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*Dramatic Publishing*



**13 Bells of Boglewood**  
by **Max Bush**

# 13 Bells of Boglewood

IUPUI / IRT / Bonderman Award Winner

Successfully premiered at Michigan State University.

*Fairy tale. By Max Bush. Cast: 4m., 3w.* This action-packed play illustrates the choices we make between doing what is right and doing what satisfies our greed. Set in a forest, two gold diggers find themselves on opposite sides of this equation as they encounter fairies, spriggans and the Greedy Bogle on their journey to find the gold. Casey Smith hires a teenaged Brian to help him dig for gold on a forested site he has just purchased. When Brian eats food left by fairies, he's able to see and talk to them. He learns that they need gold to sustain life and tells Smith he won't help him take away the gold. However, Smith is determined, and he turns to the forest's Greedy Bogle, who answers questions in exchange for gold. Soon, Smith has enough clues and the help of the Greedy Bogle to continue his search. In an elaborate race to a buried treasure, Smith and Brian encounter the hideous spriggans, guardians of the hill treasure, as well as Lara, queen of Hollow Hill. The treasure is discovered but is guarded by magic and a 13-bell warning. When the bells have sounded, Smith finds he has become the forest's new Greedy Bogle. For young Brian, the life-and-death events are a rite of passage from childhood into a larger universe. *Single set. Approximate running time: 65 minutes. Code: TL8.*

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13 Bells of Boglewood



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By  
MAX BUSH



**Dramatic Publishing Company**

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**DEDICATION**  
**To Dan, Matt, and Penelope**

The premiere production of *13 Bells of Boglewood* (formerly *The Treasure of Grouch Forest*) was presented on February 3, 1984, at Michigan State University with the following cast:

Brian . . . . . David Andrews  
Casey Smith . . . . . David Magee  
Thistle . . . . . Martie Sanders  
Lara . . . . . Linda Dunlop  
Bogle . . . . . Jordan Cohen  
Hort . . . . . Diane Crea  
Tauger . . . . . Laura Stec

*Production Staff*

Director . . . . . Max Bush  
Assistant Director . . . . . Roger Sovis  
Set Design . . . . . Noreen Walworth  
Costume Design . . . . . Penelope Victor  
Lighting Design . . . . . James E. Peters  
Sound Design . . . . . Steve Bridgeland  
Stage Manager . . . . . Brian Stonestreet  
Make-up Design . . . . . Kat Bolak  
Technical Director . . . . . Noreen Walworth



### *13 Bells of Boglewood*

#### *Characters*

Brian . . . . .	a young man of 17
Casey Smith . . . . .	a land owner, 40
Thistle . . . . .	a faery
Lara . . . . .	Queen of the Hollow Hill
The Bogle . . . . .	a Bogle
Hort . . . . .	a male Hideous Spriggan
Tauger . . . . .	a female Hideous Spriggan

*Time:* A Spring morning in the present year.

*Place:* The Forest.

*Notes:* The setting will be most effective if suggestive of the “real” forest rather than a “magical” forest or a “magical part” of the “real” forest. The magic will then be based on and grow from a tangible and familiar reality.

The sounds can be made by a large bell, small bell chimes, a base drum, a ratchet for the pinch sound and recorded music for the food and dancing.

The tune to the Spriggans’ song should be energetic and unfamiliar.

To tour,, all that is needed is a stump, the log, two rocks, the three small trees and some backing flats suggestive of the forest. Daylight is the only light needed.

Playing time is approximately 65 minutes without intermission.

## 13 BELLS OF BOGLEWOOD

At rise we see a deep, climax forest in the upper Midwest: huge beech, maples, oaks and pines. There's a stump down right, a large rock center right, bushes up right. Left we see a large fallen, rotting tree trunk, more bushes, perhaps another stump. Up are three hawthorn trees surrounding a small mound. Another large boulder sits on the mound, in the center of the three hawthorn trees. It is spring and the colors are fresh and alive. The atmosphere reflects the new wildflowers, the deepening colors of the leaves and the celebration that is growing up through the forest floor. As the play begins birds are heard singing.

*(BRIAN runs on. He's a fairly tall, slender, animated young man of 17 and comes from a working class home. CASEY SMITH calls from off.)*

SMITH: *(Off.)*

Brian? Brian, where are you?

*(BRIAN has stopped running and stands looking intently at the scenery. It's as if the forest has taken him by surprise.)*

Where'd you go? I told you to wait for me!

