooms on the head of a pin, filled with magic prunes that blow soap bubbles and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

SANDPERSON: Now, surely THAT is interesting! (PAUSE)

ALL: (SHAKING HEADS) Not interesting enough for the Prince of Tantamee.

MYE: (GLUMLY) He was so bored he went to sleep before I'd even finished. And when he finally woke up, he said I was banished from my beautiful valley until I could devise a story interesting enough to hold his attention. I've been wandering high and low,

near and far, night and day to find the inspiration for a story of such wonder that even the Prince of Tantamee will be satisfied.

SANDPERSON: You must be very clever, Mye, to think up such fantastic tales. Say - - have you ever thought of looking to your dreams for inspiration?

MYE: I HAVE looked to my dreams! That's where I got the ideas for the balancing unicorns and the candy cane war and the bubble-blowing prunes!

SANDPEOPLE LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

SANDPEOPLE: All right - - who's been drinking on the job?

Hey, Tantamee isn't MY territory!

Whose is it?

Beats me.

MYE: The point is that nowhere, not even in wacky Spooshalia, have I found the inspiration for such a story. *(SIGHS AND SITS)* I am doomed. I'll never get back to my valley. I will wander in foreign lands by myself forever more.

SANDPERSON: Oh, Mye. Cheer up.

MYE: Why?

SANDPERSON: Well - - you said that YOUR dreams weren't interesting enough to inspire you. But how about someone ELSE's dreams?

MYE: What do you mean?

SANDPERSON: You see, these people here are dreaming now, and it's a real humdinger!

MYE: Indeed?

SANDPERSON: Yup! We're characters in their dream.

MYE: No!

SANDPERSON: Yup! But they think they're awake.

MYE: *(TO AUDIENCE MEMBER)* You there! Are you dreaming?
(RESPONSE - - TO ANOTHER AUDIENCE MEMBER) Are you?

(RESPONSE – TO SANDPEOPLE) You're right! They DO think they're awake!

SANDPERSON: Fear not! They're dreaming. I know, because I sprinkled the magic sand over [local region] last night and I remember every one of these people. I'll bet the dream they're having now will be inspiring.

MYE: Do you really think so?

SANDPERSON: Yes, I do. Why don't you give it a try?

MYE: Well, I have little choice, it seems. I must find some good ideas, or I'll never get home. *(TO AUDIENCE)* Do you mind if I borrow your dream for a while? *(RESPONSE - TO SANDPEOPLE)* Where do I begin?

SANDPEOPLE: Why, you're already here! Stay alert! This is a dream, remember - - anything can happen! Now, if you'll excuse us, we have to sift through the rest of our magic sand and weed out the nightmares to get ready for tonight. Good bye, Mye! Good luck!

GENERAL GOODBYES TO AND FROM AUDIENCE.

MYE: Goodbye, Sandpeople. I hope this works.

SANDPEOPLE BOW AND EXIT.

SCENE 2

MYE: *(TO AUDIENCE, SADLY)* Well, my friends, I hope your dream is an interesting one. Frogs and jello, I was sure the unicorn story would work. But no. And now I've been gone from Tantamee so long that I can hardly remember the sound of my friends' voices, or how the setting sun looks on the lake. *(SIGH)*

ENTER MUNGO, HAPPILY. SEES MYE.

MUNGO: Well, well, well! What have we here? A poor, bedraggled traveler, sighing as if her heart would break! What is it, honey pie? What is wrong?

MYE: I can't tell you.

MUNGO: Why not?

MYE: Because I just told the Sandpeople, and it's too depressing to tell twice.

MUNGO: Depressing? Nonsense! You are not depressed.

MYE: I'm not?

MUNGO: Nay! You are just a bit under the weather, flower. And you should not be! It is a fine day, the birds are singing, you are free to roam as you choose. Smile!

MYE: Who are you, so full of joy?

MUNGO: I am Mungo, at your service. (BOWS)

MYE: Mungo?

MUNGO: Aye! Mungo the Music Maker.

