

DODGE

A farce for young audiences and actors by e. shockley

Based on an idea from students at Upper Merion Elementary School, Upper Merion, PA.

CHARACTERS

ELVES

DODGE Elf who works hard at not working.

GRAND ELF Father of Swallow and Dodge

TORTLE Slow-thinking elf

HOLMSTEAD Character worthy of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

SNIDE A dour elf

SWALLOW Gullible little sister of Dodge.

BLOSSUM

GNOMES

FROST

SNOWFLAKE

CRYSTAL

GNOME KING

(A chorus of any size fills out the cast and can collectively or individually take selected lines designated GNOMES or ELVES.)

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SCENE I

(At rise: Autumn leaves fill the stage. Elves are busy painting green leaves gold.)

GRAND ELF

Where is Dodge?

TORTLE

We sent her to get more Autumn for our brushes.

GRAND ELF

How long has she been gone?

SNIDE

What time is it?

GRAND ELF

Middle night.

TORTLE

What day?

GRAND ELF

Tomorrow?

SNIDE

What month?

GRAND ELF

Ow.

TORTLE

Is there a month called Ow?

GRAND ELF

It follows Clout.

(The other Elves move away.)

TORTLE

Ow follows Clout?

(Grand Elf bonks Turtle on the noggin.)

TORTLE

Ow.

SWALLOW

Maybe someone should go look for my big sister.

SNIDE

Why?

SWALLOW

She may be in trouble.

SNIDE

Only if she caused it.

SWALLOW

What has Dodge ever done to you to make you hate her so?

SNIDE

Nothing at all...except leave me stuck in a tall tree atop mount Ararat with an armful of starlight.

SWALLOW

She forgot to grab the bag.

SNIDE

Set me off riding a Nor'easter wind like a rodeo cowboy because she hadn't tied down her corner of the storm.

SWALLOW

That was unfortunate but her rope was frayed and she went searching for another.

TORTLE

There was the time she nearly got me eaten when she failed to signal the bear's return while I was busy setting his hibernation clock.

SWALLOW

She felt very badly about that but explained to me that she had just eaten a tiny thistle berry and could not whistle despite every effort.

GRAND ELF

Be that as it may, if we don't get these leaves painted golden double quick then the winter gnomes might overtake us.

TORTLE

Remember the last time that happened?

SNIDE

Remember? They marched halfway into summer.

TORTLE

Killed all those gigantic roaring lizards.

SNIDE

I say it was for the best. All that stomping and growling was driving me bonkers.

TORTLE

And the smell!

SNIDE

Not swell.

GRAND ELF

Well, if we run out of paint before the leaves are done then you can bet they will be about their snowflakes as fast as you can say, "Blizzard."

(Enter Gnomes in formation.)

GNOMES

Blizzard!

TORTLE

No fair!

GRAND ELF

We're still painting.

(A Gnome hits him with a snowball.)

FROST

Gnomes rock!

SNOWFLAKE

Gnomes rule.

GNOMES

Gnomes rock and rule!

GRAND ELF

You're killing all of the flowers.

SNOWFLAKE

That's the idea.

ELF

Then the trees will lose their limbs from the weight and..

GNOMES

And when the bough breaks the cradle will fall!

BLOSSOM

I've always wondered what that baby was doing up in a tree in the first place.

(Grand Elf clouts Blossum.)

GRAND ELF

Focus, Blossum.

GNOMES

We live to freeze
And murder leaves
We love to frost
And know the cost
The denless bear
The playful squirrel
Both live in fear
Of winter's rattle.
Summer lolls
And Autumn trots.
Our bell tolls
And stomachs knot
We live to freeze
And murder leaves
We love to frost
And now you've lost!

(The Gnomes pelt the Elves. Exit Elves.)

GRAND ELF

We have to find Dodge and paint the leaves quickly or the age of ice will be upon us again.

END SCENE I

SCENE II

(A clearing in the forest.)

DODGE

Dodge, you scamp. Sometimes you must speak out loud to your river's reflection in order to find an elf of ample cleverness to appreciate your novel genius. Just today, in point of fact, you have dreamed a scheme to free you from the tiresome task of painting Autumn leaves. They've sent you fetching for the colors and you've absconded with the paint, leaving bits of cloth and broken bushes as if there was a terrible row. They'll think some wind giant or summer sunbeam desperate for a final dance upon the curling surf has taken you and all the colors so as to delay the coming of fall. I need only to hide these canisters then turn up days hence looking haggard to escape weeks of terrible tedious work.

I love to frolic, snack and snooze
Avoiding labor with my wit.
The shortest path is one I choose
When I can get away with it.
Let others larder winter stores
And sweat beneath a pounding sun,
I'll fill the glen with snorting snores
Then raid a barn when gathering's done!

Dear me! Here come my cousins searching sooner than I had expected. Scurry, Dodge, for if you're found your scheming comes to naught.

(Dodge grabs the cans and exits. Enter Elves.)

SWALLOW

It is as I feared.

TORTLE

He is not here.

SWALLOW

Worse, he's victim of abuse.

GRAND ELF

The Autumn paints?

TORTLE

All gone.

SNIDE

Stolen.

But who? **TORTLE**

And why? **HOLMSTEAD**

It's obvious. **GRAND ELF**

The winter Gnomes. **SNIDE**

The Winter Gnomes... **ELVES**

They want to rule the seasons. **GRAND ELF**

Why of course. **SWALLOW**

And so... **GRAND ELF**

And so? **SWALLOW**

They've taken Dodge. **SNIDE**

Who's taken Dodge? **TORTLE**

The Winter Gnomes. **GRAND ELF**

Dodge is an Elf, not a Gnome. **SWALLOW**

Of course she's an Elf. **GRAND ELF**

I'm perfectly certain of that fact because we're sisters. **SWALLOW**

Although there have been cases... **TORTLE**

GRAND ELF

We are not discussing parentage.

SWALLOW

Then what are we discussing?

GRAND ELF

Where she has gone with the Autumn colors.

TORTLE

Well, she's not here.

SWALLOW

That's perfectly obvious.

HOLMSTEAD

And she is not there in the fields.

SWALLOW

Are you sure?

SNIDE

They are overrun with ghastly Gnomes.

GRAND ELF

And so we must conclude that they have seized her and our Autumn colors as part of an effort to overturn the order of things.

SWALLOW

A revolution.

TORTLE

Machination.

BLOSSOM

Evolution.

TORTLE

Infiltration.

SNIDE

A really cruddy bit of underhanded behavior.

GRAND ELF

And so we go and prepare for war!

ELVES

War!

Whenever reason loses season
We seize weapons
To War! To War!
Whenever malice fills our chalice
We seize weapons
And march! huzzah!
Whenever ranker rules.
Whenever ill will swells.
Whenever tempers fail to cool.
We'll fill the hills and dells
With smashing fists,
With curdling cries,
Break crown and wrists,
Till someone dies!
To war! To war! To war!
Huzzah!