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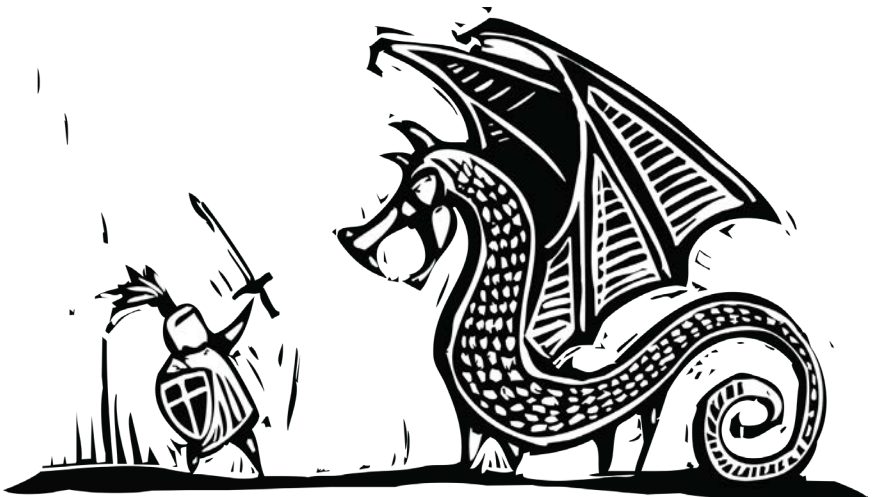
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Family Plays

Saint George and the Dragon

By
Esther Porter Lane



Saint George and the Dragon

Folk drama. *By Esther Porter Lane.* Cast: 5m., 5w., with doubling, or up to 25 mummers. This version of *Saint George and the Dragon* is a composite version of the traditional Christmas mummers' plays woven from bits of old texts, folk legends, medieval Christmas plays and scenes from Edmund Spenser's *Fairie Queene*. There is a version of *The Play of St. George* in Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*.

Here is a charming retelling of the great mummers' plays, folk plays of the Middle Ages. It is a perfect choice for holiday pageantry and drama in Christmas season productions that herald the passing of a year passed and a new beginning. Travel back in time to the Christmas celebrations in the Middle Ages, which began with a parade of knights, princesses, a king, a queen and, of course, a dragon. There were also miraculous medical practitioners who could cure all ailments. In traditional rhymed dialogue, Father (or Mother) Christmas presides over exaggerated sword and shield battles, court dances and St. George's heroic and romantic escapades. *Production notes are available in the script containing details on costumes, music, set and props. The songs are set to well-known secular Christmas carols, with plenty of fanfare and exuberance. Set: Any found space will suffice as a set. Properties may be simple, as if handcrafted by peasants, using Holly and ivy plants for decorative pieces. Decorated casual modern costumes or elaborate period costumes, if desired. Approximate running time: 40 minutes. Code: ST4.*

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(SAINT GEORGE AND THE DRAGON)

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“Produced by special arrangement with
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This version of SAINT GEORGE AND THE DRAGON is a composite version of the traditional Christmas Mummers' Play woven from bits of old texts, folk legends, medieval Christmas plays, and scenes from Edmund Spenser's "Faerie Queene." There is a version of "The Play of St. George" in Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*.

CAST LIST OF MUMMERS

(A troupe of from 10 to 25 Mummers can produce this Play)

KING

QUEEN

SABRA

2 or more PRINCESSES

MOLLY (or MOTHER) CHRISTMAS

1 to 5 DOCTORS

CAPTAIN SLASHER

TURKISH KNIGHT

EGYPTIAN KNIGHT

SAINT GEORGE

DRAGON

MUSICIANS

DRUMMER

PIPER or FLUTE-PLAYER

SAINT GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

*Flute and Drum announce the opening parade of the
Mummers*

(Chanting in unison as they circle the room or stage)

MUMMERS

We are a coming-a;
Fifing and a drumming-a;
We are a coming-a
Long the way.
We are a coming-a;
Singing and humming-a;
You'll see a mumming-a;
If you'll stay.

(A costume trunk is placed so that the parade passes by it. Mummers take swords, shields, batons, crowns, jewels, musical instruments, ribbons, decorations and "props" of all sorts from the trunk. The parade stops. Each Mummer freezes like a statue. Then they point at each other as the characters are mentioned in the next chant.)

