

Queen Mab's Alarmingly Mandatory Bridal Shower

Script excerpt

The story so far.... Domineering Queen Mab, Ruler of All the Fairies, has commanded invited us to her Bridal Shower, to celebrate her upcoming nuptials. This is her twenty-ninth fiance, and she is determined to make sure THIS one goes through with it! So she's had a very special gown made for the occasion, and has applied "a dab" of makeup to make herself even more ravishing.

QUEEN MAB

Good heavens. I'm winded. Who knew the tiniest little touchup could be so exhausting? I shall sit. Did I ever tell you you may be seated? Well, do. I'm in a giving mood today. I'm t'be married! Oh, yes. Oh, it's all happening so quickly, it's taken me stench away. The Baron, too. Don't think the Baron int surprised by all this then neither. Don't think he saw it coming, quite frankly.

I said to him, Baron, I said, now I know there's been a bit of a string of bad luck with my fiancés, leaving me at the altar or dying in the attempt, my fiancés, all -- twenty-eight of them, so let's not wait, I says, let's not wait for bad luck Dama Fortuna to come a-striking up, let's strike each other first! Let's not wait a day! Let's have the bridal shower this very very afternoon, let's knot the deed! And he said yes! Oh, my dear darling hazel hens, he said yes, yes, Your Majesty, Queen Mab, Ruler of all the Fairies, I will marry you!

So I let go his hair. And I squeezed him with such affection I did. I just squeezed him and I said it's cause you love me, innit don't answer the question, I know the answer.

And we'll not wait, no we won't, we won't wait for Black Dama Fortuna what took ahold of them other fiancés before you. We won't wait for you, like them, to come down with the dropsy or death-by-scurvy or falling down a well and never heard from again, will we? Or suddenly run off to war and killed the very hour before we was to say our vows. That was number Eighteen, the coward! Why, there wasn't even a war on at the time. I swan just so he wouldn't have to go through with it he'd provoked a war that very morning so's to have a battle to march into. What kind of marriage would that have been, I ask you? I'm lucky that little pallied harrier run off and got himself killed, that little pintail, that little soft-plumaged petrel!

Oh, and number Nineteen, the Earl of wherever-it-was, told me yes, he'd marry me, course he'd marry me, and there I am in all my resplendence with all the aisles and aisles of regalia and guests and dignifiabes, and we come to the ring bit, right before he's to say he does, and I'm to say I does too, only -- he doesn't! He stam-stam-stammers, the ferruginous duck, and gets all teary-snotted and begins to shake and tremble like a rabbit about to be skinned, and he finally says don't tuck my head off, Queen Mab, but I done married someone else on the way over. On the way over, I says! What d'you mean, on the way here to the altar? "Tsright," he says. "Bad luck, I didn't mean to. Wrong church it was. Walked right in, married her before I done realize I was couple blocks away still." "Walked into the wrong church!" I says. Eh!, bad luck, right!

And number Twenty with that freak lightning frizzled him dead on the spot, they told me, though I never did see him and the night was as dry as my scalp. And Twenty-One! Guzzling down poison he mistook for a cask of ale, and Twenty-Two slipped off the cliffs of Dover and Twenty-Three they told me was et by an eagle two minutes before. Very close that one. And Twenty-Four caught in a bear trap what snapped the life of him right in half. Though I never did understand what a bear trap was doing on the church steps.

Oh lud, lud, such bad luck the lot of them. Which is why I says to Number Twenty-Nine, let's not wait! Marry me tonight fore cruel Fate has a chance to catch you up and take you from me. I raises my fist to you, d'y'hear me!?

(SHE confronts the without. **Ipse Dixit, Dama Fortuna.**)

QUEEN MAB

DAMA FORTUNA,
 YOU'LL NOT TAKE ANY MORE FIANCES FROM ME!
 NO, IPSE DIXIT, HE IS MINE!
 YOU'LL NOT HAVE ANY MORE.
 NO, NO MORE, NO MORE!

Ooo, I'm raisin' both me fists now! I'd raise me knees as well if I had any balance. But I'm all off-kilt because....

