

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S CONVERSATION

by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

COLIN 24 Gay male

BEN 32 Gay male

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SETTING *The bedroom of a nice condo apartment downtown.*

TIME *Nighttime, midsummer.*

AT RISE *There is a large bed center stage, with a tall headboard. Sheets, pillows and a comforter are tossed about the bed and onto the floor, with a pair of underwear on each side of the bed. COLIN is standing naked, his back to the bed, apparently enjoying the view from a window, while in the bed, BEN, also naked, seems to be drifting into post-sex drowsiness. BEN stretches and rolls onto his back.*

BEN

Hmmm...

Hearing and apparently seeing BEN in the reflection from the window, COLIN turns toward the bed, smiling. Then, intently, as Romeo...

COLIN

“Oh, she doth teach the torches to burn bright! It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear! Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!

BEN

Colin...

COLIN rushes halfway to the bed, then drops to his knees, with his hands clutched over his heart, then extended toward BEN.

COLIN

“Did my heart love 'til now? Forswear it, sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night!”

COLIN flings himself onto the bed as BEN pulls a sheet over his lower body.

BEN

In bed with an actor...again.

COLIN moves to BEN, pulls the sheet away, exposing him. Then indicating BEN's groin with a graceful wave.

COLIN

But "...if I profane with my unworthy hand this holy shrine, the gentle fine is this, my lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand to smooth that rough force with tender...(pauses, smiling)...kiss!"

COLIN briefly starts to move his head to BEN's groin. BEN covers himself with the sheet again.

BEN

No acting!

COLIN looks at BEN, pulls back, goes to the edge of the bed, stands and pulls away the sheet, roughly. Then back on the bed, grabbing BEN roughly, now as Stanley, in "Streetcar Named Desire".

COLIN

Oh, no, Blanche...hey!...miss prissy fuckin' DuBois..."we've had this date coming from the beginning."

BEN

(Taken aback by the intensity.) Not that one. *(Pause)* Give it a break! You're not onstage!

COLIN

(Opening his arms and expanding his chest a bit.) But I am! We are!

BEN retrieves *the sheet and covers himself.*

BEN

We're not. And it's been a long time between dates, Stanley.

COLIN is momentarily taken aback by BEN's tone, then recovering, watching BEN for a moment: then moving, crouching, onto the bed, as Heath Ledger's Joker, in "The Dark Knight".

COLIN

"Why so serious?"

BEN

(Again, taken aback by COLIN's intensity.) You are now, seriously, creeping me out.

COLIN

(Losing the role and in a normal but concerned voice.) Why...so serious? Why...tonight...so...serious?

BEN

I'm not...

COLIN

You are. I can read you. Totally. Remember?

BEN

Just let it go, for now. Our first night together in...

COLIN

(Starting again as the Joker) "Why so..."

BEN

(Interrupting) You've been gone a while. I guess I missed you.

COLIN

Well, now I'm back and ready to make it up to you...made a damn good start on it, wouldn't you say? A month in New York without sex and I'm ready to play!

COLIN moves to lift the sheet again, but BEN pulls it back.

BEN

And how *was* that? Think you'll get any offers out of the production?

COLIN

(Reacts off BEN's line.) No. Wasn't looking for any. You know the play was just a favor for my old acting school buddy. Off-off-off-off Broadway is just way too...gritty. And sleeping on the couch of a dinky fifteen-hundred dollar a month Hell's Kitchen *hallway* is ever *not* so much fun. This *(indicating the bed and room)* is much, much nicer!

BEN

Well, I'm sure you'll get something out of it. The reviews you emailed were really good. New York is...

COLIN

(Interrupting) ...too fuckin' cold in winter. I think I'll just stay the moderately big fish in the moderately small pond for a bit longer. I mean...where else can I get a Best Actor award two years running! Not New York.

BEN

But, if you really want to challenge yourself...

COLIN

(Interrupting) I can do it here. There's lots of opportunity.

BEN

Can you really grow your skills in a small...

COLIN

(Interrupting) Wait. Stop. What's going on here? That's more interest in me and New York than's been coming my way from you, sir, since I mentioned my gig up there. When, as I remember, I detected no end of bruised feelings on your part. Which, over the past few hours, had seemed miraculously and most pleurably healed. So. Tell me. What's changed?

BEN

Nothing. Just trying to think about what would be best for you.