MUMMERS

We have Knights and
We have Princesses and
We have a King and
A Lady Queen;
We have some Mollys,

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Mollys in motley, and
Doctors in green;
We have a band and a
Drummer-boy such as you
Never before in your
Life have seen.

(Spot light on the Dragon)

We have a *Dragon*

(Point and applaud while drum and flute fanfare. Parade begins again and finishes in places on the stage.)

MUMMERS

We are a coming-a
Fifing and a drumming-a
We are a coming-a
Long the way.

We are a coming-a
Singing and humming-a
You'll see a mumming-a
IF YOU'LL STAY.

(Enter Father—or Mother—Christmas to center stage light)

MOTHER CHRISTMAS

Here come I, old Mother Christmas
Welcome or welcome not,
I hope old Mother Christmas
Will never be forgot:
Although it's Christmas time,
I've a short time to stay,

SAINT GEORGE AND THE DRAGON 7

But I've come to show you pleasure
Before I pass away!

Make room, make room, my gallants, room.
And give us space to rhyme;
We've come to show St. George's play
Upon this Christmas time
And if you don't believe my word, I straight call OUT,

Walk in, Maid Molly, and boldly now begin.

(Enter MOLLY, sweeping the stage with a large broom)

MOLLY

Make room, make room, for with this broom
I've come to clear the way
As in days of old the mummers bold
Will give St. George's play.
And they will all fence, fight, and fall,
Whatever be their age.
You'll never see such activities
Upon another stage.
And if you won't believe what I have had to say,
Let the Ladies of the Castle show
That now begins our play.

(Group of Princesses enter)

PRINCESS SABRA

I am Princess Sabra, with my Molly at my side.

(Whispers)

Don't spread the story but Saint George has wooed
me for his bride.

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If he can tame a Dragon and a Turk or two in fight,
He probably could manage me; but if he can't,
good-night!

FIRST PRINCESS

What think ye of Princesses,
Oh, ye happy village girls?
They go in silken dresses,
And in strings of shining pearls.

SECOND PRINCESS

Tho' some of us be little
And some of middle sort,
We all desire your favour
To see our pleasant sport.

(Princesses dance. As they finish MOLLY passes a big bowl of fruit to all on stage.)

(MOTHER CHRISTMAS to center stage.)

MOTHER CHRISTMAS

To see a merry act begin—
Let the Valiant Soldier enter in
He hopes your favour he will win.

(Fanfare of music. SLASHER enters and parades around the stage.)

SLASHER

Here come I, the Valiant Soldier.
Slasher is my name,
With sword and buckler by my side
I hope to win the game.
Yes, with my sword and with my spear
To 'fend the right, I'll battle here.

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MOTHER CHRISTMAS

The Turkish Knight is here, and swears he will come in.

And, if he does, I know he'll pierce your skin.

If you will not believe what I say,

Let the Turkish Knight come in! Clear the way!

(Turkish Knight parades)

TURKISH KNIGHT

Here come I, the Turkish Knight

Come from the Turkish land to fight.

I'll fight the captain who is my foe,

I'll make him yield before I go;

He brags to such a high degree,

He thinks there's none can do the like of he.

SLASHER

If thou art called the Turkish Knight,

Draw out thy sword and let us fight!

I am the friend of good St. George,

I've fought men o'er and o'er,

And for the sake of good St. George

I'd fight a hundred more.

(Fight—Slasher wounded.)

MOLLY *(To Audience)*

Is there a doctor to be found

to cure this man of his deadly wound?

DOCTOR #1 *(In audience. Comes to stage)*

Yes, there's a doctor to be found

To cure this man of his deadly wound.

With this little bottle that you see

I cure all evils there can be.

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(Repairs Slasher)

Congratulations!

(Doctor exits)

TURKISH KNIGHT

Oh rise and draw, and we will fight again.

(Fight again, Slasher killed.)

SLASHER

To slay this false Knight did I try—
Tis for the right I have to die.

MOTHER CHRISTMAS

Is there a doctor to be found
That can raise dead men from the ground,
So as to have them for to stand
And walk again upon this land?

DOCTOR #2 *(Coming to stage from audience)*

Being a doctor of great fame
Who from the ancient countries came,
And knowing Asia, Afric-ay
And every mystery out that way,
I've learned to do the best of cures
For all the human frame endures.
I can restore a leg or arm
From mortification or from harm,
I can repair a sword-slit pate,
A leg cut off—if not too late.

