

THE LAND OF NOD

(As an operetta for young folks, portraying the visit of six little sleepy-heads to the King of the Land of Nod, and the wonders they saw at his court.)

By E. S. Brooks

CHARACTERS:

- The King of the Land of Nod*
- The Sand Man (Cabinet Minister)*
- Jack o' Dreams (Cabinet Minister)*
- The Dream Sprites*
- The Dream Goblin*
- The Six Little Sleepy-Heads*
- The Dream Prince*
- My Lady Fortune*
- Old Mother Goose*
- The Royal Pages*
- His Majesty's Standard-bearer*
- The Dreams:*
 - The Goblin Can-And-Must*
 - The Queen of the Dollies*
 - The Dream Princess*

COSTUMES & MOUNTING:

The Stage mounting and the costumes must depend entirely upon the taste and facilities of the managers. The more care bestowed upon the preparation of the costumes and the dressing of the stage, the more effective will be the presentation. If no curtain is used, the scene should be set to represent a throne-room, with a tastefully draped throne at the rear center of stage. The only other properties really necessary are:

- a wheelbarrow*
- a hand-wagon*
- six couches (either small mattresses or inclined frames, over which bright-colored afghans may be thrown. Soap-boxes cut to the shape of a slanted ramp, and with sacking tacked across, would do for these couches.)*
- Strings of artificial flowers for Dream Sprites (30 or 40 inches long)*
- a banner of crimson and gold (or some equally striking combination), bearing conspicuously a big poppy, and the words, " 'To bed! To bed!' says Sleepy-head."*

SCENE

(Throne is raised, and faces the audience. The Standard-bearer steps back to one side, and the Pages stand on either side at the foot of the throne. All salute the King. The music sung is to the tune of, "A la Militaire" by W. F. Sherwin.)

KING: *(Singing)*

I'm the jolly old King of the Realm of Dreams,
the sweet, sleepy Land of Nod;
I follow the sun king's vanishing beams,
and fly when his morning glory streams,
For I am the drowsy god--Yes,
I am the drowsy god!
But I'm the King of Night in my Castle of Dreams;
The King of the Land of Nod!

My crown is a garland of poppies bright,
That grow in the Land of Nod;
And I drive round the world the black horses of night,
Or sometimes a night-mare the dreamers to fright,
As I ride to the Land of Nod.
The dear, dreamy Land of Nod;
And I welcome the children,
all sleepy and white,
As they come to the Land of Nod.

(Enter from R. and L., the Sand Man and Jack o' Dreams, who make each a low obeisance to his Majesty.)

Come hither, my henchmen, bold and true,
Proud knights of the Land of Nod;
For wherever I go, and whatever I do,
My royal old head must be guided by you;
Now isn't that awfully odd?
Yes, curious, funny and odd?
For whatever I do, I depend upon you,
Tho' I'm King of the Land of Nod.

For I am the drowsy god--Yes,
I am the drowsy god!
But I'm the King of Night in my Castle of Dreams;
The King of the Land of Nod!

SAND MAN: (*Bowing to the King.*)
I--I am the Sand Man bold!
And I'm busy as busy can be,
For I work when it's hot,
And I work when it's cold,
As I scatter my sand so free.
Close to the eyes of the children dear
I creep--and I creep; I peer--and I peer;
I peer as with barrow I plod.
Then I scatter, I scatter the sand so free,
Till the children are s-l-e-e-p-y as s-l-e-e-p-y can be;
And off we trot--the children and me--
To the King of the Land of Nod.

I--I am the Sand Man bold!
I come when the night-shades fall;
Then up to the children my barrow I roll,
And the sand fills the eyes of 'em all.

Close to the eyes of the children dear
I creep--and I creep; I peer--and I peer;
I peer as with barrow I plod.
Then I scatter, I scatter the sand so free,
Till the children are s-l-e-e-p-y as s-l-e-e-p-y can be;
And off we trot--the children and me--
To the King of the Land of Nod.

I--I am the Sand Man bold!
I come when the night-shades fall;
Then up to the children my barrow I roll,
And the sand fills the eyes of 'em all.

KING:
Scatter and plod, Sand Man odd;
You're a trusty old knight of our Land of Nod.