HE SAID YES, HE LOVES ME!
 I WILL MARRY THE DUKE
 IF IT'S THE LAST THING HE DOES.

Did I say Duke?

I MEAN, THE BARON.
 I'LL MARRY THE BARON
 IF IT'S THE LAST THING....

YOU STOLD FROM ME
 TWENTY-EIGHT TIMES
 BUT THIS ONE YOU WILL NOT SNATCH OF ME
 FOR HE HAS MADE A MATCH OF ME.
 I WILL MARRY THIS ONE,
 MARRY NUMBER TWENTY-NINE.
 IPSE DIXIT, DAMA FORTUNA!
 HE IS MINE, HE IS MINE!

For he loves me. He told me so. At least I think that's what he was saying. I had rather a tight twist on his neck, so it was a bit hard to understand him through all the rasping and wheezing. Not that he's old. I don't mean to say he wheezes all the time. Not all the time. And his hunch is hardly noticeable. Though I would have preferred it if he had been born with both of his ears. And that his one ear weren't so far down on his jaw. The important thing is that he loves me. Or at least that he hasn't told me that he doesn't.

So! All that being said, this is a joyous, joyous occasion. I'm to be married, married at last, isn't it wonderful! I said, isn't it wonderful! to which you reply, Yes, Your Majesty, Queen Mab, Ruler of all the Fairies. Oh, you're hopeless, you spotted crakes! If you wasn't all members of my Fairy Court, I'd put wicks in your ear wax an light you on fire! Humm, let me make a note of that....Enough, enough, time for that later.

So, where was we? Puttin on of the gown, done that, what's next?

(SHE startles in joy at the presents, as if seeing them for the first time.)

Presents! Oh, for me? You shouldn't have.

(SHE picks one up and is appalled at its hasty wrapping job.)

Eh! Oh, dear. What's this sad thing. No, no, I shan't chastise. Not today. I hardly gave you time, did I? Springing this bridal shower on you last minute an all, you did your best. You did your...best. It's really not very good. Still, it's the thought an all. What is it? Hmmm? Something expensive and undoubtedly overly flattering. Well, I could be made to be happy by that.

(SHE shakes it, excited as a little girl.)

Rattle. Rattle. Rattle! Could it be...a coat rack? A flagpole? Ha, a new carriage?!? Ooo, tell me you done bought me a new carriage a six, and conjured it down wee small into a little box, but when I opens it, out will pop and unconjure itself all full-sized again and teeming with diamons and rudies and memeralds and never-ending extravagancies like that, for me to ride round in! Ooo, I'm openin' it, can't stand the wait! Here it is! Three two one!

(It's not a carriage.)

A husk of corn? A corn husk! For the Queen! What moulty flycatcher'd dare to give a corn husk as a present for the Queen? Let me see the tag. And if it's from one of you, I'll fetch a jar and pickle you in brine, I will. Corn husk.

(reads the tag)

“From Prince Pot-Donnocks of the East.” Shoulda known. Pot-Donnocks! Number Sixteen. Knew he didn’t fall down a well! Wouldn’t marry him now if he asked, which I doubt he ever will. So, I’ll toss away his nasty prezzie, as if it don’t ever of existed. Get thee behind me, prezzie. Pfaugh! so much for that, and along with it, him.

(SHE tosses away the corn husk and its box.)

I’ll not let it ruin my lovely bridal shower, my little pipits. I’m t’be married, y’know. I’m a blushing bride. Look a me blush...!

(SHE poomps up her cheeks.)

I’m benuptialed.

(SHE sees the presents, as if in surprise.)

I’m be-presented! Oh, look, presents! Who put those there! For me! Well, I just might cry.

(SHE takes up another present and smells it, trying to guess what’s inside.)

What is it? Sniffy-sniff-sniff....An ostrich? An iceberg? A --

(SHE spies the tag, and gasps.)

Ooo! This one, it’s from him himself.