MYE: Music maker? But you have no instruments.

MUNGO: Nay, nay! I do not PLAY music. I MAKE it. And those who hear my music revel in it!

MYE: Ha! "Revel!"

MUNGO: You scoff?? Who is this who scoffs at Mungo?

MYE: I am Mye of Tantamee.

MUNGO: Well, Mye of Tantamee, I will make music for you. And when I do, you will be happy, and dance with glee - - your dark clouds will vanish, and you will make merry.

MYE: Don't waste your music on me, Mungo.

MUNGO: Oh, music is never wasted. Prepare yourself, Mye! Happiness is just around the corner!

MUNGO MAKES A FEW PASSES IN THE AIR - HAPPY MUSIC BEGINS AND CONTINUES UNDER DIALOGUE UNTIL END OF SELECTION.

MYE: Oh, that IS merry - - Yes, it does make me feel a bit better - - (TAPS FOOT, SWAYS) It's quite amazing - - Why, I don't feel bad at all now - - (BEGINS TO DANCE, MUNGO JOINS IN) This is most extraordinary! Why do I feel so joyful?

MUNGO: Music has this effect on people when it is freshly made. Usually people hear music filtered through instruments, radios, or

recordings. It is not at all the same. It is like an old, dry raisin, compared to a fat grape bursting with juice! Fun, is it not?

MYE: Fun? It's fantastic! How wonderful! You've lifted my spirits more than I could ever have thought possible, Mungo. How can I ever repay you?

MUNGO: Nay! There is no need for repayment, peanut! It is my job. By the way, where are you headed?

MYE: Anywhere and nowhere. I'm searching for an interesting story so that I can please the prince of my valley and return home. I miss my valley very much. Do you know any places around here interesting enough to help, do you think?

MUNGO: Ha! Hee! Hoo! Har! Ho!

MYE: Do I take that to mean YES?

MUNGO: You have come to the right place, snowdrop. This is the most amazing place you are ever likely to see - the Kingdom of Yarbankian!

MYE: Yarbankian? I've never heard of it.

MUNGO: I am not surprised. It is very small.

MYE: And what makes the Kingdom of Yarbankian so amazing?

MUNGO: Well, none of the people who live here in Yarbankian understand each other.

MYE: What?

MUNGO: *(INDICATES MYE'S LACK OF COMPREHENSION TO THE AUDIENCE – i.e. "See what I mean?")* There is no communication here. Everyone speaks a different language. One speaks through her nose. Another speaks by yawning. One communicates by placing pebbles on the ground. I speak through my mouth, like you do. But I am the only one in the whole of the kingdom who does.

MYE: That's unbelievable!

MUNGO: Yet it is true.

MYE: But what about the Sandpeople? They speak through their mouths.

MUNGO: Ah. The Sandpeople are not citizens of Yarbankian. They are, as it were, universal. They belong to everywhere equally.

MYE: Well, I'm certainly lucky I met you, Mungo. From what you're telling me, I wouldn't have been able to communicate with anyone else in Yarbankian.

MUNGO: Nay. It is a strange place indeed.

MYE: This is interesting. (*THINKS*) Perhaps I CAN find inspiration for my story here. (*ENTER SANDPEOPLE - THEY BOW*) Oh, it's you again.

SANDPERSON: Hello, Just Plain Mye. I see you've met the music maker.

MUNGO: Aye, we have been getting acquainted.

SANDPERSON: Well, Mungo. By appointment of the Empress Imperia herself. (*HANDS MUNGO SCROLL WITH A FLOURISH*)

MUNGO: Oh, nay. Not another one.

SANDPERSON: Another one.

MYE: Another what?

MUNGO: Another summons. Imperia wants me to attend her at once and, as always, I dread it.

MYE: But who is Imperia?

MUNGO: She is the Royal Empress of Yarbankian.

MYE: Is she cruel?

MUNGO: Cruel?? Mercy, nay! She is very kind!

MYE: Well - - is she bad-tempered?