*(BRIAN bends over, smells a wildflower, moves to a tree, sits, leaning against it, looking up at the treetops.)*

Brian?

*(SMITH enters. The tree BRIAN is leaning against is between him and SMITH so SMITH doesn't see him. SMITH is about 40.)*

Brian? Oh . . .

*(He spots a wildflower.)*

Another wildflower.

*(He picks it up, places it in with the other he's picked. He looks up, spies the rock.)*

Ah. Here's the rock with the bell carved in it. This is the place.

*(He glances around fearfully.)*

Look at it. No wonder they say goblins and bogles live out here. Where is that boy, anyway? BRIAN!

BRIAN: Yes?

SMITH: (*Startled.*)

Ah!

(*He turns to see it's only BRIAN.*)

Oh . . . it's you. Don't do that out here. You'd never believe what I thought you were.

BRIAN: What do you have there, Mr. Smith?

(*i.e. the bouquet SMITH is carrying.*)

SMITH: We might need these later.

BRIAN: (*Suddenly alarmed.*)

Poison ivy!

SMITH: Ah!

(*Smith drops them like they were on fire.*)

Are they?

BRIAN: Oh, no. Those are mostly woodlilies. I meant those are poison ivy.

(*Pointing behind SMITH.*)

SMITH: Oh, but . . . you were joking with me, weren't you?

(*He chuckles. BRIAN laughs. SMITH suddenly stops.*)

But it wasn't funny. Well, this is the place I wanted to show you.

BRIAN: You said you might be able to make me rich, Mr. Smith?

SMITH: I asked you here because you're the only kid in our neighborhood I can trust.

BRIAN: About what?

SMITH: Well, boy—

BRIAN: Call me Brian.

SMITH: Well, boy—

BRIAN: My name is Brian.

SMITH: Well, boy, I bought these woods, the whole thing, and—

BRIAN: I thought old Mable Putnam owned it.

SMITH: Well, I bought it from her. But—

BRIAN: Congratulations, Mr. Smith. It's a beautiful forest.

*(Looking about.)*

It has some of the oldest trees in the state in it.

SMITH: I know, but that's not—

BRIAN: But how is this going to make me rich?

SMITH: *(After a moment. In a whisper.)*

Gold.

BRIAN: *(After a moment. Equally as quiet and mysterious.)*

In the woods?

SMITH: *(Still quiet.)*

It says so in this old book Mable Putnam sold to me.

*(He takes out book and continues in the mysterious tone.)*

It belonged to her husband, John Putnam. He went looking for that gold in this woods 40 years ago, but he never came out again.

BRIAN: *(Quietly.)*

What happened to him?

SMITH: *(Still quietly.)*

Nobody knows.

BRIAN: *(Quietly.)*

Maybe he turned into Tarzan the Ape-man.

*(He jumps on stump, bursts into a Tarzan call and beats his chest.)*

SMITH: I doubt it.

BRIAN: Who would bury gold out here?

SMITH: The book says—now don't start going crazy on me—the book says . . .

*(Quickly.)*

the gold is buried in a hollow hill and belongs to faeries and that it's guarded by a faery queen and some ugly little goblins.

*(Silence. BRIAN breaks into "going crazy.")*

What's wrong with you?

BRIAN: I'm going crazy on you!

*(He continues.)*

Gold, faeries, goblins!

SMITH: You laugh, but this book can make us both rich.

BRIAN: *(Stopping sarcastic attitude, quite serious now.)*

Wait a minute. I've heard that before—about strange creatures in this woods.

SMITH: So have I.

BRIAN: My Grandmother used to tell me great stories about this place.

SMITH: You see?

BRIAN: *(Suddenly quite interested.)*

What exactly does that old book of John Putnam's say?

SMITH: It says invisible creatures live out here.

BRIAN: *(Truly considering the possibility.)*

Invisible . . .

SMITH: Yes.

*(LARA and THISTLE dash on, two invisible creatures of the forest.)*

We can't hear or see them.

THISTLE: I told you, Lara. Two thieves.

*(LARA, the Queen of the Hollow Hill, is tall and deerlike. She's protective of the creatures around her and of the well-being of the entire forest. There is also an element of darkness in her which shows through in her more fearful moments. THISTLE, however, is smaller, more angular in appearance and character. She's dressed in purple*

*and green and has two horns protruding from her hair. She's mischievous, whimsical and exhibits a naivete that leaves her vulnerable to the world. They both, as we shall see, love to play and dance.)*

SMITH: And it says they have gold out here, hidden in a hollow hill.