JACK O' DREAMS: (*Bowing low to the King.*)
I'm the sprightly young, lightly young Jack o' Dreams.
And I caper the livelong night,
While my jingling bells, with their tingling swells,
Are the dear sleepy children's delight.
For I jingle them here, into each pearly ear,
And I jingle them there again;
And the dreams come and go, and the dreams fall and flow,
As I jingle my bells again.
And I dart, and I whirl, o'er their brains toss and
twirl,
As I scatter the fancies odd;

I'm the child of the night, I'm the jolly young
sprite
Of the King of the Land of Nod.

KING:

Well spoken, my henchmen bold and true,
Proud knights of the Land of Nod;
But tell to me, Sand Man, what do you
Bring now to the Land of Nod?
Just sample the stock of your latest flock
For the King of the Land of Nod.

SAND MAN:

O sire! I bring to the Realm of Dreams
The *sleepiest* set of boys
That ever the sun king's vanishing beams
Cut off from their daylight joys--
The sleepiest, drowsiest, laziest set
In all my travels I've met with yet;
And I've picked out three as a sample, you see,--
A sample most funny and odd,--
To show you the stock that comprises the flock
Of the King of the Land of Nod.

KING:

Ho! Fix the couches, Jack o' Dreams,
And you, O Sand Man odd,
Roll in the boys--without their noise--
For the King of the Land of Nod.

(Low music- Gottschalk's "Cradle Song" [simplified edition]; Heller's "Slumber Song"; "Swing Song," by Fontaine; "Good-night," by Loeschhorn; Lange's "Blumenlied"; "Nursery Tale," by Fradel, or other selection. Or a lady may sing "Birds in the Night," by Sullivan.)

(Jack o' Dreams arranges and smooths down the couches, and the Sand Man returns, bringing in his wheelbarrow, three little boys in their nightgowns, fast asleep. He and Jack o' Dreams lift them out gently and place them on their couches. King rises to receive guests.)

KING: *(Joyfully.)*

Now nod, nod, nod, my bonny boys.
O Sand Man, it is plain
The stock you bring before your king
Your fealty proves again.
Sleep right, sleep tight, with fancies bright,
On Dreamland's pleasant sod;
The night's begun, we'll have some fun,
Says the King of the Land of Nod.
And what, O Jack o' Dreams, do you
Bring here to the Land of Nod?
Come! Let us know what you have to show

To the King of the Land of Nod.

JACK O' DREAMS:

Great King! I bring the sweetest things
That ever you looked upon,
With bangs and curls, and frills and furls--
The rosiest, posiest little girls
That ever romped or ran;

The tightest, brightest, sauciest lot
That ever in dreams I plagued.
I couldn't pick better for you--no, not
If you begged, and begged, and begged.
And of these there are three that I wish you to see--
Three sleepers *so* charming and odd;
If Your Majesty please, shall I bring in these
For the King of the Land of Nod?

KING:

Ay! Bring them in, young Jack o' Dreams,
And you, old Sand Man odd,
Fix the couches all for the ladies who call
On the King of the Land of Nod.

(Low music, same as above, while Jack o' Dreams draws in a little wagon in which are three very little girls, in their nightgowns, fast asleep. He and the Sand Man lift them carefully out and lay them on the couches. King, in rapture, bends over each little girl in succession.)

KING:

Oh, my pink! Oh, my pet!
You're the prettiest yet!
Brave Jack o' Dreams so true,
'T is very plain that never again
A fairer lot we'll view.
Sleep soft, sleep well, O girlies fair,
On Dreamland's pleasant sod,
While the Dream Sprites start in each young heart
For the King of the Land of Nod.

(Stands by the throne and waves his scepter. Low music, as before.)

Cling, cling, by my scepter's swing,
By the wag of my beard so odd;
Dream Sprites small, I summon you all
To the King of the Land of Nod!

(Enter the Dream Sprites, each with a chain of flowers. They glide in and out among the little sleepers.)

DREAM SPRITES: *(In concert.)*

We weave, we weave our fairy chain

Round each young heart, in each young brain,
Our dream-spell chain so sweet.
Bright Dream Sprites we, so gay and free;
We come with tripping feet, with merrily
tripping feet,
To dance on Dreamland's sod,
While we weave, we weave our fairy chain
Round each young heart, in each young brain,
That beats and throbs in the sleepy train
Of the King of the Land of Nod.

(Enter the Dream Goblin on tiptoe, with finger raised.)