(SHE holds the present to her breast. **The Gift He Gave to Me.**)

QUEEN MAB

FROM ME OWN BETROTHED
 FROM THE BARON OF ME HEART,
 A PRESENT, BEARIN’ ME A SIGN
 THAT LOVE IS BARREN NO MORE!
 LIFE CAN TURN UPON A PRESENT
 WHEN IT’S SOMETHING HALF AS PLEASANT.
 HALF AS PLEASANT?
 TWICE AS PLEASANT
 WHEN A GIFT IT SAYS ENTAIL
 THE MAN WOT I ADORE!

FROM HIM TO ME
 THIS GIFT IS GIVEN
 FROM THE HANDS OF HE
 WOT WILL BE MINE FROM HIM
 FROM HE TO SHE
 UNTO THE HEART OF SHE WOT WILL BE HAD BY HIM
 WHEN BY ME HE WILL BE HE WHO BY ME....

I'm a little lost here....

QUEEN MAB

SEE WHAT LOVE WILL DO-HOO!
 WHEN IT'S FOUND BY YOU-HOO!
 TO WHIT TO WHOO-HOO!
 SEE WHAT LOVE WILL DO-HOO!
 HOO HOO HOO HOO!

AH! LOVE, IT TURNS US ALL TO IDJITS.
 MAYS WELL TAKE A LEAP FROM LONDON BRIDGE.
 IT'S...WELL, IT'S MAD!
 LOVE IS MAD AND WE ARE MAD
 WHEN MAD WITH LOVE WE MADLY LOVE OUR LOVE!

CLUTTER CLATTER WOT A MATTER
 WHEN A GULL AS GOTTEN AT A REELING FEELING.
 I'D ABIDE A NIGHT O' BRIDAL GLEE-HEE-HEE!
 SPLUTTERING AND MUTTERING
 AND STUTTERING AND UTTERING
 THE FLATTERING AND SCATTERING
 AND SHATTERING AND CLATTERING
 AND CHATTERING AND WALLOWING
 AND HOLLOWING AND SWALLOWING
 THAT'S FOLLOWING THE GIFT HE GAVE TO ME!

And now I'll open it. I'll...I'll...

(SHE sets the Baron's present on a pedestal.)

NAY.
 LIE THOU THERE.
 AND RUSH ME NOT THIS MOMENT.
 CHERISH ME THIS PRENUPTIAL BLISS.
 NEVER BEFORE HAS A FEELING FELT STRONGER.
 LET LOVE'S EXHILARATION
 LINGER LONGER.
 LET IT LINGER LONGER!
 AH! AH! LOVE IN THE AIR.
 AH! AH! FEELING SO RARE.
 SO LIE THOU THERE. AH!
 AND SO LIE THOU THERE!

I WISH FOR YOU, ALL ME DEARS,
 THE NOISES WOT IS IN ME EARS.

CLUTTER CLATTER WOT A MATTER
 WHEN A GULL AS GOTTEN AT A REELING FEELING.
 I'D ABIDE A NIGHT O' BRIDAL GLEE-HEE-HEE!
 SPLUTTERING AND MUTTERING
 AND STUTTERING AND UTTERING
 THE FLATTERING AND SCATTERING
 AND SHATTERING AND CLATTERING
 AND CHATTERING AND WALLOWING
 AND HOLLOWING AND SWALLOWING
 THAT'S FOLLOWING THE GIFT HE GAVE TO ME-HEE-HEE!
 TO ME! THE GIFT HE GAVE TO ME! TO ME!

(As she turns, she sees the presents, as if for the first time.)

QUEEN MAB

What's this, presents! For me! To celebrate the glory and wonder what is me! Oh! Oh!! You overwhelm me.

(SHE picks up another present and reads the tag.)

"From the Earl of Mire Drumble." Oh dear. Number Four. The one with lethal dropsy. Pronounced dead an hour before our ceremony. Seems he's recovered somewhat. Well, Master Mire Drumble, what have you given me aside from a clackened heart?

(SHE opens the present. HER face droops.)

Well. It appears to be a clod of dirt.

(Pause. SHE is momentarily stricken.)

How. Thoughtful.

(SHE drops it quietly with the corn husk.)