BRIAN: *(Looking around.)*

That's what the old stories were about . . . gold . . . strange creatures . . . enchanted places . . .

LARA: Smell him, Thistle.

*(LARA and THISTLE dart up to BRIAN, sniff him.)*

BRIAN: These woods are so old and magical. It looks like anything could happen here.

THISTLE: *(They like the smell of BRIAN.)*

Now him.

*(They will smell SMITH, who apparently smells quite malodorous.)*

SMITH: I know what you mean. This place gives me the creeps.

*(They back away from SMITH.)*

But don't let the stories about invisible creatures scare you. The way I see it, anything you can't see can't hurt you.

THISTLE: No?

*(THISTLE makes a pinching gesture towards SMITH from about eight feet away, there is a magical sound and SMITH feels the pinch of a faery in his side.)*

SMITH: Ow!

BRIAN: What's the matter?

SMITH: *(Confused, looking around.)*

Just a pinch in my side.

*(LARA laughs.)*

Now, the book says these creatures are dirty . . .

*(The FAERIES look at themselves and each other in confusion.)*  
vicious . . .

*(LARA and THISTLE become vicious.)*

crooked . . .

*(They are a little puzzled, but try to be crooked.)*

ugly . . .

*(This they will not be.)*

little devils.

THISTLE: Devils!

*(She pinches him as before, in the other side.)*

SMITH: Ow! Who pinched me?!

*(He wheels around to try to see who pinched him.)*

BRIAN: Maybe a vicious little faery.

SMITH: *(Smiles.)*

You're joking with me . . .

*(They laugh, as do the faeries. SMITH stops.)*

But it isn't funny. That hurt.

*(BRIAN stops laughing.)*

Now, what do you say? Would you like to help me?

THISTLE: He wouldn't steal our gold, Lara.

LARA: He would, Thistle.

THISTLE: Not that one. He smells good.

BRIAN: How do we split it up?

SMITH: You get a haa—thirr—no, one fourth of all we find.

THISTLE: Say "No."

SMITH: *(BRIAN moves away, SMITH pursues him.)*

New bikes, clothes; you can take trips—

THISTLE: Say no.

SMITH: What do you say?

THISTLE: No!

BRIAN: Yes! I'll do it!

SMITH: Good!

BRIAN: I want to be rich!

LARA: You see?

THISTLE: You Hobgoblin!

*(She pinches his side.)*

BRIAN: Ow!

THISTLE: Why do you smell good?!

BRIAN: What was that?

SMITH: A vicious little faery. Now *that's* funny! Ha! Ha!

THISTLE: It's your fault.

*(She pinches SMITH.)*

SMITH: Ow!

BRIAN: *(Looking around.)*

You know, that book might be right about faeries. I have a feeling . . . I can't believe this. I feel something . . . or someone here.

LARA: *(Impressed.)*

He feels us here.

THISTLE: You see, Lara?

SMITH: And you told me I was crazy?

BRIAN: I can't believe it either. It's like I can feel someone. Like I could see them if I would just . . . know how. Is there any way we can see them?

SMITH: I'll look in the book.



THISTLE: I want him to see me.

LARA: No, Thistle.

THISTLE: He thinks I'm ugly and crooked and I'm pretty and crooked . . .  
and vicious.

*(She snarls in BRIAN's ear.)*

LARA: Thistle, move away!

THISTLE: *(Moving away.)*

Yes . . .

LARA: Go, now, and warn the Guardians of the Hill Treasure thieves  
are near.

*(To BRIAN and SMITH.)*

And for you, I shall prepare a magical feast.

BRIAN: What's it say?

SMITH: *(Reading.)*

"To see the forest creatures, eat a Golden Woodlily."

THISTLE: *(Stunned.)*

What?

*(BRIAN checks flowers around log to see if there are any woodlilies.)*

LARA: *(Worried now.)*

They know. Warn the Guardians these thieves are dangerous. I'll  
prepare the magical food. Go.

*(She begins to dash off. THISTLE hesitates.)*

BRIAN: These flowers you picked . . . some of these are woodlilies.

*(BRIAN moves to pick up flowers.)*

LARA: *(She returns.)*

Come, Thistle, he'll see us.

THISTLE: *(Back to playfulness.)*

I want him to see me.

LARA: I said I forbid it. If they can see you they'll try to catch you.

THISTLE: He won't try to catch me.