DREAM GOBLIN:

But if some children eat too much,
Or on their backs recline,
I jump and bump on all of such,
Until they groan and whine.
'T is not my fault, you'll all agree--
I'm naught but a goblin, as you see,
And I dance on Dreamland's sod.
But if children *will* stuff, why--that's enough;
I know what to do, for I'm "up to snuff,"
For the King of the Land of Nod.

KING:

Now weave your chains, ye Dream Sprites fair,
And call the Dreams from the misty air.
Stand back, O Goblin odd!
Old Sand Man, scatter your sand apace
O'er each drooping eye, on each little face;
And Jack o' Dreams, jingle your merry bells
Till the tinkling tangle falls and swells,
While trooping from Dreamland's pleasant lanes
Come the Dreams through the ring of rosy chains,
Come the Dreams so rare through the misty air,
To the King of the Land of Nod.

DREAM SPRITES:

(Dream Sprites' Weaving Song, "Adante"- music composed by Anthony Reiff)

Come, come, come, Dreams of the misty air;
Come, come, come,
Come to these children fair.
Come to these children fair.
Soft and low, soft and low,
Sing to each list'ning ear,
Sing to each list'ning ear;
Fall and flow, fall and flow,
Fall and flow,.....

Dreams of the air, appear!
Here appear,
Here appear,
Dreams of the air, appear!

KING:

Here, here, children dear!
Now, by my scepter's swing,
I hold you all in my mystic thrall,
Fast bound in my fairy ring;
Eyes bright closed tight, rest ye on Dreamland's sod.
As your slumbers you keep, speak the language of sleep.
To the King of the Land of Nod.

SIX LITTLE SLEEPY-HEADS:

(Sitting up in bed, facing the audience, and nodding their heads sleepily.)

We are Six Little Sleepy-heads just from the earth,
To visit the Land of Nod.
Our lessons are over, and so is our fun;
And after our romp, and after our run,
Right up to our beds we plod;
And when mama is kissed, and prayers are said,
Why--we drowsily, dreamily tumble in bed,
And are off to the Land of Nod.

(Fall sleepily on their couches again.)

KING:

Now raise the call, my subjects all,
As ye gather on Dreamland's sod.
Bid the Dreams appear to the children here
And the King of the Land of Nod.

ALL:

(Incantation Chorus- Music by Anthony Reiff.)

Merrily, merrily here we sing,
Cheerily, cheerily let it ring,
Ring, ring thro' the misty air;
Sprightly, O! Lightly, O!
Come at our call;
Hither come, hither come,
Hither come, one and all!
Hither come, hither come,
Come to these children fair.

Gliding, sliding, full of joy,
Hasten, girl and boy.
Asleep, asleep on Dreamland's sod,
Quickly, oh, quickly we bid you come.

Drowsily, drowsily,
Crooning with buzz and hum,
To the King of the Land of Nod,
The King of the Land of Nod.
Good night!
Good night!
Says the King of the Land of Nod.
Buzz-buzz,
Buzz-buzz,
Says the King of the Land of Nod.

(As the buzz-buzz chorus is repeated, with nodding motion and music accompaniment, the Six Dreams silently enter and stand behind the little sleepers.)

DREAM PRINCE: *(Steps in front of first little girl.)*

I'm the gallant Prince of the Fairy Isles
That float in the mists of story,
I'm the glittering Prince of the Realm of Smiles,
And I tread the paths of glory.
I call the bright flush to each eager cheek,
As my deeds are read with rapture,
And the dangers I face and the words I speak
Are certain all hearts to capture.
Oh, I've danced in the brains of countless girls,
As they've read with joy the story
Of my wondrous treasures of gold and pearls,
And my marvelous deeds of glory.
I'm the Prince who glitters on many a page
Of many a fairy story,
Ever young and brave, as from age to age
I reign in perennial glory;
And I come tonight at the call of my King,
To dance through *your* sleep, dream-laden,
And many a happy thought to bring
To my rare little, fair little maiden.

(Shakes his sword aloft.)

Here's my strong right arm, that shall shield from harm
This Queen of my Realm of Story;
I'm your Prince so true, and I come to you,
Filling your dreams with glory.

(Steps behind her again.)

His own little, sweet little lass.
O roses bright, and violets, too,
Rejoice as so swiftly I pass;
I shall dance and flutter his day-dreams through--

I'm his own little, sweet little lass.

