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# A holiday pageant

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Brunswickan Staff

## The Cast:

The Spirit of Colleges Past  
Thomas Beckandcall  
Baron Caliban  
Seven Peasants  
Several Fools

## The Scene:

Medieval New Brunswick (i.e.: 1968)

(Enter The Spirit of Colleges Past)

## Spirit

The sun arose an hour late that day;  
Eclipse, the god of darkness, hid the dawn,  
When several Midnight Raiders cloaked, and blue,  
Their sharpened blades they brandished at the door.  
While in the peaceful dark the waifs still slept,  
The men in blue from out of darkness came,  
And dragged the shoeless waifs into the night,  
While peasants, fools, and nobles prayed for peace.

(Enter Thomas Beckandcall)

## Thomas

This is the truth, I tell you verily,  
Trust not your eyes, your ears, or what you read,  
But listen only to wise Caliban  
Whose word I bring on scrolls of skin of lamb.  
For in your hearts you know he's right, take heed:  
You see before you on the hills of stone  
Great houses, halls, the green green grass, and trees,  
And many slaves to build his castles red.

## Spirit

(Confronts Thomas)  
Are you Thomas Beckandcall?

## Thomas

I am.

## Spirit

Are you a witness to that dardened morn  
When Midnight Raiders hammered at the door?

## Thomas

You question me unfairly. Let me say  
There is no word to add to what was spoke  
By me that day when I and Caliban  
Stood up before the scribes, and speeches read.

## Spirit

No word indeed. Where is that martyred prince  
Whose tracks were covered in the dead of night,  
That prince who once was harboured by the walls  
Around that holy mission in the yard?

## Thomas

He is no prince. He would have broken panes  
To let the cold winds freeze the Baron's house.

## Spirit

A little ventilation wouldn't hurt.

## Thomas

He would have rent the stonework from the walls.

## Spirit

They need a little mortar here and there.

## Thomas

The house of scrolls, he tried to cause a storm.

## Spirit

Or blow the dust from off its ancient shelves.

## Thomas

You bait me but I will not bite.

## Spirit

Aha!  
You will not listen, that is your mistake!  
The starving slaves are wailing at the door,  
And in your kitchens chefs preparing feasts  
For fattened nobles work throughout the day,  
But soon the peasants will an engine bear  
Against the doors, and you will need to talk  
More quickly than you do from parapets.

## Thomas

What engine will they bear? What man of them  
Can organize, design or build a ram  
To batter our wall, to bridge our moat,  
To bring an end to our sweet luxury?  
Your riddles are but dreams, my ghostly friend.  
I will not stay to hear you any more.  
(Exit)

## Spirit

This doubting Thomas Beckandcall will see  
What nonsense is and what is honesty,  
For even in the peasantry there lie  
A thousand dormat engineers of fate.  
They will awaken when the sun is high.

What's this? What chorus do I hear afar?  
A peasant's march? What melody is that?

(Enter seven Peasants)

## Peasants

(Singing, to the tune of "Wouldn't it be Lovely")  
All we want is a place to sit,  
Out of reach of a courtly writ,  
With no prerequisite,  
Oh, wouldn't it be groovily?  
Oh, wouldn't it be groovily?  
Let us speak on what we believe,  
Crowds can listen or crowds can leave,  
Even on Christmas Eve,  
Oh, wouldn't it be groovily.

We are poor but we're not so dumb,  
And we know that the time will come,  
For votes for all, not some,  
Oh, yes, it will be groovily.  
Groovily.  
Groovily.  
Groovily.  
(Spoken, with a sinister tone) Groovily.  
(The following is chanted by all seven in unison)

We want peace and no more war,  
And the right to vote.  
Baron open up your door,  
And fill in your moat.  
This has all been said before,  
Now we mean it even more,  
While you think, you should take note  
That death has not an antidote.  
(Exit)

## Spirit

They seem to mean it and I am afraid  
The future looks more gloomy than before.  
The Baron stays at home with nobles pure  
And will not answer to the peasants' cry.

(Enter Baron Caliban, striding in, and loudly proclaiming, hand them to the Fools. The Fools cautiously take them, and begin to eat them)  
his face a couple of inches from Spirit's face.)

## Caliban

Hullo. I knew your father when he slaved  
For several years within my garden's walls.

Spirit  
(Retreating)  
Yes, I ...

## Caliban

(Not letting him retreat)  
And your cousin Dr. Rich,  
Who had to leave to fight in that great war.

Spirit  
(Still retreating)  
Yes, he ...

## Caliban

(Still on the offensive)  
When your dear Aunt Lucille was here  
The castle barely stood above the gates.

(Enter several Fools, with Fools' attributes, and bottles, sticks, and stones)

## Caliban

What's this? A demonstration? Who are they?

## Spirit

Only fools, they know not what they say.

(The fools swagger in, but sit in an orderly fashion, in several even rows)

## Caliban

Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the castle!

Fools  
(Applause)

## Caliban

A fool and his party are soon muted!

Fools  
(Louder applause, and a few cheers)

## Caliban

Anybody who disagrees with the opinions of the nobles is a bad boy!

## Fools

(Leap to their feet, applauding and cheering, in almost insane joy. They dance and jump and cheer, even, for a moment, after Caliban raises his hands to hush them)

## Caliban

Thank God for some civilized people. Thanks for your restraint.

## Fools

(More cheers. Then they resume their orderly sitting position)

(Enter the seven Peasants, with signs saying things like, "Can't we make a suggestion," "Maybe we can help," and "I

think there may be a way to improve things a little.")

## Fools

Boo! Boo! Go far away where you belong!

(The Peasants remain silent)

Boo! Boo!

(The Fools throw sticks and stones)

## Caliban

What is the meaning of these signs?  
These peasants are disrupting our affairs.

## Fools

(They hiss and boo at the Peasants and continue to throw objects. The Baron does nothing.)

## Spirit

They seem to want to have some kind of voice

In the decisions which affect their lives.

## Caliban

Bah! Humbug!

## Spirit

If that's all you have to say  
I think you'd better strengthen all your walls  
And hire Midnight Raiders and more streds,  
For these poor people have a forceful point,  
Not on a spear but in their minds, and those  
Cannot be dulled against a stone.

## Caliban

Humbug!

(The Peasants produce a bag, out of which they take cupcakes and

hand them to the Fools. The Fools cautiously take them, and begin to eat them)

## First Peasant

This cake is from the table of that man,  
The man who keeps four thousand voiceless slaves.

## First Fool

This cake is sweet. I crave some more.

## First Peasant

Let them eat cake. A taste is all they need.  
Tomorrow is another day, and then  
We will be one, then we shall win  
That right which is our own from birth to death.

## Caliban

Why do you torment me? Tell me the truth.

## Spirit

This is the truth, before your eyes today.

## Caliban

But who are you? What agent sent you here?  
You trouble me with paradox and mobs,  
You warn me of a future dark and dim.  
Believe me I am worried for my fate,  
But tell me who you really represent.

## Spirit

I am the Spirit of Colleges Past,  
But I look to the future as well;  
I think what we need  
Is to listen and heed  
Their advice or we're doomed to Hell.  
This is a mob, but its members are men,  
And they look to a future of joy;  
I endeavour to hear  
What they say without fear —  
For, I am the real McCoy.

(Exeunt)

(Curtain)

Ches

Henri

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