(Tries to cure Slasher)

It is too late.

SAINT GEORGE AND THE DRAGON 11

(Slasher is carried off)

(Turkish Knight parades victorious. Molly again sweeps the stage in wide circles. Loud fanfare and the EGYPTIAN KNIGHT enters shouting)

EGYPTIAN KNIGHT

Open your doors, and let me in;

I hope your favours I shall win;

Whether I rise or whether I fall

I'll do my best to please you all.

The Turkish Knight is there and swears he will come in.

And if he does, I know he'll pierce my skin.

If you do not believe what I have to say,

Let the Turkish Knight come in! Clear the way!

TURKISH KNIGHT

Where is the Egyptian, that will before me stand?

I'll cut him down with my courageous hand.

(They fight and both are wounded)

MOTHER CHRISTMAS

Mercy! See these knights all a-stretched out on the ground.

Doctor, O Doctor! Where's a doctor to be found?

DOCTOR #3 *(In audience)*

Here I am. What's all the urgency?

Quick, tell me, has anyone died?

MOLLY

Look, don't you call that an emergency?

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(Pointing to 2 knights flat on floor)

But wait: are you a doctor fully qualified?

DOCTOR #3

I've traveled in Italy, Germany, France and Spain,
Over the seas and back again.

I've here in my medicine case spectacles for blind
bats, splints for crooked eels, crutches for lame
ducks, straight-jackets for March hares, and deodor-
ants for pole-cats.

I have pills that cure all ills,
The itch, the stitch, the pink-eye and the gout,
Pains within and pains without.

MOLLY

Quick, Doctor, do your duty.

(Doctor, helped by Mother Christmas and Molly, repairs both Knights. He then shakes hands with everyone on the stage and exits)

EGYPTIAN KNIGHT

Fight again, O cursed Traitor!
For I would foully shame
The cause of chivalry if I had slain
The Turkish Knight!
Rise and defend yourself again
Or yield in sorrow to this champion!
Oh, rise and draw, and we will fight again.

TURKISH KNIGHT

Take up your sword and I will show you why.

(They fight and the Egyptian Knight is forced to his knees)

SAINT GEORGE AND THE DRAGON 13

EGYPTIAN KNIGHT

Oh, pardon me, dear Knight, pardon of thee I crave
Oh, pardon me this night and I will be thy slave.

(Turkish Knight accepts this surrender and signals to two Princesses to aid the Egyptian Knight to exit on his knees)

TURKISH KNIGHT

Now, if St. George but will meet me here
I'll try his mettle without fear!

(MOLLY sweeps the stage again)

MOTHER CHRISTMAS

Room, room, gallant room do I require
Step in St. George and show thy face like fire.

(Enter Saint George to crashing music. He circles the stage)

ST. GEORGE

Here am I, St. George.
That worthy champion bold
With my sword and spear
I won three crowns of gold.
I'll fight the Turkish Knight
And bring him to the slaughter;
In hopes that I can win Fair Sabra
The King of England's daughter.
Where is the man that now will me defy?
I'll cut his giblets full of holes,
And make his buttons fly.

TURKISH KNIGHT

Make not so bold, St. George, I pray;
Though thou'rt all this, thou'rt one I'll slay!

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(Fight—Turkish Knight wounded)

MOLLY

Can there a doctor come to me
From anywhere in this countrie?

DOCTOR #4

Good, here's a chance to show my utmost skill
One drop of alicumpane will either cure or kill.
Here, take a swallow from this bottle,
And let it gurgle down your throttle . . .
He rises ten times stronger than he used to be.
St. George for England and for victory!

(Doctor repairs Turkish Knight. Congratulations all around)

ST. GEORGE

My blood is hot as any fire,
So I must say thee Nay,
For with my trusty sword and spear
I'll take thy life away!

TURKISH KNIGHT

Then thou and I will battle try.
And if I conquer thou shalt die!
So give me leave, I'll give thee battle
And quickly make thy bones to rattle!

(Fight. Turkish Knight is wounded and is dragged off stage.)

1st PRINCESS *(to St. George)*

Oh, noble sir, most worthy lord,
Flower of chivalry