O Powers above! In your infinite love,
Make him gentle, and brave, and strong;
Make him fearless and true, and manly, too,
As ye hasten his years along.

O Prince of the Isles of Beautiful Smiles,
Send us pleasure and happiness rare;
Send us favoring tides as our ship gaily glides
Down Life's flowing river so fair.

KING:

Well, well, my brave boy, there'll be nothing but
joy
In your pathway--so soon to be trod.
May this sweet little lass make it all come to pass,
Says the King of the Land of Nod.

JACK O' DREAMS: (*Rushing in at right.*)

Great King! The sun is on the run
The lamps of day to light.
'T is time to go, oho! Oho!
With the vanishing shades of night.
Dismiss your court, break off your sport;
'T is time that your way you trod
Around Cape Horn, ere day is born,
To the opposite Land of Nod.

SAND MAN: (*Rushing in at left.*)

Too true, too true! Great King, for you
The horses of night I've hitched
To your chariot grand, and a fresh load of sand
Into my barrow I've pitched.
So, let us be off! Be off! Be off!
To China's celestial sod,
To hold the court, and renew the sport,
Of the King of the Land of Nod.

(*Spirited music--"Racquet Galop," Simmons, "Full of Joy Galop," Fahrbach, Boccaccio March," or other selection.*)

KING: (*Rising.*)

Gather and plod, gather and plod;
Up and away from the Land of Nod!

SAND MAN and JACK O' DREAMS: (*Together*)

Goblins, sprites, and dreamy ring,
Gather, gather round your King,

Here on Dreamland's sod.
Round the world we now must go,
Ere the sun his face doth show
In this Land of Nod.

(All the characters form in circle around the children, and all excepting the King sing or repeat together softly: Music by W. F. Sherwin.)

Children dear,
Sleeping here,
Fare you, fare you well!
Mighty King,
Break the ring
Of this magic spell.

Pleasures bright
Round you light,
Happy children all.
Mighty King,
Break the ring
Of sleep's mystic thrall.

(These first two verses are divided among the characters and sun simultaneously. Then they all join together:)

Nid no more,
Nod no more,
Here on Dreamland's sod.
Wake! Wake! The spell we break
Of the King of the Land of Nod.

KING:

(From his throne, using music of first song.)

I'm the jolly old King of the Realm of Dreams,
The sweet, sleepy Land of Nod.
But I fly from the sun-king's morning beams
To the Kingdom of Night and the Castle of Dreams
Far away in the Land of Nod--
In the Chinaman's Land of Nod;
For I'm no good at all when the sunlight streams--
I am the King of the Land of Nod!

(Descends from the throne.)

Gather round me, henchmen bold and true,
Proud knights of the Land of Nod;
Bear your monarch away round the world with you.

(To the children)

God-speed ye, dear children!
Whatever you do,
Come again to the Land of Nod.

Wake, boys! And wake, girls! Here's the day shining
through,
Says the King of the Land of Nod.

(All pass off in procession, Standard-bearer leading, followed by the King and his Pages, Sand Man, Jack o' Dreams, Dream Sprites, Dreams, and Goblins. As they move off, they sing in chorus the following:)

Goodbye Song

(Use the music of the Incantation Chorus by Anthony Reiff.)

Tra-la-la, la-la-la; soft and slow,
Singing merrily, now we go
Off through the misty air.
Waken, O little ones! Here is the dawn.
Wake, with the flush of the rosy morn
Tingeing each cheek so fair.

Soft we go, slow we go; now farewell.
Dreamers, awake, we break the spell.
Haste ye from Dreamland's sod;
Good night! Good morning! Say King and Court.
Rouse ye, O children! Waken to sport--
Farewell to the Land of Nod.

Good-by! Good-by!
Says the King of the Land of Nod;
Good-by! Good-by!
Says the King of the Land of Nod.

(When the last strains of the Good-by Song die away, and all is quiet, the Six Little Sleepy-heads begin to stir and stretch. Low music,--"Nursery Tale," by Fradel, or "Blumenlied," by Lange,--during which the Six Little Sleepy-heads sit up on the edge of their couches, rub their eyes, and finally become wide awake.)

SIX LITTLE SLEEPY-HEADS:

(All together.)

Oh!--Oh! What a beautiful dream!

What a--

Why! See all the people!

Why, where are we?

Oh! Mama! Mama!

(All run off hastily.)

CURTAIN