Lie thou there with the other.

(Cautiously, SHE takes up another present.)

Next. From Number Five. The Viscount of Mulberry Wox. Trampled to death by wildebeests. Or so he said.

(SHE opens it.)

Look. A wad of used tobacco. I sense a trend.

(SHE picks up other presents.)

Yes. From Number Six, the Vizier of Hooper's Hide, who in the wedding chariot on his way to me, sunk into a bog, never to be heard from again. Until now, apparently. When he resurrects himself to insult me with....

(SHE opens it.)

A glob of uncooked dough.

(SHE finally explodes.)

Well, dignity be damned! I shall see you all have your noses rot off. I shall cast a spell to mangle and scurvy you with itches and frantics beyond your worst imaginings! I shall fetter your dreams with terrors and shivers such the likes have never this earth nor heaven beyond have dreamt nor feared to dream!

(SHE conjures revengeful Magick against them. **Cross the Queen.**)

QUEEN MAB

KI HERRICUM, BERRICUMIMOSS!
 CROSS THE QUEEN,
 THE QUEEN WILL CROSS!
 SOD THY CHILDREN,
 SOD THY WARS!
 KI FERRICUM TERRICUMICOSS!
 CROSS THE QUEEN,
 THE QUEEN WILL CROSS!
 DROWN THY CATTLE,
 OPE THY SORES!
 KI FERRICUMINUS HERRICUM!
 SCAVAGE THE BEASTS,
 SCAVAGE THY BEDS,
 SCAVAGE THY CLOTHES
 AND THY DRINKS, THY FEASTS!
 NEVERMORE BEDARKEN THE BOWER OF MAB!
 AWFUL, ETERNAL, DELICIOUS,
 UNSPEAKABLE, UNSTOPPABLE
 TORN-FROM-THE-CLACKENED HEART REVENGE!

QUEEN MAB

Any questions? I'll open my fiancé's present now. I'm in such a jolly mood.

(SHE gets the box down off the pedestal.)

Thing is...

QUEEN MAB

He has agreed to marry me. And love, as you know, conquers all. There may be some what of hurt me, but this one, he's different. And I don't just mean that his ear's affixed to his jaw. Though...that do make him different. And sometimes a little hard to look at. Well, I mean, he's all a bit twisted like a crochet hook, y'know, and sometimes looking at his face too close'll put you off your fish and chips, and he's, well, how do I say, he's not the ripest berry on the bush, y'know? Not the firmest mushroom in the basket. Not the roundest wheel on the cart. Right. But he'll marry me, and that's as good as a wink to the lame and halted. As good as salve to the thirsty and bypassed. As good as a kiss to the overly rejected.

And his heart is pure. His face is a mess, but his heart is pure. And really, haven't I enough beauty for the both of us? I don't really care. Not really.

(SHE sits; a rare moment of stillness for her. **If He Will Sit With Me.**)

QUEEN MAB

IF HE WILL SIT WITH ME
 WITHOUT I ASK HIM TO,
 IF HE WILL LIGHT A FIRE
 ON A COLD WINTER NIGHT,
 IF WHEN THE WINDS IS BLOW,
 IF WHEN THE MOON AIN'T RIGHT,
 OR EVEN LESS THAN THAT,
 IF EVEN ONCE A WHILE
 IF HE WILL SIT WITH ME
 WITHOUT I ASK HIM TO,
 IF HE'LL MIGHTN'T CRINKLE ME
 A FAINTEST SMILE....

BUT IF HIS SKIN IS POKED
 OR IF HE'S ODOROUS
 OR IF HE'S MISSING TEETH
 OR HIS LISP IS SEVERE
 OR WHEN HE WHISPERS CLOSE
 HE RUNS THE RISK OF GETTING
 SOME OF HIS SALIVA IN HIS EAR,
 YES, IN HIS EAR,
 IF HE IS SO BEWROUGHT,
 WELL THEN, IT MATTERS NOT
 IF HE'S STUPID AS A MUSTARD POT.

QUEEN MAB

So. Let's see what he guv me for a wedding present.