MUNGO: Nay, nay! She is most patient!

MYE: Is she dim-witted, then?

MUNGO: Dim-witted?? YOU are dim-witted to suggest such a thing! Nay, she is exceedingly clever.

MYE: I do not understand. To be summoned into the presence of a kind, patient, clever empress is surely a tremendous honor.

MUNGO: Aye, it would be, if only I could help her. But I cannot, and to disappoint her yet again is heartbreaking. (*TO SANDPEOPLE*) Try as I might, I cannot get it.

MYE: Get what?

MUNGO: Oh, it is a sorry tale.

SANDPERSON: The sorriest. How long has it been now?

MUNGO: Three long years.

MYE: Three long years since what?

MUNGO: Three long years since poor Imperia has been happy.

MYE: Frogs and jello! Three years??

SANDPEOPLE: Three LONG years.

It seems even longer.

MYE: But what is wrong? Why is she sad?

SANDPERSON: Because of the Bork.

MYE: The WHAT?

MUNGO: The Bork.

MYE: The BORK?

MUNGO AND

SANDPEOPLE: THE BORK!!

MYE: What in the name of Tantamee is the Bork??

SANDPERSON: An excellent question.

MUNGO: No one is sure. It appeared in Yarbarkian one day three long years ago, and it has nested here ever since.

SANDPERSON: Wretched creature.

MUNGO: Be kind, Sandperson. The Bork is what it is. It cannot help it.

SANDPERSON: I suppose you're right. But when I think of poor Imperia, my blood boils.

MUNGO: Aye, the poor lass. If only I had a solution for her.

SANDPERSON: I have a solution.

MUNGO: You do?

SANDPERSON: Yes. Ice the Bork.

MUNGO: What? (*SANDPERSON DRAWS A FINGER ACROSS THROAT*) Nay! Imperia will not hear of it. She is gentle as well as kind, patient and clever.

MYE: What is going on here?

MUNGO: (*UNROLLING AND READING SCROLL*) Let me see - - Aye, as I thought. She wants me to come to her at once.

MYE: But why?

SANDPERSON: Look, we hate to dash off like this, but we have a meeting of our own to attend. The Sandman has promised to

MYE AND THE SANDPEOPLE

show us how to use a new filter for the sand, guaranteed to screen out 80% more nightmares.

It has a 2000 year warranty, and it comes with six free steak knives, too! Good luck with Imperia, Mungo. Goodbye, Mye!
(THEY BOW AND EXIT)

MYE: Goodbye. *(TO MUNGO)* Now, would you please explain to me what is going on?

MUNGO: *(SIGH)* I will do my best, sunshine. You see, it all began three - -

MYE: Yes, yes. Three long years ago, so I've heard.

MUNGO: Our empress, Imperia, was asked to go to a tribunal of the Inter-Universal Court of Emperesses, Fairies and Big Cheeses.

MYE: The what?

MUNGO: The Inter-Universal Court of Emperesses, Fairies and Big Cheeses, better known as the - -

MYE: Go on.

MUNGO: Well, the tribunal is a very serious and solemn occasion, you see. And Imperia is usually a very merry empress. So, in preparation for the tribunal, she put all her happiness in a magic egg.

MYE: She what?!

MUNGO: Oh, why do you always need to hear everything twice, blossom?

MYE: I'm sorry, Mungo, but this is most amazing. I've never heard of anyone putting their happiness in a magic egg before!

MUNGO: But she HAD to, you see, in order to be sure that she would not laugh during the tribunal. If anyone laughs during the tribunal, they grow a second mouth, and Imperia thought that one mouth was plenty. She put the magic egg on a lily pad in the middle of the pond at the royal palace, and off she went, serious and somber, to the tribunal.

MYE: *(SHAKING HER HEAD)* Unbelievable.

MUNGO: Believe it. Now, when poor Imperia was gone, who should appear at the palace but the mysterious Bork. It clambered over

the garden wall, and before the guards could do more than yelp, it ate ALL the royal tulips.

