

Characters

- Molly (M/F)** - Traditionally a young man dressed as a young woman carrying a broom. He/she sweeps a performance space clear of people, and introduces the play in a lively manner. He/she invites Father Christmas to step in.
- Father Christmas (M/F)** - Father Christmas is 'Old' Father Christmas, from a time before the calendar changes in 1752, when Christmas was celebrated on January 5th. Old Father Christmas is anxious that he should never be forgotten. He introduces St George.
- St George (M/F)** - Traditionally played by a male. Bold and proud. He demands money or satisfaction from the Turkish Knight.
- Turkish Knight (M/F)** - Traditionally played by a male. A bold warrior, he refuses to pay a fee, and takes up St George's challenge to a fight.
- Prince of Morocco (M/F)** - A proud prince of royal blood, and father to the Turkish Knight. He calls for a doctor to save his son from death.
- Doctor (M/F)** - Traditionally played by a male. Authoritative and boastful. He says that he is not one of 'these little mountebanks' that lie about their skills. He can mend a broken neck, and what's more do it in front of your eyes!
- Johnny Jack (M/F)** - Traditionally played by the youngest mummer in the group. He has small toys sewn onto his jacket, or sticking out of a knapsack to represent his wife and large family.

Optional intro to audience

Mummers Plays, like wassailing, were part of the entertainment at festive occasions, which included Easter, All Souls Day, and Christmas, and there are many plays to fit each. Mummers Plays performed around Plough Sunday (early January) are called Plough Plays. The play-actors were called mummers or geysers; but there were many local names, such as pace-egggers, tipteerers and galoshins.

At one time most villages had their own Mummers group, or side, and many villages had their own play. They visited the big houses, and three nights of Mumming could raise as much as a month's wage for the agricultural labourers, who mostly made up the groups. If the ploughboys didn't get their rewards of coins, figgy pudding or ale, they might play a trick on the landowner, such as ploughing up their churchyard or garden! The modern custom of 'Trick or Treat' at Halloween is thought to originate from mumming.

After WW1 the plays mostly died out, although in some cases continued until after WW2. Resurrected by folk revivalists around the middle of the 20th century, they continue as an art form in streets and public houses.

Scene 1

(Molly enters the performing space sweeping the floor of debris and people. Ask for space. Enthusiastically tell audience of what is to come, and introduce Father Christmas)

Molly: Room, room, brave gallants all
Pray give us room to rhyme!
We come to show you activity
This merry Christmas time.
Activity of youth, activity of age,
I will show you such activity
That never was acted upon a common stage.
And if you don't believe what I say,
Step in Father Christmas and clear the way.

(Father Christmas enters. Address audience. Introduce St George)

Father Christmas: In comes I, Old Father Christmas,
Welcome, or welcome not;
I hope Old Father Christmas
Will never be forgot.
To all in this room there shall be shown
The dread-fullest battle that ever was known!
So, walk in St. George with thy free heart,
And see if thou canst claim freedom for thy old part.

(St George enters boldly. Address audience. Make actions)

St George: In comes I, St. George, the man of courage bold
With my broad sword and spear
I won ten pounds of gold.
I fought the fiery dragon
And drove him to the slaughter,
And by that, I won the King of Egypt's daughter.
So therefore, if any man enter that wood
I shall hack him as small as the dust,
And afterwards send him to the Cooks shop

To be made into mince pie crust!

(Turkish Knight enters boldly. Challenge St George)

Turkish Knight: In comes I, the Turkish Knight,
Just come from Turkish land to fight.
I'll fight thee, St. George, and if thy blood be too hot,
I'll soon fetch it cold!

(St. George faces boldly up to Turkish Knight. Insults him, demands a fee)

St. George: Ho! Ho! My little fellow
Thou talkest very bold,
Just like the little Turks, as I have been told
Therefore, pull out thy purse and pay,
I'll have satisfaction ere thou goest away!

Turkish Knight: **(Derisory to St George. Boasts. Struts up and down)**

Satisfaction, no satisfaction!
My head is made of iron
And my body lined with steel,
I battle now to see which on the ground shall fall!

(SFX. The tin drum can be used to beat dramatically interpreting the fight. St George and Turkish Knight fight energetically. St George thrusts sword as if to go into Turkish Knight – but aim for armpit, which Turkish Knight will discretely hold open. Turkish Knight hold open armpit discretely, and allow sword to go in. Close arm tightly and leave sword sticking out. Crumple and fall in dramatic way. Make loud groans!)