COLIN

What would be best for me is another round of slap butt, a good night's sleep, a little morning wood and a long, self-indulgent brunch with bottomless mimosas! You and me...fuckin' all the fuckin' day, lover!

BEN

Hmm...

COLIN

Oh, you of the most eloquent "hmmms". So...hmm...what?

BEN

Hmm... *(Catches himself, smiles, then serious)* I'm...not sure I can...I mean...except the sleep, of course. I just have this grant proposal...

COLIN

It's Saturday-fuckin'-night and you took the day off Monday. Can't you...

BEN

(Interrupting) I wish I could, but...

COLIN

(Interrupting) Second time. What's happened here? In about the last fifteen minutes or so? *(Pause, serious)* Truth.

BEN

Ah. Truth. Well... *(pause)* I did miss you and it's great to have you back, but...

COLIN

...but...

BEN

(Pause) You used the "L" word. We haven't...used the "L" word, you know.

(Beat)

COLIN

Ah, yes...the "L" word. (*Flushing, struggling to absorb and deal with a major, serious and unexpected moment. A pause.*) I guess I did use it. So...

BEN

So...

COLIN

You wouldn't be buying... "passion of the moment"? (*BEN doesn't respond. An awkward silence.*) Guess not. So that leaves... (*BEN still doesn't respond, though COLIN is waiting.*) I did notice you stayed with the plan. Didn't use it.

BEN

There's not a "plan". We just haven't...

COLIN

Yeah, I know. We haven't. Hmm...

BEN

(*Smiling*) "Hmm"?

COLIN

It's catching.

COLIN reaches over to BEN, who, very slightly, withdraws from the touch. COLIN withdraws his hand.

I meant it.

BEN

(*Long pause*) It's just that... (*pause*) I...don't know if I can. (*Pause*) Mean it.

(*Beat*)

And I should, right? Not just to be polite. You say "I love you" so I say "I love you" so as not to be impolite?

COLIN

We went beyond "fuck buddies" months ago, as far as I can tell.

BEN

Yeah, well... maybe that's when I got lost. Lost my anchor and started drifting. The past month...too much time for drifting, I guess.

COLIN reaches out again, touches BEN, who does not withdraw this time.

COLIN

Enough time for me to find *my* anchor? Maybe?

BEN

Maybe we should have stayed fuck buddies?

COLIN

(Pulling his hand back.) No.

BEN

Maybe? It keeps things...simpler.

COLIN

Ah, the land of "may" and "be"...the "equivocal-city". I'm outta here.

COLIN tosses back the sheet and rolls out of the bed, then stands, facing the bed. There is an uncertain moment, then he shouts...

I love you! I fuckin' love you!

Turning to the audience, he goes to his knees and shouts, as Stanley again...

Stella! Stella!

BEN

(Laughing) You fuck! You'll wake the neighbors!

COLIN

We woke them half an hour ago.

Turns and leans onto the bed, reaching across for BEN.

Besides...we can't go back to being fuck buddies...'cause you love me, too.

BEN

Oh. And you know this...how?

COLIN crawls back into the bed and over to BEN.

COLIN

By that...

COLIN brushes BEN's forehead.

...by these...

COLIN brushes his hand across BEN's closed eyes.

...by these...

COLIN brushes his hands across BEN's lips, then down his neck to his chest, where COLIN places his open hand over BEN's heart.

...by that. (Pause) And, lest we forget...

COLIN trails his hand down BEN's stomach, then under the sheet to grab BEN's crotch.

...by that.

Smiling, BEN grab's COLIN's hand at his crotch, then COLIN brings BEN's hand to COLIN's chest, over his heart.

Most of all...by this.

COLIN takes his hand away, leaving BEN's hand on his chest, who does not move his hand away for a long moment. Finally, BEN moves his hand away, slowly, then turns away from COLIN.

BEN

I don't...(pause)...know.

COLIN

Ah. (pause) Well, let's see. What is it? Almost five months, now? Not living together...yet. Though half the time I'm over here and the other you're at my place. All our friends have met each other...

BEN

...and don't all get along...

COLIN

...there's the constant, phenomenal sex...

BEN

...almost the best sex I've ever had...

COLIN

Almost?

BEN

Yeah, but he was a pro and I paid for it. One thousand dollars for one night.