*(With a laugh, moving near him.)*

He'll fall in love with me, I know! He'll say:

*(LARA is impatient, but also amused. THISTLE as BRIAN.)*

"Oh, Thistle, you are beautiful! I've fallen in love with you." And I'll say: "Then give me presents. I want ribbons! Give me ribbons!"

BRIAN: *(Picking one out.)*

This is a woodlily.

SMITH: *(More interested than he tries to show.)*

Well, eat it.

BRIAN: Which part am I supposed to eat?

SMITH: The petals.

LARA: Thistle, come!

THISTLE: But I want my ribbons!

LARA: Thistle, you little goblin; now!

THISTLE: *(As she's running off.)*

I'm coming. I'll be back, thief!

*(As she passes LARA.)*

Run, Lara. He'll see you!

*(THISTLE laughs, they both run off. BRIAN, who has eaten the flower, wheels around to where THISTLE and LARA have just exited.)*

SMITH: Well? What is it?

BRIAN: I thought I heard . . . no, I don't see anything.

SMITH: *(Relieved.)*

What'd you expect? Boogie men?

BRIAN: But I felt sure they were here.

SMITH: You're soft in the head, kid. Your brains are mudpies.

BRIAN: I guess you're right.

SMITH: You'll find I'm always right. Now, to find the gold—

BRIAN: Wait . . . What's that?

SMITH: *(Startled.)*

What?

BRIAN: *(Runs to bush, reaches in, pulls something out.)*

This.

SMITH: That's not a faery.

BRIAN: It's an old sign.

SMITH: What's it say?

BRIAN: *(Brushing away dirt.)*

"Beware of the Greedy . . .

*(He pronounces the "o" like the "oo" in food.)*

Boogle."

SMITH: *(Correcting BRIAN's pronunciation. The "o" is long, as in ogre.)*

Bogle.

BRIAN: What does that mean?

SMITH: Nothing.

BRIAN: It must mean something.

SMITH: It doesn't mean anything.

BRIAN: *(Reading sign as if it rhymes with "Toggle".)*

What's a "Greedy Bogle"?

SMITH: *(Correcting him.)*

Bogle!

BRIAN: What is it?

SMITH: Somebody put that there to scare you, that's all. Are you scared?

BRIAN: Not yet.

SMITH: Neither am I.

BRIAN: What's a Greedy Bogle?

SMITH: *(With a sudden charge of excitement.)*

A booglie creature that lives out here!

BRIAN: What?

SMITH: If we give him a piece of gold he has to tell us where the treasure is hidden! I told you I'd make you rich! The book says he's tied to a tree somewhere near this rock with the bell carved in it.

BRIAN: You're serious.

SMITH: The first thing we have to do is find him. Here. A gold coin.  
*(SMITH takes two gold coins out of his pocket and gives one to BRIAN.)*

BRIAN: What do I do with this?

SMITH: Hold it out and call him, then he'll appear. But don't let him touch you. Where he touches you, you'll itch worse than poison ivy.

BRIAN: Great; I'd rather ask a pretty faery where the gold is.

*(Tentatively, BRIAN and SMITH hold out their gold coins and call for the BOGLE. At first both take this game seriously, calling, "Here, Bogle . . . here Greedy Bogle . . ." in a variety of different voices. BRIAN becomes amused at the strangeness of their activity. He sings, accompanying himself on an imaginary guitar.)*

"Here Greedy Bogle, won't you take my gold. We're searchin' this place for your ugly face."

*(BRIAN breaks into a guitar solo with his imaginary guitar. He concludes, looks up at SMITH who is unimpressed. They resume calling for the BOGLE. There is an offstage low growl. SMITH freezes.)*

SMITH: Stop.

BRIAN: *(Freezes.)*

What?

SMITH: A noise.

BRIAN: Where?

SMITH: There.

*(He points.)*

BRIAN: Like what?

SMITH: A growl.

BRIAN: Would a Boggle growl?

SMITH: A

*(Correcting him.)*

Bogle might.

BRIAN: What did it sound like?

*(SMITH growls. BRIAN is unsettled by the thought of a BOGLE that growls.)*

SMITH: Go that way.

BRIAN: Why me?

SMITH: Earn what I'm paying you.

BRIAN: You're not paying me anything.

SMITH: I'll go next time.

BRIAN: There won't be a next time.

SMITH: Go on, boy!

BRIAN: My name is Brian!

SMITH: I don't care if it's Baby Cakes! Get over there!