St. George: **(Mortified)** O, only behold and see what I have done!
I have been and slain my brother, just like the evening sun!

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(Prince of Morocco enters regally. On fourth line notice body of Turkish Knight. Mortified. Speaks to St George - then appeals for Doctor in audience)

Prince of Morocco: In come I Prince of Morocco,
From the land of Ottoman,
Come to see my Turkish son.
St George, St George, what hast thou done?
You've been and slain my only son!
Is there a Doctor to be found?
That can cure this man lies bleeding on the ground?

(Doctor enters with black bag)

Doctor: Yes, there is a doctor to be found,
That can cure this man lies bleeding on the ground

Prince of Morocco: Doctor, what is thy fee?

Doctor: Ten guineas is my fee, but ten pounds I will take from thee.

(Prince of Morocco pays fee into Doctor's hand. For fun it could be in golden chocolate coins)

Doctor: **(Could unwrap and eat a chocolate coin)** Mmmmmm, yum, yum.

Prince of Morocco: Take it Doctor, but what canst thou cure?

Doctor: **(Boasts. Make actions)** I can cure the ague, the palsy and the gout
That roving pain that goes within and out,
A broken leg or arm, I soon can cure the pain,
And if you break your neck, I can quickly set it on again!

Prince of Morocco: **(Admiringly)** Thou must be a noble doctor if that is all true
That you have been telling about.

Doctor: **(Boasts)** I am not one of these little mountebanks
That go about the streets
And tell you as many lies in one half hour
As you would find true in seven weeks.
But what I does, I do right before your face,
So, if you don't believe your eyes tis a very hard case.

Prince of Morocco: **(Shakes head sadly)** Sure 'tis, Doctor

(Turkish Knight yawns and snores noisily. Doctor holds up bottle. It could be an enormous bottle for fun. Have clean water already in it. If weather is cold, or if venue carpeted, use an empty bottle and just pretend!)

Doctor: Well, I have a little bottle, which I call Elecampane;
One drop on this man's tongue and another on his crown.
If this man's alive, he'll rise and fight again!

(Doctor carefully pour teeny drop of water onto Turkish Knight's face, then chuck a goodly amount onto his crown (head. Or pretend!) Turkish Knight jumps up energetically. Wipes wet hair with hand. Pretends to thump or shakes fist at doctor. Fights with St George. SFX. Tin drum interpreting actions. St George and Turkish Knight fight energetically again. Both tire. Father Christmas intervenes. Holds up hand.)

Father Christmas: Hold fast, hold fast, my fine fellows!
You have both met your match,
Let not one the other dispatch,
But unite and be as one,
Before the setting of the sun,
And raise a glass,
To Old Christmas!

(St George and the Turkish Knight sulky and reluctant at first, but with persuasion from other characters, firmly shake hands. Other characters cheer. Little Johnnie Jack enters)

Little Johnnie Jack: Here comes I, little Johnnie Jack,
Wife and family on my back.
My family's large and I am small
And so a little helps us all.

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Roast beef and plum pudding, strong beer and mince pies,
Who likes that better than Old Father Christmas and I!
One mug of Christmas Ale, will make us merry and sing,
Some money in our buckets, will be a fine thing.

So, ladies and gentlemen, all at your ease,
Please give the Christmas Boys just what you please,
We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,
And plenty of good beef, and barrels full of beer!

(Johnnie Jack invites audience to join in singing. Everyone sings with gusto. Make actions)

WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS

We wish you a Merry Christmas,
We wish you a Merry Christmas,
We wish you a Merry Christmas,
And a Happy New Year!

Chorus:

Good tidings we bring to you and your kin;
We wish to a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Now, bring us some figgy pudding,
Oh, bring us some figgy pudding,
Now bring us a figgy pudding,
And a cup of good cheer!

Chorus

Good tidings we bring to you and your kin;
We wish to a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

We all like our figgy pudding;
We all like our figgy pudding;
We all like our figgy pudding;
With all its good cheer.

Chorus

Good tidings we bring to you and your kin;
We wish to a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

We won't go until we get some!
We won't go until we get some!
We won't go until we get some!
So bring some out here!

Chorus

Good tidings we bring to you and your kin;
We wish to a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

END

(Characters line up and bow in character to audience. One of characters announce that if money is being collected for charity, what the charity is. Money collected for charity should be in sealed buckets, and proper procedures followed.)

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