COLIN

...you never...

BEN

(Interrupting) I know.

COLIN

Hmm... *(Catches himself, smiles.)* So maybe, I thought...after all that...

BEN

Or maybe not.

COLIN

Ouch. *(In a falling voice)* Ouch...ouch. *(Long pause)* Have you...

BEN

No, I haven't met someone else...

COLIN

...I know. I'd *know* that. What I was going to ask was...have you *ever*...been in love?

BEN

(Long pause) Ah. Well. *(Pause)* No. Not really. *(Pause)* No. *(Pause)* I don't think I've even wanted to be.

COLIN

That is...

BEN

(Interrupting) Sad? Yeah, maybe.

COLIN

Not maybe. Sad. *(Pause)* No one?

BEN

No one. *(Long pause)* When I was a kid I had...best friends. *Really* best friends. That was...romantic, in a way.

COLIN

One of them your cowboy?

BEN leaves the bed, stands, pulls on his underwear during the following, then returns to the bed.

BEN

And some others later. But, Wade? Yeah, definitely. Though in Abilene we were all cowboys. He just really had the horses to prove it. We were best friends...for years.

COLIN

Sounds like Brokeback...

BEN

(Interrupting)...did I ever tell you about when we became friends?

COLIN

No.

BEN

Eighth grade. Homeroom together. He was...just...I thought he was beautiful. This one weekend I was wandering around the pasture near our new subdivision. I saw him on his horse. Heading my way. He saw me and decided to play a game, I guess. Brought his horse to a gallop and headed straight at me. Trying to make me jump aside. I decided that, even if he ran me down I wasn't going to move. And I didn't. I stood there. He pulled the horse aside just before he'd have hit me. We were friends from then on. Best friends.

COLIN

Did you ever...?

BEN

No. I think I wanted to. Sometimes he'd spend the night, in the same bed...it was hard to keep my hands away from him. But, no. *(Pause)* Probably as close to love as I've come. A teenager will fall in love with anything.

COLIN

I fell in love, at fourteen, with the first guy I had sex with. Football player. He dumped me for a cheerleader.

BEN

You were his "experimental" phase?

COLIN

No. *Male* cheerleader. He took the guy to the prom as his date. I was crushed.

BEN

(Smiles) California was a *way* different place to grow up, then. Texas... I couldn't even think about sex with Wade. Didn't think about sex, really. With Wade... So maybe I did love him. But no sex. *(Pause)* I'd remember how he

looked at me after running his horse at me and I wouldn't move. Respect. I didn't want him to...

COLIN

(Interrupting) Look at you and see a queer.

BEN

(Surprise, off COLIN, pause, then reflective) Maybe. *(Pause)* Yeah, maybe...

COLIN

Growing up gay in west Texas has got to be tough.

BEN

More than you'd ever want to know.

COLIN

You never talk about it.

BEN

Because I got out of there. It's not me anymore. Moved here...

COLIN

...where...

BEN

...I discovered gay sex and *bam!* I made up for a *lot* of lost time. *(Pause, abashed.)* We did talk about that.

COLIN

Yeah, scary. Master of the online hook-up.

BEN

I hated the bars. Standing around all night, dealing with posers and attitude, buying over-priced drinks and talking for hours to score maybe...once in a while?

COLIN

When *online*...

BEN

(Interrupting)...once, twice, three times a night. No questions. No games. Every night. Or afternoon. Or morning. Years. I put West Texas *way* behind me.

COLIN

But you came out.

BEN

Eventually. Took a while. I finally did, though. Come out.

COLIN

And you've never fallen in love. Among all those hook-up guys, there was never one...

BEN

Those guys? *(Smiles)* Not a chance.

COLIN

(Hand to his chest, indicating.) Not a chance?

BEN

(Pause) Stop it. You... *(Long pause)* You were... *(BEN pulls COLIN into an embrace, then falls silent.)*

COLIN begins to cuddle with BEN, then puts his hand on BEN's chest, caressing. After a moment he begins to trace the outline of a rectangle on BEN's chest: across the top of his chest, down his left side and across to the right, back up to the start at the top of his chest. Then COLIN sits up and places both hands against BEN's torso, as if feeling something he had been tracing. BEN is silent, puzzled. COLIN sits back, watching BEN.

What?

COLIN runs his fingertip quickly, just across the top of BEN's chest, then down.