MYE: It ATE them!

MUNGO: Aye, each tulip in one gulp. And then, it started on the lily pads.

MYE: Oh, no. Don't tell me!

MUNGO: Nay, lass. It did not eat Imperia's magic egg. But when it plucked that particular lily pad and found the egg, it seemed to grow very excited. The guards could only chase helplessly after it as it clambered back over the wall with the magic egg.

MYE: The Bork pinched Imperia's happiness!

MUNGO: Aye. And a sad day it was for the whole of Yarbankian. Poor Imperia. She knew nothing of the theft until she returned from the Inter-Universal Court of Empresses, Fairies and Big Cheeses tribunal. And in the meantime, the royal guards sought out the nest of the mysterious Bork.

MYE: What a story!

MUNGO: It is our sad history, I'm afraid, no mere story. When the guards finally located the nest of the Bork, there it sat, calm and self-satisfied, keeping Imperia's magic egg warm as if it would hatch! No one can communicate with the Bork, of course – this IS Yarbankian, after all. But it would seem that the Bork thinks the magic egg is its baby, and it will not budge from the nest. Poor Imperia has been without her happiness for lo, these three long years. She keeps summoning me to her palace to ask me for help, but I can do nothing for her, poor empress.

MYE: But you can!

MUNGO: Nay, sweeting, I cannot.

MYE: Of course you can! When I came to Yarbankian, I was heartbroken! Desolate! I had been banished from Tantamee and had wandered the world, looking for an interesting story and finding nothing likely to please the prince. I felt terrible. But then I met you. You made your music for me, and I suddenly felt so happy that I danced with joy! Don't you see, Mungo? You don't have to worry about Imperia's magic egg! You can give her some brand new happiness, just by making fresh music for her!

MUNGO: Ah, Mye, I wish it was that simple.

MYE: But it worked for me!

MUNGO: Aye, honey bee. That was because you can hear the music.

MYE: Hear the - - ? Well, of COURSE I could hear it! I'm not deaf, am I?

MUNGO: Nay. But the Empress Imperia is.

MYE: (PAUSE) Imperia is - - deaf? She can't hear?

MUNGO: Nay. Her ears are closed. And so my music, powerful and happy though it is, cannot reach her.

MYE: But how do you communicate with her when you are summoned?

MUNGO: (PATS HER CHEEK) This is Yarbankian, cream-puff. No one can communicate with each other, remember?

MYE: Oh, I had forgotten.

MUNGO: When I am summoned, the Sandpeople help me out. Remember, they are universal – everyone dreams, kitten. The Sandpeople can communicate with their hands as well as their mouths, and their feet, and their hair, and their elbows.

MYE: Their elbows?

MUNGO: Aye. You really must see that sometime - most impressive. They act as my interpreters at times such as this, when I must go to Imperia and disappoint her yet again. (SIGH) Oh, I hate this. Now, if you will pardon me, my friend, I must be off. It is not nice to keep an empress waiting, no matter how kind and patient she is.

MYE: Of course. But, Mungo, I can't help thinking that your music ought to be able to help SOMEHOW.

MUNGO: It is dismal to be a music maker, spreading happiness hither and yon, and not be able to help Imperia. But we are all at a loss.

MYE: Mungo, where might I find the Bork?

MUNGO: The Bork? But why do you want to find the Bork? I tell you, no one can communicate with it.

MYE: I believe you. Nevertheless, I want to see it. Where is its nest?

MUNGO: Walk toward the sunrise. You will find it in a field of dead grass and sticks, and you cannot mistake it. There is nothing quite like the Bork. Now, be careful, Mye! Do not let your curiosity and your eagerness for an interesting story be your undoing.

MYE: I'll be careful, Mungo. Thank you. And good luck with the empress.

MUNGO: Thank you. (*EXIT MYE*) But I am afraid no amount of luck in the world can make this sorry situation any easier to bear. Oh, I had better make some music to cheer myself up along the way. The last thing the empress needs is a gloomy music maker.

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