(SHE opens the box and looks inside. A moment.)

Right. Well, the good thing is, it's not a gob o' dough.

(SHE pulls out of the box a small note. SHE tips the rest of the box upside-down and nothing else falls out.)

It says. "My dear beloved...." Well, that's a good start, eh? "I've run away." Oh. Might should've stopped when I was ahead. "I've run away. I've done left your kingdom and won't ever be back. I've, in fact, guv over living in your world at all and gone over to become a yooman, that I might not ever be forced to marry you. I'm sorry if this grieves you, but I am a coward and could not face the notion of being married to you even for a day. With apologies, I remain, Number Twenty-Nine. The Baron of -- " Well, I get the gist.

Thing is.

So there's cake if anyone wants it.

But I think we're done with the opening of the presents. Unless there really is a carriage in one of 'em. I'd fancy keeping that. No?

Thing is.

(SHE gazes on a distant horizon and is suddenly transported away from us. **Fold Thine Arms.**)

QUEEN MAB

O BRIDE,
 MY BEAUTIFUL AND BLUSHING BRIDE,
 MY MAB, OUR WEDDING NIGHT OF HAPPINESS,
 I PRAY 'TWILL LAST FOREVER.
 O BRIDE
 O BEAUTIFUL AND BLUSHING BRIDE,
 AROUND ME FOLD THINE ARMS
 AND HOLD ME TILL THE MORNING.

QUEEN MAB

I can't really blame any of 'em. The Twenty-Nine, I mean. Standing next to me, well, who would feel you could possibly measure up, y'know? Why, you'd always feel inadequate. You'd have to. Who could live with that? Next to such beauty, such regal presence, why, I'd think it'd be enough for you to want to drive your carriage into a bog just so you wouldn't have to run the risk of catching a glimpse of yourself in a mirror or a bit of reflected armor and think, "Good heavens, next to the Queen, how ordinary am I! How non-wondrous. How unastonishing. Such a disappointment to be me." Y'know? No, I don't blame 'em. Feel sorry 'em really, poor dears. Poor poor ordinary dears, having to live with being so...not me. Next to me, who is so...evaporous, so...effluvial! Would that I weren't so awesome and wonderful. I mean, for my sake. Who can measure? Who can, or ever will, measure up?

I mentioned there's cake, right?

Look. You needn't stay. I'll have the servants clear this up. I've a new girl. Not yet sure what her name is. I call her My Lady's Oatmeal. On account of the texture of her skin. You know, lumpy. Raisins. Oh yes.

(SHE sees presents, as if for the first time.)

What's this, presents for me? I can't bear to --

(SHE catches a glimpse of a card.)

Oh, from the Duchess of Chippings. So far to the North. Curious. I don't remember inviting her. Yet bless me, it isn't a present at all, but a mere card. The cheek! Well, I'll nettle her frenzy! I'll bottle her fermentation. I'll --

(SHE reads the writing on the card.)

"My dearest esteemed Queen Mab." Well, I'll read it. "The Duchess of Chippings is proud to announce the birth of her newborn son, the Duke of Chippings, born last month in health and joy so praise your Majesty, Queen Mab, Ruler of all the Fairies."

A duke. Well, he's a bit young for me. Still. If I'm patient...and continue to keep as careful care of my thinny figger, why, eighteen years, they'll pass in a trice, they will! Eighteen years, that's all. The Duke of Chippings. I like that. Yes, I like that very much. I do believe, my little colly birds, I do believe Queen Mab will be happy after all! Give or take the better part of twenty years. Imagine. Happy. Happy after all.

(SHE clutches the card. **I Shall Be Beautiful - Reprise.**)

QUEEN MAB

I SHALL BE BEAUTIFUL
 I SHALL BE BEAUTIFUL
 I SHALL BE BEAUTIFUL
 I SHALL BE BEAUTIFUL
 I SHALL BE BEAUTIFUL
 I SHALL BE BEAUTIFUL
 YES, I SHALL BE BEAUTIFUL.

(Lights dim on her reverie.)

THE END