COLIN

It's there. I can feel it.

BEN

What?

COLIN

The closet. The one inside.

BEN slaps COLIN's hand away in what may be surprise or anger. COLIN moves away a bit.

BEN

You're wrong. It's gone. That's only the space where it was. Now it's just...empty. Empty there. *(Pause)* I figured that one out a long time ago. Before I met you.

COLIN

None of those guys had a chance because...

BEN

(Interrupting)...when I looked at them I saw only...queers. Me. How could I love a queer? How could he love me? Both ways. It was all about sex. Where did love fit into that equation?

COLIN

“Did”?

BEN

“Does.” Where does love... *(stops)*.

COLIN brings BEN's hand to COLIN's chest, then melodramatically...

COLIN

You *know* where...

BEN pulls his hand away sharply.

BEN

The actor knows that, huh?

BEN moves away from COLIN to the edge of the bed, then stands, facing COLIN.

(Beat)

Until tonight...*(pause)*. No one's ever said, “I love you”, to me. No one. There's no one I've ever said, “I love you” to...*(pause)*...too... *(Turning back to COLIN)* Before you, I've never, ever looked into a face that was looking back at me like...*(looks away from COLIN briefly)*...that. *(Pause)* How fuckin' sad? How fuckin' pathetic? I see my gay friends, couples, together...some just moved in together...some together for thirty years...and I don't even have a clue. What they have. What it must be like. I try to imagine sometime. Watching TV, snuggled together, one leaning back into the other's arms...so relaxed....so...natural. Holding hands and not even aware they are. Having...always...someone to talk to...about the important stuff or the minor shit of the day. Always knowing there's...someone will be there. And I don't have a clue. What that would be like. It'd break my heart if I had one.

COLIN

You just need to let...

BEN

(Tapping his chest.) Don't come near this, Colin. It's damaged goods. I'm...damaged goods. You're too late...ten years too late. *(Pause)* I can't.

COLIN

Ben, we can...

BEN signals "stop" with his hand to interrupt and COLIN is silent for a long moment.

(In BEN's voice, perfectly.) "The actor knows that, huh?" *(Switching to his own voice)* Yeah, that's what I get paid for. Watching people, imagining how they feel, what it's like to be them. Caring about them. Even when the people only exist in a script or onstage.

(Beat)

But I'm a good watcher and a damned good actor and what I know is that though you may think you've lost your closet...you haven't. It's still there. It keeps love locked inside. 'Cause, if that ever got out, you'd be...completely gay. You'd have finally touched...the person you love...your cowboy in bed with you. *(Pause)* Me.

BEN

You've got me pegged, then? *(Touching his chest)* It feels like *emptiness*. So, why does it feel...empty?

COLIN

Not empty...numb. Fear's a good painkiller. Like Novocain. But it doesn't just kill pain. It kills all feeling. Your inner closet is still working...still numbing...only now it's protecting you from love.

BEN

And the fact that I've been out for years, totally out...to friends, family, work...

COLIN

(Interrupting)...it's still there.

BEN

So, there's no help for that, is there? Damage done? Well, thank you, Abilene.

COLIN

You can still...

BEN

(Interrupting) Just how can you know what I'm feeling? When I don't feel it myself?

COLIN
(Pause) You don't love me?

BEN
I didn't say that...

COLIN
Why not?

BEN
(Long pause)...I don't know...

There is a very long moment, an impasse. For COLIN, the relationship with BEN hangs in the balance and the audience should be brought just to the edge of discomfort and wondering if something has gone wrong onstage as COLIN, considers, then decides what to do. The only thing he can think of to do.

(Beat)

COLIN
Acting exercise.

BEN
(Incredulous) What?

COLIN stands, picks up his underwear from the floor and puts it on.

COLIN
You're going to do an acting exercise...my favorite. I'll show you how. Just give me an emotion. Anything.

BEN
You're kidding! Now? Why now? And what's with... (indicating the underwear.)

COLIN
...actors hate performing in the nude. Too much exposure. Now, go. An emotion.

BEN begins, confused and reluctant. This a standard acting exercise, where BEN will name an emotion and COLIN will then express the emotion wordlessly. The pace should be slow enough that COLIN is able to fully inhabit the emotion before BEN moves on to the next one. COLIN should employ the whole stage for his exercises. And COLIN is very, very good. Though BEN starts naming the emotions randomly, his interest in COLIN's responses grows and he becomes more focused. A test?

BEN

Hmm...

COLIN

(Interrupting) That is *not* an emotion.

BEN

OK. *(Pause)* "Puzzled" ...
"Courageous" ...
"Joy" ...
"Anger" ...
"Disdain" ...
"Jealous" ...
"Hurt" ...
"Proud" ...
"Grief" ...
"Regret" ...
"Love" ...

COLIN moves toward BEN on the bed. BEN reacts.

"Uncertain" ...

COLIN stops. Uncertain. After a pause, COLIN begins to laugh and moves toward BEN, to embrace him, then the laughter turns to wrenching sobs and BEN reaches for him, only to be met with laughter again. COLIN moves from the bed and then produces an improvised, quick, virtuoso series of emotions, one after the other, that runs for half a minute or so. The audience should only slowly realize that COLIN is not reacting to BEN, but continuing an acting exercise. BEN only slowly realizes that, as well.

What was that?

COLIN

My New York gig, abridged version. *(pause)* Now, your turn.

BEN

What?

COLIN

I showed you how to do it. I'll give you an emotion...you express it. It's easy. First day acting class stuff. *(Removing his underwear.)* I'm the director. You're the actor. Now.

BEN

I don't want to. I'm not an actor.

COLIN drops to his knees, hands together on the edge of the bed, as in prayer, almost in tears.

COLIN

Please, Ben! It's important!

BEN

OK!

COLIN returns to the bed. BEN is very awkward and reluctant as the exercise begins for him and he does not get better at it. But, he is sincerely trying.

COLIN

"Questioning" ...
"Surprise" ...
"Regret" ...
"Loneliness" ...
"Hopefulness" ...
"Joy" ...

COLIN pauses...

Be an *actor*, Ben...not a *mime*. You have to *feel* the emotion, *live* the emotion...it's *you*...

COLIN resumes...

"Protective"
"Tenderness?"
"Love?"

BEN

(Frustrated) I can't do this!

COLIN

You can. You will. Just trust your...

COLIN wants to say "feelings", but now must think of...

OK, something else.

COLIN is searching, thinking. Then he has an idea. Patting the bed in front of him...

Come here. Baby steps.

BEN

I don't think...

COLIN

Please, Ben...baby steps?

BEN takes his place on the bed, in front of COLIN. COLIN kneels behind BEN and begins to lightly touch and stroke his back, shoulders, neck, head, lightly massaging, touching, caressing. This continues throughout the exercise.

We'll start... with a visualization exercise. *(Pause)* Now close your eyes and relax. Breathe...deeply...slowly. Relax. Breathe. Empty your mind. Let your mind go blank. Quiet. Calm. Calm. *(long pause)* Now, I want you to think of the most beautiful place on earth. The very most beautiful. Some place you've been and remember and love. A perfect place, a perfect moment. A moment you treasure. *(Long pause)*. Tell me when you've got it.

BEN

I don't...

COLIN

Breathe. Slowly. Slowly. Quiet. Find the place. The place you've been and remember and love.

BEN

(Long pause) There...

COLIN

Now hold it in your mind. Remember everything about it. Every single thing. Every sound, every color, every smell...how the air touched your skin...how the ground felt under your feet. *(Long pause)* And now I want you to...*go* there. Just...*be there*. In that lovely, wonderful place. *Now*.

BEN

(Dreamily) Yes.

COLIN

Surround yourself with the place. You *are* there.

BEN

(Again, dreamily) Yeah...

COLIN

Now...think of the one person in the world you want to show this place to...and bring that person there. Now.

BEN

(Dreamily, smiling) Yes.

After a long moment, COLIN stops massaging BEN's shoulders, pulls back and away, and in a cold, emotionless voice...

COLIN

Now you are gone. No longer there. Forever...gone. That person is alone. In that place. Without you. Forever.

BEN is perfectly still for a moment, then stifles an involuntary sob. Wiping his eyes he quickly moves away from COLIN and leaves the bed.

(Beat)

BEN

You scare me. *(Pause)* I don't know who you are. I've seen you in plays, watched you rehearse, take on different roles. I've seen you disappear into a role...just disappear and become a person I don't know...can't know. Unexpected. You are a damn good actor. And I don't know who you are. You're...a shape-shifter and that scares me. How do I know...*who* you are? How do I *know*...that *this* is not just another...*part*? How can I be sure?

COLIN

Ben...

BEN

Shouldn't I be sure? For my first time? Before...before I... *(pause)* Oh, being with you has been this incredible, awesome...*run*. But is that all that it is? Just another...*gig*?

COLIN

I love you...

BEN

...'cause when I had the world's most expensive fuck it *was* great sex and I knew who he was and what he was doing because I was paying for it. Simple as that. Same with all the guys I hooked up with. With you, though...I can't be sure what it is. And I need to be sure.

COLIN

Ben...

BEN

I'm not sure I know you.

BEN goes to his knees and leans onto the bed, facing COLIN, intent.

Who are you?

(Beat)

COLIN gathers the sheet protectively, sits back.

COLIN

(Quietly) Oh, shit. *(long pause)* Truth, Ben? Truth? *(Pause)* I don't know. I don't think I've ever fuckin' known. Ever. My one really big secret. Ever. *(pauses, then almost to himself)* So we do this. *(Turns back to BEN, then hand to his chest)* There's no "there" there. I look inside and...nothing. No "me". Nothing. *(pause)* I scare you? I fuckin' scare me. Or would, if either "I" or "me" meant anything to...*(“me”, unsaid, then pause)* The kid with no inside. Only an outside...a "what you see" side. As long as I can remember. How's that for growing up with? You had West Texas? I had *that*.

(Beat)

So I'd watch people. Just...watch. See who they are. See if I can see who they are. What's going on *(hand to chest again)* there. *Imagine* what it would be like to have that going on...*(begins to put hand to chest again...stops.)* *Feel* what it would be like to have that going on... *(Pause)* to *feel*...to *feel* them...who they were...what they had there. Whatever it was going on there. I *loved* doing that. Only way not to be crazy lonely. Or just...*(gestures)...pouf...*

(Beat)

COLIN moves from the bed, to stand on his side of the bed...the sheet, again, protectively clutched in front of him.

I try so fuckin' hard. Sometimes I can't. Sometimes I can. Sometimes I have to just make it up...*try* to make it up. You know I get these stories going about them and they can make me laugh or just cry or hurt or feel like...*(searching for the word, then touching his chest)*...the sun is there and I cry, too...different, though. Sometimes it's just twitchy and weird and scary what I feel...the stories I get for these people and I want to back away...hide from them. *(Pause)* But I don't. I can't. At least there's something *there* for a bit. A *me* for a bit.

(Beat)

I fuckin' *love* being an actor. Makes it easier. What I'd be doing anyway. I get *way* better stories than I could ever make up on my own about the people who

run around with...(searching) a me there (touching his chest). What I've never had.

(Beat)

So, yeah, Ben. It's a role and if that means that you can't...(stops, emotional.) It's a role. This loving you that makes me cry and smile and soar and feel like my heart's as big as the world and there's no one else in all the world but you...you! (Suppressed sob and pause) Only my "new gig"? (Pause) Aren't these gigs all there's ever been of...me? All there ever will be of...me? You're right to be scared. I'm scared...I'm so scared...that all I am, all I've ever been is a fuckin' actor. Finally...just a fuckin' actor.

COLIN lies down on the bed and turns away from BEN, partially covering himself with the sheet. He's quietly sobbing.

BEN stands for a long moment, watching COLIN. Then he slowly lowers his shorts, drops them to the floor. He slowly moves onto the bed, close to COLIN, then moves under the sheet covering COLIN, behind him, touching him with the full length of his body. BEN reaches around COLIN, hugging him and pulling him closer. After a long moment, almost in a whisper...

BEN

I love you. I do love you. (pause) Always.

COLIN smiles and turns to BEN, then embraces him, kisses him. Still in the embrace, COLIN wipes tears from his eyes, then raises the hand he had used to wipe his eyes.

COLIN

"With this field dew consecrate, every fairy take his gait, and each several chamber bless, through this palace, sweet with peace, and the owner of it blest, ever shall in safety rest...(To BEN, taking him in his arms) ...Sleep, thou...oh sleep...and I will wind thee in my arms! (Pause, turning and dismissing the audience with a wave of his hand) Fairies begone, and be all ways away!"

BLACKOUT

END OF PLAY